**Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00339 (Version 1)**

**SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION**

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| **Service & Division:** | Corporate & Housing Services Housing & Communities | **Lead Officer Name:** | Ross Allan |
| **Team:** | Strategy |
| **Tel:** | 01324 590387 |
| **Email:** | [Ross.Allan@Falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:Ross.Allan@Falkirk.gov.uk) |
| **Proposal:** | The Local Housing Strategy 2023 – 2028 (LHS) is the overarching strategic document for housing. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to produce an LHS setting out the strategy, priorities and plans for the delivery of housing related services. | **Reference No:** |  |

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| **What is the Proposal?** | **Budget & Other Financial Decision** | **Policy (New or Change)** | **HR Policy & Practice** | **Change to Service Delivery**  **/ Service Design** |
|  | No | Yes | No | No |

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| **Who does the Proposal affect?** | | **Service Users** | **Members of the Public** | **Employees** | **Job Applicants** |
|  | | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| **Other, please specify:** | |  | | | |
| **Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):** | | | | | |
| 10/08/2022 | The purpose of the LHS is to set out the strategy, priorities and plans for the delivery of housing and housing related service in the Falkirk Council area over a five year period (2023 – 2028). | | | | |
| 03/11/2022 | The purpose of the EPIA is to ensure the LHS has been developed with consideration of the Equality Act 2010 and the public duty which all public authority bodies must ensure they adhere to. | | | | |
| 03/11/2022 | Continuous monitoring of the outcome and actions written in LHS is carried out on a yearly basis over the 5 year period to ensure actions are progressing towards meeting the outcomes. This is considered good practice by the Scottish Government and is presented to Executive prior to being published on the Council website. | | | | |
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| **Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):** | |
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**SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

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| **For budget changes ONLY please include information below:** | | | **Benchmark, e.g. Scottish Average** |
| **Current spend on this service (£'0000s)** | **Total:** |  |  |
| **Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s)** | **Per Annum:** |  |  |
| **Increase to this service budget (£'000s)** | **Per Annum:** |  |  |
| **If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete.** | **Current Annual Income Total:** |  |  |
| **Expected Annual Income Total:** |  |  |
| **If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved?** | **Start Date:** |  |  |
| **End Date (if any):** |  |  |

**SECTION THREE: EVIDENCE Please include any evidence or relevant information that has influenced the decisions contained in this EPIA. (This could include demographic profiles; audits; research; health needs assessments; national guidance or legislative requirements and how this relates to the protected characteristic groups.)**

**A - Quantitative Evidence**

**This is evidence which is numerical and should include the number people who use the service and the number of people from the**

**protected characteristic groups who might be affected by changes to the service.**

Consideration has been given to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, particularly around evidence on the specialist requirements of local populations. Age, disability, sex and ethnicity have been considered as these are the main protected characteristics which have an impact on housing need and demand. Information has been taken from the Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2022 (HNDA).

Information has been taken from multiple data sources including but not limited to various Falkirk Council Services, Census Data and National Records of Scotland.

