

Stage 1: Equality Impact Assessment

1. What are the main aims purpose and outcomes of the Policy and how do these fit with the wider aims of the organization?

The Housing Strategy is an overarching plan that guides the council and its partners in tackling the major housing challenges facing the borough. It sets out the priorities and outcomes that we wish to achieve and provides a clear strategic vision and leadership.

The three priorities of the Strategy are:

Priority 1: Enable and support the delivery of quality homes across the housing market to develop sustainable communities

Priority 2: Ensure that existing housing in Maidstone Borough is safe, desirable and promotes good health and wellbeing

Priority 3: Prevent homelessness; secure the provision of appropriate accommodation for homeless households and supporting vulnerable people

The Strategy contributes to the council's corporate priorities for Maidstone 'to keep the Borough an attractive place for all and to secure a successful economy'.

2. How do these aims affect our duty to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the act.**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**
- **Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

The Housing Strategy potentially affects all sections of the borough's population.

Enabling and supporting the delivery of a range of quality homes, including affordable housing, promotes social inclusion. Mixed tenure housing can help close attainment gaps by raising peoples aspirations and therefore assists in advancing opportunity.

Access to a decent home has a direct effect on health and wellbeing and assists in establishing sustainable communities.

The proposed new Housing strategy has undertaken thorough consultation with all appropriate stakeholders to ensure that the final strategy is fair and transparent.

3. What aspects of the policy including how it is delivered or accessed could contribute to inequality?

The proposed strategy, when working alongside other relevant adopted plans and policies, should not contribute to inequality.

4. Will the policy have an impact (positive or negative) upon the lives of people, including particular communities and groups who have protected characteristics ? What evidence do you have for this?

It is the aim of the Housing Strategy to have a positive impact on the boroughs population as a whole, by improving access to quality homes and promoting good health and well-being; this includes people and groups who have protected characteristics.

The Housing strategy links in with the emerging Maidstone Local Plan 2011-2031.

Emerging policy 'DM23 – Housing mix,' in the draft Local Plan highlights that the key requirements for a mixed community are a variety of housing, particularly in terms of tenure and price, and a mix of different households such as families with children, single person households and older people.

Furthermore, emerging policy 'DM26 – Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation,' addresses the issues of the specific type of housing that the Council has a duty to provide for this client group under the Housing Act (2004).

There are no negative impacts foreseen.