

Housing Tenancy Conversions

Department

Regeneration and Growth

Person Responsible

Chris Trowell

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Impact Assessment Data

5. What effects could your policy have on different equality groups and on cohesion and good relations?

5.1 Age (select all that apply)

- Neutral

The first attached chart shows the age and gender of heads of household. The majority are between 30 and 49, with a small number of people over 60 and none under 20. Households likely to be worst affected by the proposal are those liable to the OBC, which does not apply to people over working age. Older people are therefore unlikely to be disproportionately affected. The impact is therefore assessed as neutral as far as heads of household are concerned, although it should be stressed that when dependents are taken into account (see below) there is potential for a negative impact.

The second chart shows the ages of dependents (in this case, children or others under 21). In the 245 households for whom data is available there are 1038 individuals, 610 of whom are under 21.

Households with children, particularly those occupying larger properties, are more likely to be affected by the OBC. There is therefore a risk that children and young people could be affected if households are obliged to commit a higher proportion of income to rent.

5.2 Disability (select all that apply)

- Neutral

Only one main applicant is recorded as having a disability. No other occupiers have indicated a disability.

In general, disabled households may be more likely to be unemployed, receiving benefits or on low incomes. As noted above, in this case as in others tenants will be contacted individually to discuss the impact of the proposal and agree an appropriate solution.

5.3 Gender identity and expression (select all that apply)

- Unknown

There is insufficient data to provide any analysis.

5.4 Marriage and civil partnership (select all that apply)

- Unknown

There is insufficient data to provide any analysis.

5.5 Pregnancy and maternity (select all that apply)

- Unknown

There is insufficient data to provide any analysis.

5.6 Race (select all that apply)

- Negative

The attached chart shows the ethnicity of all residents (not only heads of household).

Black African and Black Caribbean households are over-represented in the overall homeless population and therefore also in the cohort affected by this proposal. These groups and some others, particularly Asian households, are generally more likely to form larger households and therefore more likely to be subject to the OBC. White Other households are a growing segment of the homeless population, although not particularly likely to form large households. White UK households are under-represented.

There is therefore a risk that certain groups will face a disproportionate impact.

5.7 Religion or belief (select all that apply)

- Neutral

Only three of all heads of household and only 44 of all residents have indicated a religious belief. There is therefore insufficient data to carry out any analysis. As in the case of sexual orientation, there is no specific evidence to suggest that religion or belief will be a significant factor in this proposal.

5.8 Sex (select all that apply)

- Negative

Of 245 heads of household, 165 (67.3%) are female, 79 (32.2%) male and one unknown. This is generally in line with the over-representation of women among homeless households and those affected by the OBC. Given that women also, on average, are lower earners, it is likely that they will be disproportionately affected by the proposal.

5.9 Sexual orientation (select all that apply)

- Neutral

There is insufficient data to provide any analysis. Of 245 heads of household, only 10 (just over 4% of the total) provided any information, eight stating they were heterosexual and 2 preferring not to say.

Having said this, it is not anticipated that sexuality would be a significant factor governing any potential negative impact or that any impact for any particular sexual orientation would be significantly different, since this will depend mainly on income.

5.10 Other (please specify) (select all that apply)

- Unknown

There is insufficient data to provide any analysis.

6. Please provide a brief summary of any research or engagement initiatives that have been carried out to formulate your proposal.

What did you find out from consultation or data analysis?

Were the participants in any engagement initiatives representative of the people who will be affected by your proposal?

How did your findings and the wider evidence base inform the proposal?

The proposal is based primarily on financial projections for the PFI project, which relies on rental income to deliver on budget.

Data on affected households has been collected through routine monitoring and surveys not specifically related to the proposal.

There has been no relevant consultation to date. Findings from data analysis are set out above and in the report to Cabinet.

As noted above, the proposal is driven by the financial impact for the council of changes to the welfare system that have adversely affected the viability of the PFI scheme. The proposal is necessary to ensure that the council's fiduciary duty is fulfilled.

7. Could any of the impacts you have identified be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?

- No

Not applicable.

8. What actions will you take to enhance any potential positive impacts that you have identified?

As noted above, a key positive aspect of the PFI scheme is the opportunity it provides for tenants to make their temporary home into a permanent one, ensuring stability and minimising the disruption associated with frequent moves between temporary homes. In addition to the priorities outlined below, tenants who choose to do so will be able to opt to convert their existing temporary tenancy to a permanent one at a Discounted Market Rent.

9. What actions will you take to remove or reduce any potential negative impacts that you have identified?

As noted above, a process has been proposed through which tenants whose properties will be converted to Discounted Market Rents will be identified. This is intended to prioritise those who are least likely to be affected by the OBC, as follows:

• Working households

• Other households exempt from the benefit cap including ASC nominees

• Smaller properties by earliest date of homelessness acceptance

This will mean that those most likely to face a negative impact will have more time. However, it should be stressed that the proposal will eventually affect all households, except for the 72 one bedroom units, which will be converted to Affordable Rent for five years.

In the interim, all homeless households, including those affected by the proposal, are being encouraged to bid for permanent accommodation elsewhere in the council or housing association stock, with 80% of lettings this year designated to the homeless as part of the wider drive to reduce temporary accommodation use. Many of the affected households will therefore have the opportunity, over the next three years, to bid for alternative homes rather than remain and convert to Discounted Market Rent. This will also provide an opportunity for the council to allocate any void properties appropriately to households unlikely to be adversely impacted by higher rent levels.

Officers will contact affected households individually to explain the proposal and identify the options available.

In addition and as noted above, further work is already underway to obtain more detailed and up to date data on households currently resident, to inform further analysis that will in turn support decisions over additional action to be taken.

10. Please explain the justification for any remaining negative impacts.

Subject to the mitigation measures noted above, the proposal is necessary to avoid a significant financial loss to the council. Ultimately, an offer of a property at a Discounted Market Rent would be considered reasonable in discharging the council's duty to a homeless household, but effort will be made to ensure that appropriate solutions are found for all affected households.