* Falkirk has an increasing population; this has been the case since the mid-1990s. The National Records Scotland 2018 population projections indicate a rise of 6% between 2018 and 2043 which will result in a population estimate of 169,962 by 2043.
* The population is ageing with the majority of age groups between 0-59 years expected to see a fall between 2018 and 2043, with the largest fall expected to be in the 5-11 age group at 14%. There will however in stark contrast be a substantial increase in the 75-84 and the 85+ age group at 76% and 92% respectively, this compares to 66% and 84% nationally. The population of Falkirk is expected to age at a higher rate than the national average
* Single person households are the largest household category in Falkirk, and this is expected to increase as there is a projected to be a 7% fall in household size from 2.20 to 2.05 people per household and from 2.15 to 2.03 in Scotland in the next 25 years.
* 74% of households who live in properties with disrepair are pensioners, 28% of households in fuel poverty are pensioners
* An estimated number of 2,598 people are living with dementia
* 7000 households whose home limits their day-to-day activity equates to circa 4000 social rented and circa 2000 owners
* 392 Falkirk Council applicants for accessible properties
* There continues to be an increasing need for disabled adaptations, 3% circa 2, 000 households report requiring disabled adaptations. Although need for wheelchair housing greater for older people, need is across all age groups. Of those with a disability, 19% of children, 41% of working age adults and 68% of those above retirement age where the disability is due to mobility.
* Average of 1, 109 homeless applications per year annually over the last 10 years. Largest group single people.
* Single males represented 47.5% of all homeless applications in 2020-21
* There are 51 people with severe and multiple disadvantage who would benefit from a Housing First approach - Housing First supports vulnerable people with complex needs to get into settled accommodation.
* 92.32% of LHS survey respondents had broadband access at home, with a further 73.99% being able to access the internet via mobile phone data. Indeed, overwhelmingly, the preferred device to use for internet access is a mobile phone (91.64%), followed by laptops (66.04%) and tablets (62.26).
* the percentage of respondents with internet declines with age. For example, 97% of tenants between the ages of 16 and 34 had internet access, while only 25% of respondents over 65 had internet access. The elderly (60+) comprises 23.8% of Falkirk’s 35,900 households.

**B - Qualitative Evidence**

**This is data which describes the effect or impact of a change on a group of people, e.g. some information provided as part of performance**

**reporting.**

**Social - case studies; personal / group feedback / other**

Age, disability, sex and ethnicity have been identified as the main protected characteristics which have an impact on housing need and demand. Priorities, actions and indicators detailed in the LHS along with consultation on the needs of these specific groups have been designed to ensure adequate housing and support services are in place to meet the continuous demand for affordable housing, specialist housing options and support services in the local area.

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| **Best Judgement:** | |
| **Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?** | No |
| **Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?** |  |
| **What gaps in data / information were identified?** |  |
| **Is further research necessary?** | No |
| **If NO, please state why.** | Extensive consultation was carried out across the local area to determine the priorities, actions and indicators. |

**SECTION FOUR: ENGAGEMENT Engagement with individuals or organisations affected by the policy or proposal must take place**

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| **Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?** | Yes | |
| **If YES, please state who was engagement with.** | A survey was made available for people to complete via online and in paper form across the local area. The survey was promoted online via the Council's social media platforms and was shared with Local Community and Support Groups. Physical copies were also distributed across the area via local groups.  Extensive engagement was carried out during the development of the LHS including face to face consultation with Asylum Seekers, Young people, Homeless assessment centre residents, Older People's Group, Community Café and Food Pantry service users as well as Community Learning & Development's Young parent's group.  Opportunities to participate were also given to those resident in the Travelling Persons Site and service users of the Sensory Centre, Falkirk & Linlithgow Autism Support and LGBT Falkirk. | |
| **If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.** |  | |
| **How was the engagement carried out?** | | **What were the results from the engagement? Please list...** |
| **Focus Group** | Yes | Participants across the eight focus groups held highlighted a desire to see more social and affordable housing provided by Falkirk Council & Partners. The importance of Housing Options was highlighted as was the provision and promotion of adaptations services |
| **Survey** | Yes | 82% of respondents noted that it was Very Important or Important to build more affordable housing. 86% responded that building more home that meet people's changing needs was a priority. 93% want to see empty homes back in use. 88% places an importance on preventing homelessness, 81% thought it to be important to signpost clients to services to maximise income and benefits. 87% placed an importance on providing advice on housing adaptations  90% saw it important to promote technology (e.g., MECS, Home Safety Monitoring) to stay at home for longer. 83% noted that the providing advice on how to save energy at home was very important or important. |
| **Display / Exhibitions** | No |  |
| **User Panels** | No |  |
| **Public Event** | No |  |

