

EQUALITY ANALYSIS (EA)

POLICY/PROPOSAL:	Retendering of the Housing Association Leasing Scheme
DEPARTMENT:	Partnerships and Housing
TEAM:	Housing Needs & Support
LEAD OFFICER:	Saleema Nuraney
DATE:	10-01-2025

SECTION A – INITIAL SCREENING

1. Please provide a description of the policy, proposal, change or initiative, and a summary its objectives and the intended results.

This equalities analysis is on the retendering of the Housing Association Leasing Scheme as the current contract expires on 31 Jul 2025. This procurement exercise is designed to retain existing stock and provide a sufficient supply of temporary accommodation (TA) to meet demand from homeless households, to allow the council to move away from the use of expensive and less desirable nightly paid accommodation and to enable the placement of households in or closer to Brent.

The Council has a statutory duty to provide suitable temporary accommodation to homeless persons who are eligible, unintentionally homeless and have a priority need for accommodation under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). The HAL Scheme is used to provide temporary accommodation for homeless families.

There is currently an acute shortage of affordable private rented sector accommodation across London which has been falling due to a highly inflated rental market where landlords are able to secure and charge higher rents. This has impacted Brent's ability to gain access to private rented properties in Brent and outside of Brent for discharge of the Council's statutory homeless duties.

While the Council has emergency Temporary Accommodation (TA) schemes designed to accommodate statutory homeless households, such as Anansi House and Knowles House, these are already operating at full capacity with very limited potential to move these households into affordable private rented accommodation to end the homeless duty. As a result, alternative accommodation needs to be secured to try to meet current and expected demand

The Council contracts with the Housing Associations to source suitable housing for homeless families. The Housing Associations source suitable properties and enter into head leases with the property owners, generally for a 3 year term. The Council is provided with nomination rights in order that the Council can nominate tenants to properties made available by the Housing Associations. The tenants enter into an assured short hold tenancy with the Housing Associations and pay rent (generally via Housing Benefit paid to homeless families). The Housing Associations provide management and maintenance services which are covered by the rent. The Council pays a weekly nomination fee to the relevant Housing Association for each property. There are minimum property standards and furniture standards specified by the Council, and the Housing Associations have to provide a high-quality housing management service. Performance is monitored through performance indicators and regular monitoring meetings.

The principal aim of the HAL scheme is to:

- Continue to meet the housing need for eligible, homeless persons with a priority need for whom the Council has a statutory duty to provide suitable TA under part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).
- Meet housing need through provision of appropriate affordable housing
- Make best use of leased accommodation to meet housing need
- To specify the affordability thresholds to be complied with by Contractors when setting rents
- Encourage Housing providers to pay full regard to the affordability of TA
- Promote a consistent approach to the letting and management of TA in the borough
- To retain and acquire good quality and affordable TA has also increased

2. Who may be affected by this policy or proposal?

The proposed approach is expected to directly benefit homeless families who have approached the Council and are eligible for suitable accommodation. The families are from various ethnic backgrounds and include those who may not have English as their first language as well as those who do.

3. Is there relevance to equality and the council's public sector equality duty? Please explain why. If your answer is no, you must still provide an explanation.

Yes. This is a statutory service to meet the needs of homeless people in Brent. They must have "due regard" to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a "protected characteristic" and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation

4. Please indicate with an "X" the potential impact of the policy or proposal on groups with each protected characteristic. Carefully consider if the proposal will impact on people in different ways as a result of their characteristics.

Characteristic	Impact Positive	Impact Neutral/None	Impact Negative
Age		x	
Sex		x	
Race		x	
Disability *		x	
Sexual orientation		x	
Gender reassignment		x	
Religion or belief		x	
Pregnancy or maternity	x		
Marriage		x	

5. Please complete **each row** of the checklist with an “X”.

Screening Checklist

	YES	NO
Have you established that the policy or proposal <i>is</i> relevant to the council’s public sector equality duty?	x	
Does the policy or proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?		x
Would the policy or proposal change or remove services used by vulnerable groups of people?		x
Has the potential for negative or positive equality impacts been identified with this policy or proposal?		x

If you have answered YES to ANY of the above, then proceed to section B.

If you have answered NO to ALL of the above, then proceed straight to section D.

SECTION B – IMPACTS ANALYSIS

- Outline what information and evidence have you gathered and considered for this analysis. If there is little, then explain your judgements in detail and your plans to validate them with evidence. If you have monitoring information available, include it here.

