

South Cambridgeshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Introduction – Please read

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) allow the Council to:

- Show that the Council are meeting its legal duty, demonstrating due regard for the provisions of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) as below:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Methodically consider and assess the impacts of proposals across the [nine protected characteristics](#)
- Allow the Council to develop and implement high quality proposals that maximise positive outcomes for all.

EqIAs should be completed during the development and review of all Council policies, strategies, procedures, projects or functions. Where there is any doubt, the completion of an EqIA is always recommended.

When the form is completed, please send an electronic copy to equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk. Further support and guidance available on Insite or contact the Policy and Performance Team.

Equality Impact Assessment Complete Form

Section 1: Identifying Details

- 1.1 Officer completing EqIA:
Julie Fletcher
- 1.2 Team and Service:
Housing Strategy
- 1.3 Title of proposal:
Mutual Exchange Policy
- 1.4 EqIA start date:
25/05/2023
- 1.5 Proposal implementation date:
28/09/2023
- 1.6 Who will be responsible for implementing this proposal (Officer and/or Team):
Housing Neighbourhood Services

Section 2: Proposal to be Assessed

- 2.1 Type of proposal:
Policy
If other, please specify
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- 2.2 Is the proposal:
Review of existing
- 2.3 State the date of any previous equality impact assessment completed in relation to this proposal (if applicable):
27/06/2017
- 2.4 What are the headline aims of the proposal and the objectives that will help to accomplish these aims? (Max 250 words)

The aim of the Mutual Exchange Policy is to deliver the Council's Mutual Exchange scheme in line with government legislations and the relevant guidelines and, to apply the conditions for Mutual Exchange fairly and consistently across the board.

The SCDC Mutual Exchange Policy has the following objectives:

- ▶ To inform SCDC staff, residents and partners on how the scheme will operate, the eligibility criteria and grounds for refusals;
- ▶ To promote Mutual Exchange as an effective housing option for meeting housing needs;
- ▶ To improve mobility for social housing tenants in the district;
- ▶ To contribute to the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy priority for Promoting Health and Wellbeing through housing; and
- ▶ To ensure effective use of the Council's housing stock by enabling tenants move to accommodation suitable for their needs. This will help:
 - Address over-crowding and under-occupation in the Council's existing stock;
 - Address needs for adaptations and help release adapted homes;
 - Relieve pressure on the Council's Housing Register; and
 - Relieve pressure on health and care services.

2.5 Which of the Council's equality objectives (as detailed in the Council's Equality Scheme) does this proposal link to or help to achieve?

- Identify, prioritise and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community
- SCDC is an employer that values difference and recognises the strength that a diverse workforce brings.

- Protected characteristic groups have a voice and are represented in forming the future shape of the district.
- None.

2.6 Which groups or individuals will the proposal affect:

- Service Users
- External Stakeholders
- Employees
- Councillors
- Other

If other, please specify [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

2.7 Broadly speaking, how will these groups or individuals be affected? (you will be asked to provide more detail on the specific impacts on different protected characteristic groups later in the form) (max 250 words)

Mutual Exchange provides a host of benefits for tenants and the Council alike. The process helps tenants to meet their housing needs, move closer to work, family members and/or specific services. It can also help improve health and well-being. For many tenants, Mutual Exchange provides the only realistic opportunity for them to move from their current home. It also provides a quicker way of finding alternative accommodation especially for housing applicants who are on low priority or in need of accommodation for which there is a long waiting list.

The policy meets Social Housing Regulator expectations by subscribing to an online mutual exchange service allowing free access to SCDC tenants to find potential matches. Help with access will also be provided to tenants who do not have access to the internet. Although mutual exchanges are primarily tenant-led, the Council may provide additional and reasonable support to tenants unable to carry out mutual exchange without assistance. Type of support will be decided on a case-by-case basis.



- 2.8 If any part of the proposal is being undertaken by external partners, please specify how the Council will ensure that they will meet equality standards?
(Max 250 words)
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Section 3: Evidence and Data

- 3.1 Describe any work you have done (this could include consultation) to understand any effects on groups of people, including those within [9 protected characteristic groups?](#) Please list any key sources (e.g. web-search, previous versions of document, customer feedback etc) that you used to reach your conclusions.
(Max 250 words)

The residents Housing Engagement Board has been involved throughout the review process and revision of the Policy. A desktop research was undertaken to identify Top 10 Local Authorities delivering the most Mutual Exchanges to identify best practice. Local Authorities in the HouseMark peer group were also invited to complete a questionnaire on Mutual Exchange. To learn from service user experiences, a questionnaire was sent to tenants who completed mutual exchange since the publication of the current policy in January 2020.