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| **Other: please specify** | Details regarding the consultation was shared online via Falkirk Council's social media platform. Information was also shared via the local newspaper's social media outlets. Details of the survey and its availability were sent directly to Registered Tenants Organisations and Falkirk Council's People's Panel. Details were also sent directly to those who had previously taken part in Housing related consultation and had indicated a willingness to take part again. | |
| **Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?** | | No |
| **Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?** | | Yes |
| **Is further engagement recommended?** | | Yes / No |

**SECTION FIVE: ASSESSING THE IMPACT**

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| **Equality Protected Characteristics: What will the impact of implementing this proposal be on people who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 or are likely to be affected by the proposal / policy / project? This section allows you to consider other impacts, e.g. poverty, health inequalities, community justice, carers etc.** | | | | |
| **Protected Characteristic** | **Neutral Impact** | **Positive Impact** | **Negative Impact** | **Please provide evidence of the impact on this protected characteristic.** |
| **Age** |  |  |  | Between 2018 and 2028, the population of Falkirk is projected to increase from 160,340 to 165,462. This is an increase of 3.2%, which compares to a projected increase of 1.8% for Scotland as a whole.  Falkirk is projected to have the 11th highest population out of the 32 council areas in Scotland in 2028  The average age of the population of Falkirk is projected to increase as the baby boomer generation ages and more people are expected to live longer. An increase of 13.5% (2308) in the 65-74 age group and a 29% (3755) expected to be noted in the 75+ age group.  This is likely to have implications for social care, health, housing and leisure services. It will also mean demand for purpose-built housing to meet the needs of the aging population. It is likely that most older people wish to remain in their own home for as long as possible. It will also mean an increase in the demand for adaptations to be made to existing housing.  The New LHS will have a commitment to supplying new homes that will be future proof and will meet the changing needs of people. Consultation results highlighted the importance of this amongst those aged 65+.The significance of providing specialist housing advice for those within the same age group with disabilities was also noted.  Younger people (16-24) are often difficult to engage with, but two focus groups were held at the Link Academy facility and with Community Learning's Young Parents group to obtain their views on housing in Falkirk. The main issues raised were affordability, cost of living and the availability or Social Housing and appropriate housing options. |

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| **Public Sector Equality Duty: Scottish Public Authorities must have ‘due regard’ to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance quality of opportunity and foster good relations. Scottish specific duties include:** | | | | |
|  |  |  |  | Falkirk Council’s increasing digitisation of services, ensuring the elderly can still  access services is a major challenge Falkirk Council must overcome.  Also, Some individuals may lack the necessary proficiency or assurance to navigate the web or operate electronic devices. Older households tend to be less equipped with broadband services. This is believed to stem from a preference among older individuals to utilise traditional methods of communication and obtaining information/services. |
| **Disability** |  |  |  | The LHS is committed to ensure that all new builds are designed to meet the standard of varying needs thus ensuring that new builds are suitably designed for people as they more through life.  The LHS is committed to building adapted/wheelchair accessible properties during the course of LHS4  To coincide with the aging population, it is estimated that an increase in demand on the adaptation services is inevitable and will lead to people being able to live at home comfortably and for longer. |
| **Sex** |  |  |  | Commitments to increasing the number of affordable housing in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics  HL1 statistics show that single males are overrepresented in homeless applications. Falkirk Councils current Housing Options are equipped to provide advice and information on each applicant’s personal circumstances. |

Due to the significant percentage of elderly not using the internet, coupled with