<p>The information used for this analysis is taken from the Housing Northgate database as at January 2025 and consists of households currently residing in HALS accommodation over 22/23 and 23/24 which is a total of 549 households.</p>
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2. For each “protected characteristic” provide details of all the potential or known impacts identified, both positive and negative, and explain how you have reached these conclusions based on the information and evidence listed above. Where appropriate state “not applicable”.

AGE

Details of impacts identified	<p>Neutral impact. Households will not be discriminated against because of their age. Services can be accessed by adults over 18. 21 responses were blank. Where a response was captured, analysis indicates that the greatest number of main applicants accessing the service are aged between 41 - 50 as they make up 35% of households in HALS TA.</p> <p>21-30 (30 individuals, 6%) 31-40 (133 individuals, 25%) 41-50 (185 individuals, 35%) 51-60 (142 individuals, 27%) 61-91 (38 individuals, 7%)</p>
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DISABILITY

Details of impacts identified	<p>Neutral impact. Households will not be discriminated against because of their disability. The provision of accommodation is based on client need. Where adapted or single level accommodation is required, Providers are informed to procure suitable accommodation. Due to the shortage of adapted properties, preference is given to households who require properties that have been adapted or developed for people with a disability.</p> <p>Of the 455 responses captured, analysis indicates that all applicants 455 applicants stated they did not have a disability in their household. Applicants who have an illness or disability are required to complete a medical form and include as much detail as possible to enable an accurate assessment. Medical priority is awarded following an assessment and recommendation from the Council’s District Medical Officer (DMO). The DMOs recommendations are always taken into consideration before an offer of TA is made to the applicant. If the DMO has made a recommendation for a specific type of property e.g. ground floor or single level access accommodation but where none is available, accommodation with downstairs facilities are sought to meet the applicant’s housing need. This flexible approach is adopted largely due to the difficulties in procuring adapted properties to meet the needs of disabled applicants. Part of the tender evaluation will assess how Housing Associations ensure disabled clients are able to access service.</p> <p>Clients with learning disabilities, mental health issues, sensory or physical impairment are also able to access floating support either through a self referral or through a referral from the Council or the Housing Association.</p>
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	<p>The types of support offered are :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. helping families to access appropriate welfare benefits 2. helping people into education, training and employment 3. support with finding debt-cancelling agencies where applicable 4. support with finding appropriate agencies for physical and mental health needs 5. helping families to keep tenancies and prevent repeated homelessness 6. helping families reintegrate into the community 7. supporting people experiencing domestic violence 8. supporting families with social/cultural issues <p>They are also able to arrange interpreters where necessary and help clients liaise with various service e.g. mental health services, hospitals, GP, social services and schools to name a few.</p>
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RACE

<p>Details of impacts identified</p>	<p>Neutral impact. Households will not be discriminated against because of their race. Brent is one of the most diverse boroughs in London. A sensitive and flexible approach to meeting clients' needs is taken to ensure adequate and suitable provision is made.</p> <p>People from black and minority ethnic communities are more likely to be impacted because they are over-represented among homeless acceptances (compared to the general population).</p> <p>The majority of households who access TA are from BAME households (specifically the Black African community). Of the 294 responses captured, analysis indicates there are 42% of households in HALS TA from the Black community (African, Caribbean, Somalian, Other),</p> <p>42% Black community (African, Caribbean, Somalian, Other) 28% Asian community (Indian, Pakistani, Chinese, Bangladeshi, Other) 12% Any other ethnic background 11% White community (Irish, UK, Other) 4% Mixed 2% Arab community 1% Prefer not to say</p>
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SEX

Details of impacts identified	Neutral impact. Households will not be discriminated against because of their gender. Although the provision of accommodation through the HAL scheme is accessible by both men and women, of the 520 responses captured, analysis indicates that 69% of households in TA are headed by women whereas only 31% are headed by men.
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SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Details of impacts identified	Neutral impact. Households will not be discriminated against on the basis of their sexual orientation. Unfortunately there is insufficient data on this protected characteristic due to a lack of responses by clients.
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PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

Details of impacts identified	There will be a positive impact on households with children or pregnant mothers as only eligible families with children can access this service. Pregnancy is also classified as a priority need when determining if a household is eligible for assistance under the Housing Act 96 (as amended).
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RELIGION OR BELIEF

Details of impacts identified	<p>Neutral impact. Households will not be discriminated against on the basis of their religion or belief. Of the 76 responses captured, analysis indicates the majority of households are Muslim (39%).</p> <p>40% Muslim 31% no religion/Not stated 26% Christian 3% Other</p>
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GENDER REASSIGNMENT

Details of impacts identified	Neutral impact. We have no data on this protected characteristic. Households will not be discriminated against on the basis of gender reassignment. The Provider of the re-tendered services will be required to provide the council with monitoring data which will be reviewed for any evidence of barriers to access the services.
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MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

Details of impacts identified	Neutral impact. We have no data on this protected characteristic. Households will not be discriminated against on the basis of this protected characteristic.
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3. Could any of the impacts you have identified be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?

