

Annex 2

Temporary Accommodation Reform Plan Cabinet Report March 2016

Equality Analysis – Screening - Online EA System

Stage 1 Screening Data

1. What are the objectives and expected outcomes of your proposal? Why is it needed? Make sure you highlight any proposed changes.

Brent has one of the highest numbers of households in Temporary Accommodation (TA) in England. Although the borough has been successful in reducing numbers recently, against the overall London trend, and has managed to dramatically reduce the number of households in Bed & Breakfast accommodation during 2015/16, there are still too many households in temporary accommodation which is inadequate for their needs, and the needs of their children.

In the context of budget reductions and the council's financial priorities, the proposal seeks to increase the quantity and quality and reduce the cost of temporary and permanent accommodation provided to households to whom the council owes a homelessness duty. It also aims to reduce the number of permanent social lettings made to homeless households, who currently make up 80% of such lettings, to meet other priority housing needs among households on the Needs Register.

Specifically, the proposal aims to:

- Roll Out of the “Find Your Home” programme, which aims to prevent homelessness by intervening early and empowering households threatened with homelessness to access PRS accommodation in areas they can afford.
- Making all Stage 1 short term temporary accommodation self contained by planned development of identified sites in Brent.
- Improved procurement of PRS accommodation to prevent homelessness or end a homelessness duty, including by external commissioning and through a pilot project with other West London boroughs.
- Acquisition of a large portfolio of long term PRS accommodation in which to be able to accommodate households who have been homeless at LHA rates into the future
- Development of new build LHA rent PRS accommodation inside and outside Brent.
- Development of a more integrated package to assist housing needs clients into employment.
- Enhanced resettlement services in the main areas where the council is placing homeless households.

Identified benefits include:

- Overall, better quality more secure accommodation for homeless households closer to Brent
- Homelessness prevention and private rented rehousing form the bulk of Housing Options service
- Estimated 40% reduction in Temporary accommodation between March 2015 and March 2019.
- All Stage 1 TA self contained and within Brent and revenue positive for the council
- No use of B&B or hostels with shared facilities, hotel annexes or other nightly paid accommodation
- Acquired existing stock and new-build LHA rent PRS portfolio in Brent and the home counties offering long-term well-managed tenancies
- Around 200 to 300 RP managed properties for PRSO/prevention across London
- Proportion of Brent social housing allocations to homeless households reduced from 80% to around 55%
- Reduction in annual non-staffing costs of the Housing Needs service of over 75% (£2.5M) by 2018/19 compared to do nothing projection.

Who is affected by the proposal? Consider residents, staff and external stakeholders.

The proposal primarily affects households currently in temporary accommodation awaiting suitable permanent accommodation and households applying as homeless in future and other households on the Needs Register.

There is also some effect on a limited number of staff responsible for procurement of PRS housing.

3.1 Could the proposal impact on people in different ways because of their equality characteristics?

Some protected groups are over-represented among homeless households. This is partly due to the criteria through which priority need is established under the relevant legislation: for example, a household may be regarded as being in priority need owing to age, to a physical disability or mental health condition or to pregnancy. It is also an effect of poverty and disadvantage: some ethnic groups, for example Black Africans, are over-represented among homeless households compared to their presence in the general population.

3.2 Could the proposal have a disproportionate impact on some equality groups? If you answered 'Yes' please indicate which equality characteristic(s) are impacted

Given the profile of homeless households noted above, households with certain protected characteristics may be affected disproportionately. However, the impact is expected to be positive since the proposal will improve the quality and security of temporary accommodation.

3.3 Would the proposal change or remove services used by vulnerable groups of people?

The proposal will change services used by vulnerable groups but, as noted above, the change is expected to result in improved services.

3.4 Does the proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?

Yes – see above.

3.5 Is the proposal likely to be sensitive or important for some people because of their equality characteristics?

Yes – see above.

3.6 Does the proposal relate to one of Brent's equality objectives?

The proposal relates to the following objectives:

- To know and understand all our communities
- To ensure that local public services are responsive to different needs and treat users with dignity and respect
- To develop and sustain a skilled and committed workforce able to meet the needs of all local people.

Recommend this EA for Full Analysis?

Yes. Although it is anticipated that the impact of the proposal will be broadly positive, further investigation and analysis is needed to ensure that the full implications of the change are understood and any possible negative impacts are identified and addressed.

It should be stressed that the proposal is made in the context of the council's policy that the principal means through which full homelessness duties are met will be through an offer of private rented housing, in line with the powers granted under the Localism Act. This policy was subject to a full equalities analysis at the time of its adoption and this aspect is therefore not considered further in relation to this proposal. The focus of analysis will be on the specifics of the current proposal, as set out in section 1 above.

4. Use the comments box below to give brief details of what further information you will need to complete a Full Equality Analysis. What information will give you a full picture of how well the proposal will work for different groups of people? How will you gather this information? Consider engagement initiatives, research and equality monitoring data.

Full analysis will require the following:

- Profile of the characteristics of households in temporary accommodation
- Profile of homelessness approaches and acceptances
- Profile of Needs Register applications
- Profile of staff impacted by potential contract changes
- Analysis of outcomes from Find Your Home project