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| **Ethnicity** |  |  |  | Increasing new affordable housing, ensuring the correct support is available to people who require it, providing up to date housing options information, tackling fuel poverty, driving up standards in the private sector and improving our estates will no result in any negative impact on these protected characteristic.  Overall the LHS is designed to benefit all protected characteristics and it is anticipated there will be neutral impact for the protected characteristics listed above |
| **Religion / Belief / non-Belief** |  |  |  | Commitments to increasing the number of affordable housing and improve services in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics |
| **Sexual Orientation** |  |  |  | Commitments to increasing the number of affordable housing and improve services in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics. |
| **Transgender** |  |  |  | Commitments to increasing the number of affordable housing and improve services in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics |
| **Pregnancy / Maternity** |  |  |  | Commitments to increasing the number of affordable housing and improve services in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics |
| **Marriage / Civil Partnership** |  |  |  | Commitments to increasing the number of affordable housing and improve services in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics |
| **Poverty** |  |  |  | The Cost of Living, poverty and increased energy costs were a concern noted throughout the consultation process.  The LHS is committed to reducing fuel poverty and increasing the energy efficiency of homes in the Falkirk Council area. The initiatives and resources available are targeted towards households identified in fuel poverty hotspots detailed in the LHS.  This commitment will benefit households by providing the necessary advice, grants and initiatives to reduce bills, improve the warmth of their accommodation and lift residents out of fuel poverty.  Low-income households are more prone to struggle with paying for a broadband connection, signing a contract, and acquiring the necessary equipment for internet access. |

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| **Care Experienced** |  | |  |  | Commitments to increasing the number of affordable housing and improve services in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics |
| **Other, health, community justice, carers etc.** |  | |  |  | Commitments to increasing the number of affordable housing and improve the quality of homes and services in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics |
| **Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)** | The LHS is designed to make available affordable housing and increase housing options for people in the local area.  The Cost-of-Living Crising and Covid-19 pandemic and recovery have all had an impact on the residents of the Council area in particular the local economy, jobs and household finances which has a direct impact on housing. | | | | |
|  | | **Evidence of Due Regard** | | | |
| **Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):** | |  | | | |
| **Advance Equality of Opportunity:** | | Actions to target specific groups to raise awareness of services e.g. Fuel Poverty assistance, Adaptations services | | | |
| **Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):** | |  | | | |

**SECTION SIX: PARTNERS / OTHER STAKEHOLDERS**

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| **Which sectors are likely to have an interest in or be affected by the proposal / policy / project?** | | **Describe the interest / affect.** |
| **Business** | Yes | Important to ensure there is a good choice of various all tenure housing options available to make Falkirk Council a more attractive place for people to want to reside and work |
| **Councils** | Yes | Insight into the challenges facing Councils and how they are tackling them |
| **Education Sector** | No |  |
| **Fire** | No |  |
| **NHS** | Yes | The NHS is represented in the IJB which is responsible for planning, resourcing and the operational oversight of a wide range of health and social care services which overlap with housing |
| **Integration Joint Board** | Yes | The NHS is represented in the IJB which is responsible for planning, resourcing and the operational oversight of a wide range of health and social care services which overlap with housing |
| **Police** | No |  |
| **Third Sector** | Yes | Many different types of organisations from the Third Sector are involved in the delivery of housing and support services to people so that people have choice in the services that can support them to maintain independent living. It is important the third sector is an equal partner in the development of the LHS and that effective partnership across health, social care and the third sector is embedded and sustained into the future to provide the right advice and support to enable people to make informed decisions about their housing as they age or their circumstance change.  Registered Social Landlords (RSL) Housing Services  Third Sector Private Developers  Health and Social Care Reform Private Sector  Scottish Government  There is 16 RSLs in the Falkirk area with amenity, sheltered or very sheltered housing stock covering approximately 500 properties and 3,500 mainstream properties. Our partnership working with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) contributes to the joint funding of projects in the SHIP and determining the number of new builds. This partnership is necessary to ensure that any future housing developments include a variety of house types and sizes, reflecting local community needs |

while encourage new models of housing that enable older people to maintain their independence in the community and are fully adaptable to meet the changing life needs of tenants.

The Council’s Housing Services in currently provides a wide range of Housing Options to anyone with a housing issue/need. Accessing high quality information and advice services will be vital to ensuring people of all ages have access to the right housing and support.

It is crucial Private Developers liaise with the Council to ensure that they build homes which are suited to the changing needs of households. Developers should be encouraged to build to the Lifetime Homes standard to ensure that properties are flexible and adaptable. Lifetime Homes are designed to create and encourage better living environments for everyone from raising small children to coping with illness or dealing with reduced mobility in later life.

