

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Assessment Title: EqIA for MKCC Housing Allocation Strategies

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Prepared by: Jeremy Beake, Corporate Policy, and Equality Manager

1. Introduction

This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) evaluates the proposed strategies by Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC) to enhance the housing allocation scheme. The assessment focuses on the impact of these strategies on specific groups, including people with disabilities, vulnerable women, ethnic minorities, and families experiencing child poverty.

2. Background

MKCC is facing a significant challenge with a growing backlog of housing applications and limited available properties. The decision to include individuals in refuges who have fled domestic abuse under Band A represents a proactive step towards supporting vulnerable women, yet the local connection requirement remains a barrier for some.

3. Objectives of the Strategies

- Streamline application processing to reduce backlog.
- Increase the housing supply through partnerships and incentivization.
- Regularly review the allocation scheme to adapt to changing demographics.
- Enhance support services for applicants.
- Engage with the community to address housing needs collaboratively.

4. Impact Assessment

Strategy	Potential Positive Impacts	Potential Negative Impacts	Mitigation Measures
Streamlining Application Processing	- Faster processing could benefit all applicants, especially those in urgent need (e.g., families with children, vulnerable women).	- Changes may inadvertently disadvantage those less familiar with digital processes, including some older individuals or people with disabilities.	Alternative method supplied via a back-office application process for those who need additional support to apply to the housing register, and this is available to those less familiar with digital processes, including some older individuals or people with disabilities. We also work closely with Parish Councils and CAB to support those that need assistance.
Increasing Housing Supply	- More affordable housing options can directly alleviate child poverty and support vulnerable populations.	- Development projects may face opposition in certain areas, potentially leading to community tensions.	Engage with communities early in the planning stages to address concerns and emphasize benefits.
Regular Reviews of Allocation Scheme	- Keeping the scheme responsive can help address the specific needs of diverse groups more effectively.	- Frequent changes may create confusion among applicants regarding their status and entitlements.	Clearly communicate any changes and provide support to help applicants understand new processes.

Strategy	Potential Positive Impacts	Potential Negative Impacts	Mitigation Measures
Enhanced Support Services	- Additional support can empower vulnerable women and families, ensuring they navigate the system more effectively.	- If support services are not accessible (e.g., language barriers), some groups may still struggle.	Offer services in multiple languages and formats to cater to diverse needs.
Community Engagement	- Inclusive discussions can highlight the needs of marginalized groups, ensuring their voices are heard.	- Engagement processes may not reach all communities, particularly those who are less connected or aware of opportunities.	Use varied outreach methods (social media, local organizations) to ensure broad participation.

5. Specific Considerations for Target Groups

- **People with Disabilities:** Ensure that all application processes and housing options are fully accessible. This includes physical accessibility and clear communication.
- **Vulnerable Women:** The inclusion of those fleeing domestic abuse that have been assessed as high risk by a local MARAC or housed in a refuge in Band A is a positive step. Continued support and advocacy are crucial to address any remaining barriers.
- **Ethnic Minorities:** Engage with community leaders from diverse backgrounds to understand specific challenges and barriers faced by ethnic minorities in accessing housing.
- **Child Poverty:** Focus on creating family-friendly housing solutions, including larger units for families and proximity to schools and services.

6. Conclusion

The proposed strategies by MKCC present significant opportunities to address the housing needs of various vulnerable groups in Milton Keynes. However, careful consideration of potential negative impacts is necessary to ensure equitable access to housing. By implementing the recommended mitigation measures, MKCC can enhance the effectiveness of its housing allocation scheme while promoting equality and opportunity for all residents.

7. Recommendations

- Implement the proposed strategies with a commitment to accessibility and inclusivity
- Continuously monitor and evaluate the impact of these strategies on target groups.
- Establish feedback mechanisms to ensure ongoing community engagement and response to changing needs.