- 3.2 If you have not undertaken any consultation, please detail why not, or when consultation is planned to take place.
(Max 250)
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Section 4: Impact of proposal on those with protected characteristics

- 4.1 Please select all characteristics that may or will be impacted (positive or negative). When providing details of the impact please consider the following questions

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. (both the number of persons affected and the severity of the impact)
- you will be asked to set out actions to manage these impacts in the following question (4.2)

All - general to all protected Characteristics.

Details:

Age

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Disability

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Gender reassignment

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Pregnancy and maternity

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Race

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Religion and belief

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Sex

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Sexual orientation

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Other (socio economic, rural isolation, covid)

Details [Mutual Exchange schemes are tenant-led. Those seeking to exchange are responsible for finding their potential exchange partners, carry out checks to the property they would like to move to and make the arrangements for the actual move.](#)

However, tenants may need support if have no access to IT or internet to find potential exchange partners and complete online forms. They will be made aware of where to access IT e.g. libraries, council offices.

SCDC will also provide additional and reasonable support to tenants who are unable to manage independently with using any Mutual Exchange service the Council provides. Support will be based on individual need and on a case-by-case basis.

This may include:

- Access to a computer
- Explaining how the mutual exchange service works
- Assistance to navigate the online mutual exchange service
- Registering and searching for matches on behalf of a tenant.

None of the above

4.2 Considering the above impacts you have identified above, please detail any actions (specific or general) which may help to enhance or mitigate impacts.

Please include the timescale for completing the action.

Action and timescale	Officer
Forms available on printed format to download or on request for tenants with no access to internet or IT	Housing Services Team/ December 2023
IT available in SCDC premises	Housing Services Team/ December 2023
Additional and reasonable support based on individual need. The type of support provided will be based on a case-by-case basis.	Housing Services Team/ December 2023

Include equalities monitoring questions in the Mutual Exchange Application Form	Housing Services Team/ December 2023
Set performance indicators and regularly monitor the scheme against policy aim and objectives	Housing Services Team/ December 2023

4.3 How will you monitor that the above actions have been completed and that this proposal, once implemented, is impacting fairly on everyone it affects? In answering this question, please include information about feedback you will seek and/or data you will collect and analyse, and how often you will do this

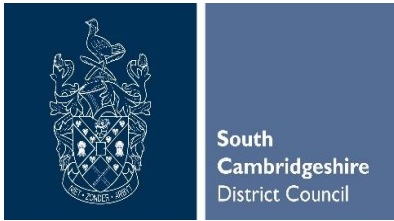
Tenants will be asked to complete a feedback form 6 months after completing Mutual Exchange. Also, data will be collected and monitored on the following indicators on an ongoing basis:

- No of MX completed, of which Transfer Tenants
- No of refusals and reasons
- Reason for move
- Bedsize pre/post MX
- Match found via HomesSwapper, Locata, Facebook, Other etc
- Previous Landlord and LA

Section 5: Summary

5.1 Briefly summarise the key findings of the EqIA and any significant equality considerations that should be taken into account when deciding how to proceed with the proposal (this section can be included within the 'equality implications' section of any committee reports). (Max. 250 words)

Tenants without IT will not be able to benefit from online Mutual Exchange service(s) provided by the Council. Although it is a tenant led process, tenants unable to manage independently may not be able to benefit from the scheme without support.



Section 4.2 above sets out actions to mitigate potential barriers to access the SCDC Mutual Exchange scheme.

5.2 Confirm the recommendation of the officer completing the EqIA:

Proceed with the proposal (with any actions identified as required within Section 4 of the EqIA). Analysis demonstrates that the proposal is robust, we have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.

Reject the proposal: Analysis demonstrates that the proposal will cause unlawful discrimination and it must be removed or changed

Section 6: Sign Off

6.1 Signature of individual completing EqIA:

Julie Fletcher

6.2 Date of completion:

02/10/2023

6.3 When will this proposal next be reviewed and who will this be? (when in doubt 3 years minimum)

September 2025

6.4 Approving officer signature *, this should be your Head of Service, Service Area Manager, or Project Sponsor:

Peter Campbell

6.5 Date of approval:

28/09/2023

Please send the completed document to Equality.Schemes@scambs.gov.uk for publishing on the website.



**in the event that this EqIA is completed by Head of Service, then no additional approving signature is required.*