The Private Sector Housing is committed to ensuring better communication with tenants and landlords, robust enforcement procedures, effective repairs and maintenance solutions in order to drive up standards in the private sector to encourage peoples to consider the private rental sector as a viable option.

Private Developers ensure new builds can accommodate the variety of needs across the lifetime of the occupants as evidence suggests people want to remain in their homes as they age and want to remain as independent as possible.

Partnership involves local authorities and housing associations, as well as private and voluntary sector providers. All have a vested interest in LHS to ensure older people have choice in the services that can support them to maintain

independent living. Most elderly people prefer to live independently in their own home, rather than entering institutional or hospital care, and the Scottish Government wishes to deliver health and social care in the community. This suggests there will be a growing demand for appropriate servicing and adaptation of the existing housing stock to incorporate wheelchair friendly and other facilities to allow this.

Planning has a role to play in regards to LHS as they are responsible for developing the Local Development Plan (LDP) which is used to identify suitable land for new builds and grant planning applications. Planning will also look at potential projects to make sure there are no issues with sites, for example flooding, reduction in open space, building restrictions, listed buildings which may be renovated and impact on wildlife.

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|  |  | The Scottish Government need to be satisfied that each Local Authority are addressing the issues, concerns and demand for housing within their communities linking their LHS with SOA and overall strategic aims of the Scottish Government. |
| **Other(s): please list and describe the nature of**  **the relationship / impact.** | Additional advice and support services will assist in progressing some of the priorities and actions to provide advice and assistance relating to specialist housing options and support. | |

**Mitigating Actions: If you have identified impacts on protected characteristic groups in Section 5 please summarise these in the table below detailing the actions you are taking to mitigate or support this impact. If you are not taking any action to support or mitigate the impact you should complete the No Mitigating Actions section below instead.**

**SECTION SEVEN: ACTION PLANNING**

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| **Identified Impact** | **To Who** | **Action(s)** | **Lead Officer** | **Evaluation and Review Date** | **Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes** |
| The EPIA demonstrates the proposal is robust; there is no potential for discrimination and opportunities to promote equality have been taken. All priorities, outcomes and actions in the LHS are designed to contribute towards improving the communities for everyone. | N/A | N/A | N/A | 06/09/2022 | N/A |

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| **Identified Impact** | **To Who** | **Action(s)** | **Lead Officer** | **Evaluation and Review Date** | **Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes** |
| The New LHS will have a commitment to supplying new homes that will be future proof and will meet the changing needs of people. Consultation results highlighted the importance of this amongst those aged 65+.The significance of providing specialist housing advice for those within the same age group with disabilities was also noted.  There is also a need to raise awareness of adaptations and streamline the process for applying for disabled adaptations whilst also reducing timescales.  Raising awareness will also help to support people living in their homes for longer, increasing suitability | Older people or those who require adaptations to existing homes | LHS Priority 4 - Housing & Support for vulnerable groups. LHS Priority 6 Improving Housing Conditions. All relevant actions are listed within the LHS | Disabled Adaptations are carried out for the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) by the housing service.  The costs being transferred to the Integration Joint Board’s budget from Falkirk Council’s housing revenue account | 09/03/2023 | Local Housing Strategy, Strategic Housing Investment Plan, Local Development Plan |

