

Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (from May 2012)

Section 1: Your details

EIA lead Officer: Michael Callon

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Head of Section: Michele Duerden

Chief Officer: Kevin Adderley, Strategic Director

Department: Regeneration & Environment

Date: 11/04/2013

Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?

Implementation of the Under Occupation Rule. This is a Phase 1 EIA undertaken at the point of the Scrutiny Review being reported to Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. A Phase 2 EIA will need to be completed pending the decision of Cabinet in respect of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review. It is at this stage that timescales and resource implications will be included.

Section 2b: Will this EIA be submitted to a Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

Yes / No

If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee 22nd April 2013.

Please add hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published on the Council's website (see your Departmental Equality Group Chair for appropriate hyperlink)

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Section 3: Does the proposal have the potential to affect..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- ✓ **Services**
- ✓ **The workforce**
- ✓ **Communities**
- ✓ **Other** (please state eg: Partners, Private Sector, Voluntary & Community Sector)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 4: Does the proposal have the potential to maintain or enhance the way the Council (please tick relevant boxes)

- ✓ Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ✓ Advances equality of opportunity
- ✓ Fosters good relations between groups of people

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 5.

- No** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 5:

Could the proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any potential negative impact.

Which group(s) of people could be affected	Potential positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
Tenants under occupying in Social Housing and/or in receipt of Housing Benefit	The under occupation rule will have a negative impact resulting in either a reduction in housing benefit or the upheaval of having to change accommodation with its associated financial and emotional costs. As such, there is particular concern for the most vulnerable tenants and the recommendations from the review reflect this and are translated into the proposed actions. The potential impact on particular protected groups i.e. those on low incomes or with a disability is referred to in the full scrutiny report to be considered by the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 nd April 2013. http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=530&MId=3909&Ver=4	The allocation of Discretionary Housing Payment should be based on well-defined and quantifiable criteria focussing on the most vulnerable groups and easily understood by applicants. Disabled tenants living in properties with major adaptations should be treated as a high priority within the Discretionary Housing Payment criteria.	Strategic Director of Transformation & Resources Strategic Director of Transformation & Resources		

		<p>Changes to the under occupation rules specifically affecting foster carers should be monitored. Consideration should be given to introducing an additional monthly fixed fee to foster carers, paid regardless of whether a child is in place to offset the cost of the under occupation rule for those foster carers affected.</p>	<p>Strategic Director of Families and Wellbeing.</p>		
<p>Social Housing Providers</p>	<p>The under occupation rule will have a negative impact increasing the risk of some tenants falling into arrears with rental payments and requiring an increase in resources towards debt management and recovery.</p>	<p>Consideration be given to ways in which mutual exchanges in the social housing sector can be encouraged.</p> <p>Discussions are undertaken with Registered Providers to determine whether a more joined-up approach could be employed regarding the marketing & promotion of downsizing services which are already available to tenants.</p> <p>Consideration be given to the enhancement of the Property Pool Plus (PPP) website to ensure that a benefits calculator and</p>	<p>Strategic Director for Regeneration & Environment</p> <p>Strategic Director for Regeneration & Environment</p> <p>Strategic Director for Regeneration & Environment</p>		

		<p>other relevant information is available at the time when tenants are applying for properties.</p> <p>Armed forces veterans should be allocated as band B on the PPP website.</p> <p>The Council should work in partnership with Registered Providers and Private Landlords to promote the importance of tenants paying rent.</p> <p>The principles of social overdraft schemes are investigated and the findings presented to Registered Providers.</p>	<p>Strategic Director for Regeneration & Environment</p> <p>Head of Neighbourhoods and engagement</p> <p>Strategic Director for Regeneration & Environment</p>		
The Council	<p>The under occupation rule will have an impact on the Council's services and the level of resources required to deliver those services in a number of areas. A range of actions are recommended to address areas where Council services are likely to experience more demand and where preventative activity may reduce demand further downstream.</p>	<p>All front line staff have access to an on-line toolkit of information to enable them to sign post clients to the most appropriate advice point for support.</p> <p>Training is offered to private landlords to explain the changes and how tenants will be affected. This should include Houses in Multiple Occupation and</p>	<p>Strategic Director of Transformation & Resources</p> <p>Strategic Director for Regeneration & Environment</p>		

		<p>regulations for shared accommodation.</p> <p>Adequate monitoring and enforcement action is taken to prevent establishment of illegal Houses in Multiple Occupation.</p> <p>In order to further prepare for Digital by Default and support the aims of the GO ON Wirral campaign, it is proposed a target is set for each library to recruit a minimum of five digital champions to provide support for clients.</p> <p>The Council leads a dialogue with local schools to encourage increased provision of education regarding financial management and budgeting. The Schools Forum could provide a useful mechanism for this dialogue.</p> <p>Discussions are held with Wirral Credit Union regarding the possibility of Credit Unions being established in schools in</p>	<p>Strategic Director for Regeneration & Environment</p> <p>Strategic Director of Transformation & Resources</p> <p>Strategic Director of Families and Wellbeing.</p> <p>Strategic Director of Families and Wellbeing.</p>		
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		<p>order to promote education regarding financial management and budgeting.</p> <p>The Housing Needs Assessment process takes account of the shortage of one-bedroom properties.</p> <p>The Council should act as a community leader to encourage the transfer of hard-to-let or empty properties to organisations such as the YMCA and the Veterans Centre with supporting finance from the Supporting People Project. Consideration should also be given to creative ideas such as self-repair projects.</p> <p>An evaluation regarding the impact of the under occupation rule be conducted by the appropriate Overview & Scrutiny Committee during spring 2014.</p>	<p>Strategic Director for Regeneration & Environment</p> <p>Strategic Director for Regeneration & Environment</p> <p>The Head of Policy & Performance / Director of Public Health.</p>		
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Section 5a: Where and how will the above actions be monitored?

These actions are aligned to the outcome of the Under Occupation Rule Scrutiny Review. Subject to Cabinet approval of the recommendations of the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, responsibility for monitoring the implementation of these actions will rest with the scrutiny committee.

Section 5b: If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?

N/A

Section 6: What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?

A detail scrutiny review has been undertaken which has included both primary and secondary research sources.

Section 7: Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council proposal?

Yes / No – (please delete as appropriate)

If 'yes' please continue to section 8.

If 'no' please state your reason(s) why:

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 8: How will consultation take place and by when?

Consultation has been undertaken as part of the Scrutiny Review process. Relevant officers and departments have been consulted on the contents of the final scrutiny report.

Before you complete your consultation, please email your preliminary EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal requirements. The EIA will be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 5. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for re-publishing.

Section 9: Have you remembered to:

- a) **Add appropriate departmental hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published (section 2b)**
- b) **Include any potential positive impacts as well as negative impacts? (section 5)**
- c) **Send this EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer?**
- d) **Review section 5 once consultation has taken place and sent your completed EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer for re-publishing?**