No

4. Were the participants in any engagement initiatives representative of the people who will be affected by your proposal and is further engagement required?

N/A

5. Please detail any areas identified as requiring further data or detailed analysis.

N/A

6. If, following your action plan, negative impacts will or may remain, please explain how these can be justified?

N/A

7. Outline how you will monitor the actual, ongoing impact of the policy or proposal?

There will be on-going performance monitoring via quarterly contract meetings held with the Providers and by reviewing their KPIs which are submitted on a monthly basis. The number of complaints will also be used as a monitoring mechanism to ensure customers have been treated fairly and have not experienced discrimination on the basis of any of the protected characteristics. Regular performance monitoring will ensure that the TA scheme does not operate in a manner that disadvantages or discriminates against any particular group

SECTION C - CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis above, please detail your overall conclusions. State if any mitigating actions are required to alleviate negative impacts, what these are and what the desired outcomes will be. If positive equality impacts have been identified, consider what actions you can take to enhance them. If you have decided to justify and continue with the policy despite negative equality impacts, provide your justification. If you are to stop the policy, explain why.

Overall the policy is intended to ensure availability of enough suitable accommodation for homeless households to allow the council to meet its duties at a cost that it can sustain and which are affordable to homeless households, against the background of an increasingly difficult housing market.

The policy is also intended to provide more certain and sustainable outcomes for homeless households and enable them to be accommodated within Brent. The offer of a temporary accommodation will mean that households can move into more settled accommodation that is affordable, enabling them to settle in a neighbourhood, engage with local services and opportunities and plan their futures with more certainty.

No negative impacts have been identified. The positive equality impacts which have been identified will remain due to the eligibility criteria of the households who can access the service.

Brent Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities in the delivery of all of its services and will seek to ensure that the HAL scheme is applied in a manner that is fair to all sections of the community regardless of their protected characteristic.

Brent Council and its partners will be responsive, accessible and sensitive to the needs of all applicants. They will not tolerate prejudice and discrimination and will actively promote equality.

The contract terms will ensure applicants placed by the Council receive the best possible service in accordance with their individual needs and requirements and there is a clear understanding of the relationship between the Council and the Provider.

The tender process will also include method statements which allow the panel to assess how well the Provider is able to meet our clients' needs. Bidders are required to demonstrate their experience by providing examples of how they will deal with tenancy and housing management issues. The panel will also be assessing Providers to ensure their staff are CRB checked.

The Council will allocate TA in line with Brent's TA Placement Policy which will ensure that everyone's housing need is met in a fair, consistent and non discriminatory manner.

The specification of the HALS contract will ensure that properties procured by Contractors will meet rigorous standards, including adhering to the "minimum property standard" as defined in the HALS specification.

The specification also includes Brent's commitment to Equality and Diversity in Procurement and states clearly the commitment we expect from Provider to promote equality and diversity, taking into account the needs of the people protected under the Equality Act 2010 in respect of the Protected Characteristics.

SECTION D – RESULT

Please select one of the following options. Mark with an "X".

A	CONTINUE WITH THE POLICY/PROPOSAL UNCHANGED	X
B	JUSTIFY AND CONTINUE THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	

C	CHANGE / ADJUST THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
D	STOP OR ABANDON THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	



SECTION E - ACTION PLAN

This will help you monitor the steps you have identified to reduce the negative impacts (or increase the positive); monitor actual or ongoing impacts; plan reviews and any further engagement or analysis required.

Action	Expected outcome	Officer	Completion Date

SECTION F – SIGN OFF

Please ensure this section is signed and dated.

OFFICER:	Saleema Nuraney Private Sector Initiatives and Projects Team Leader	
REVIEWING OFFICER: <i>* the manager with oversight of the project</i>	 Laurence Coaker Director, Housing Needs & Support	14/01/2025
HEAD OF SERVICE / Operational Director:	 Laurence Coaker Director, Housing Needs & Support	14/01/2025