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| **Identified Impact** | **To Who** | **Action(s)** | **Lead Officer** | **Evaluation and Review Date** | **Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes** |
| Initiatives and resources available are targeted towards households identified in fuel poverty hotspots detailed in the LHS.  This commitment will benefit households by providing the necessary advice, grants and initiatives to reduce bills, improve the warmth of their accommodation and lift residents out of fuel poverty. | Poverty/Fuel Poor | LHS Priority 5 - Tackling Climate Change, Energy Efficiency & Fuel Poverty. All relevant actions are listed within the LHS | Natalie Moore Young & Paul McLay and Carole Glass | 09/03/2023 | Local Housing Strategy, Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy, Climate Change Strategy |
| Raising awareness of housing options and increasing the number of affordable housing and sustainable private sector options will increase choices for all including single male homeless applicants. | Homeless applicants or those threatened with homelessness | LHS Priority 3 - Improving Access To Housing, LHS Priority 7 - Creating a sustainable Private rented sector.  All relevant actions are listed within the LHS | Laura Smith & Natalie Moore Young and Gail Lucas/Lesley Scaif | 09/03/2023 | Local Housing Strategy, Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan |
| New build developments that are of qualifying size (20 or more new homes) will include a % of affordable properties. | First time buyers. Young Buyers | LHS Priority 1 - Housing Delivery. Plans will ensure the delivery of both market and affordable housing | Natalie Moore Young | 28/03/2023 | Local Housing Strategy, Local Development Plan |

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| **Identified Impact** | **To Who** | **Action(s)** | **Lead Officer** | **Evaluation and Review Date** | **Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes** |
| Digital Inclusion - Develop and implement digital skills training programs for older residents or for those experiencing poverty or live in noted areas of deprivation. Explore opportunities to provide low cost equipment and training to develop, gain confidence and promote digital device use. | All who require internet access and/or skills development. | LHS Priority 4 - Support for vulnerable people, LHS priority 2 creating sustainable communities | Alan Christie, | 28/03/2023 | Digital Housing Strategy, Local Housing Strategy, Tenant Participation Strategy. Digital Inclusion Strategy |
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**No Mitigating Actions**

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| **Please explain why you do not need to take any action to mitigate or support the impact of your proposals.** | |
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| **Are actions being reported to Members?** | Yes |
| **If yes when and how ?** | Committee report being provided to Members, highlighting the outcomes of consultation and the mechanism in place via the LHS i.e Affordable Housing Options, Housing Supply Targets (All Tenure) and Specialist Housing Advice, Reducing Fuel Poverty. |

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| **SECTION EIGHT: ASSESSMENT OUTCOME** | | |
| **Only one of following statements best matches your assessment of this proposal / policy / project. Please select one and provide your reasons.** | | |
| **No major change required** | Yes | Increasing affordable housing, ensuring the correct support is available to all people who require it, providing up to date specialist housing options information, tackling climate change and fuel poverty, driving up housing standards in both the social and private sector whilst also improving our estates will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics. |
| **The proposal has to be adjusted to reduce impact on protected characteristic groups** | No |  |
| **Continue with the proposal but it is not possible to remove all the risk to protected characteristic groups** | No |  |
| **Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation** | No |  |

**SECTION NINE: LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF**

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| **Lead Officer:** | | | |
| **Signature:** | Ross Allan | **Date:** | 07/03/2023 |

**SECTION TEN: EPIA TASK GROUP ONLY**

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| **OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA: Has the EPIA demonstrated the use of data, appropriate engagement, identified mitigating actions as well as ownership and appropriate review of actions to confidently demonstrate compliance with the general and public sector equality duties?** | | | Yes |
| **ASSESSMENT FINDINGS**  **If YES, use this box to highlight evidence in support of the assessment of the EPIA**  **If NO, use this box to highlight actions needed to improve the EPIA** | Qualitative and Quantitative assessments and survey. | | |
| **Where adverse impact on diverse communities has been identified and it is intended to continue with the proposal / policy / project, has justification for continuing without making changes been made?** | Yes | If YES, please describe:  The assessment demonstrates that relevant actions are in place within the LHS to address the impacts highlighted. | |

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| **LEVEL OF IMPACT: The EPIA Task Group has agreed the following level of impact on the protected characteristic groups highlighted within the EPIA** | | |
| **LEVEL** | | **COMMENTS** |
| **HIGH** | Yes / No |  |
| **MEDIUM** | Yes / No |  |
| **LOW** | Yes |  |

**SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF**

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| **Director / Head of Service:** | | | |
| **Signature:** | Karen Algie | **Date:** | 01/09/2023 |