



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Before completing the EQIA please have a look at the [Dorset Council style guide](#) and also use the [accessibility checker](#) to make sure your document is easy for people of all abilities to read.

Use the [Hemingwayapp](#) to check the readability of your document, to do this, click the edit button on the top right of the hemminwayapp screen, paste your text and the app will highlight if there are any problem areas.

Some key tips

- avoid tables and charts, if possible please provide raw data
- avoid pictures and maps if possible.
- avoid using bold, italics or colour to highlight or stress a point
- when using numbering or bullet points avoid using capitals at the beginning unless the name of something
- date format is dd month yyyy (1 June 2021)
- use clear and simple language
- where you need to use technical terms, abbreviations or acronyms, explain what they mean the first time you use them
- if using hyperlinks, make sure the link text describes where the link goes rather than 'click here' Please note equality impact assessments are published on the Dorset Council [website](#)

Before completing this form, please refer to the [supporting guidance](#). The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to consider the equality implications of your policy, strategy, project or service on different groups of people including employees of Dorset Council, residents and users of our services and to consider if there are ways to proactively advance equality.

Where further guidance is needed, please contact the Inclusion Champion or the [Diversity & Inclusion Officer](#).

1. Initial information

Name of the policy, project, strategy, project or service being assessed:

Housing Strategy

2. Is this a (please delete those not required):

New Strategy

3. Is this (please delete those not required):

Both internal and external

4. Please provide a brief overview of its aims and objectives:

The strategy sets out the Council's aims and objectives for housing for five years from January 2024. These are:

Housing Need: Enabling residents to live safe, healthy, independent lives in homes that meet their needs.

Housing Supply: Driving the delivery of homes people need and can afford to live in.

Housing Standards: Improving the quality, standard, and safety of homes.

Prevention of Homelessness: Support, at the right time, to people in crisis to prevent homelessness.

5. Please provide the background to this proposal.

Every local authority must have a housing strategy which sets out its vision for housing in its area. The Dorset Housing Strategy sets out the priorities and approach we will take as a Local Authority and by working with partners to meet local housing needs and objectives. The strategy is not the Local Plan, and it does not set out planning policies.

It provides:

- a framework to guide us and our partners in tackling housing issues facing Dorset.
- a clear strategy set against current national climates.

This strategy is not a standalone document. It supports our Council Plan and alongside other key strategies and plans:

- A Better Life Strategy
- Birth to Settled Adulthood Programme
- Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy
- Economic Growth Strategy
- Domestic Abuse Strategy
- Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy
- Children's Services Sufficiency Strategy (pending)
- Corporate Parenting Strategy
- Dorset Council Planning for Climate Change – Interim Guidance and Position Statement
- Local Transport Plan

Dorset Council will be developing a new Local Plan setting out our planning policies and proposals for new developments. Findings from the consultation will be fed into the local plan team. During the development of this Housing Strategy close engagement with our Planning service has been carried out to ensure its objectives can be supported and that the approaches are aligned.

Evidence gathering and engagement

6. What sources of data, evidence or research has been used for this assessment? (e.g national statistics, employee data):

This strategy was developed with assistance from Dorset Council's housing service, adult social care, children's services and planning services as well as housing associations and health partners. We also used data from:

- research and analysis of the local and national housing context
- 2021 Census
- NOMIS (Official Census and Labour Market Statistics)
- Icen Housing Needs Assessment 2021 (a report outlining the number of homes needed in Dorset)
- Council strategies and plans
- information from partner organisations (Registered Providers, Public Health Dorset, Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership, NHS and Homeless Forum)
- Information from internal and external engagement

- national policies and trends
- best practice research
- housing sector trends
- local housing data
- Government studies and research
- Public Consultation

7. What did this tell you?

Research and data.

Our data and research told us residents are experiencing a gap between income and housing costs. Current national caps on financial assistance (Local Housing Allowance) available to help pay rent, are set at 2011 rates and rental costs are rising. Dorset house prices are on average 11 times higher than average wages making home ownership more difficult.

The standard of homes has been the focus of legislative changes seeking to improve the condition of rental homes. Dorset provides help, guidance and assistance to private landlords to meet decent homes standards and carries out enforcement action when needed. Dorset's social landlords work closely with the Council to address any issues in homes they own.

A drive to support rural communities was announced by the Government this summer. This aims to boost the supply of new affordable housing to buy or rent, grow the rural economy, improve connectivity, support home energy and thriving communities.

Local NHS Trusts recognise the impact of poor housing on health and Dorset's need for more supported accommodation to improve positive recovery at home.

Dorset's 65+ year old demographic is higher than the national average and means there is a growing need for care services. Increasing age related conditions means Dorset will need more extra care accommodation. This is a type of housing that meets design standards and includes the provision of care.

Dorset also needs more specialist supported housing accommodation for adults and young people who have medical or welfare related housing needs. Access to supported accommodation helps residents to continue to receive the right support and services whilst living in a community.

Dorset needs more temporary accommodation to tackle homelessness. The supply of temporary accommodation is outstripped by demand in Dorset in line with national trends.

Increasing the supply of all types of housing is key to meeting local housing pressures. This should be linked to the needs of our residents and communities. Including the specific needs of the following groups:

- older residents and those who will require additional support and property adaptations to help them to live independently.
- disabled residents who require properties adapted to their specific needs.
- residents who need supported housing. Including those who have learning difficulties, mental ill-health issues, autism, special educational needs, people leaving care, people leaving hospital, young people (16-17 years), and looked after children and people who are homeless.
- victims of domestic violence and abuse.
- women and children.
- people who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless.
- identified groups of people such as essential local workers (key workers), working aged people, young people, current and former armed forces personnel and their families, gypsies and travellers, prospective foster carers and adopters, refugees, asylum-seekers, unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people,
- rural communities.

Research also told us the number of new affordable homes being built has risen incrementally since 2019. The council and it's partners are working together in response to nutrient neutrality planning requirements, but this is expected to impact on the number of new homes built in the short term.

Our research also told us that the impact of housing on health is widely understood. The council and other organisations want to strengthen working together to improve housing expertise in health settings and the supply of housing with support options.

Public consultation

A full report of our public consultation responses is available at appendix B.

2137 responses were received and 84.3% were from members of the public and tells us our residents have views about housing in Dorset.

Other public consultation respondents are:

- Affordable or social housing provider
- Community group or charity representative
- Development, construction or planning professional
- Elected members
- Housing support, care or other housing related support provider
- Neighbourhood plan group member
- Parish or Town Councillors
- Private rented sector landlord or agent
- Voluntary organisations
- Community Land Trusts
- Charities

Most respondents agreed with the Housing Strategy vision to ensure our residents have access to affordable, suitable, secure homes where they can live well and be part of sustainable and thriving communities. The total agreement percentage was 86.6%.

The top 5 things most important to respondents in summary are (not in order of priority):

- Building more social and affordable housing for rent.
- Infrastructure to support new housing development (road improvements, school places and GP capacity).
- Supporting affordable home ownership for first time buyers and working aged people.
- Design of new homes (to improve energy efficiency, reduce environmental impact, protect natural environment, and to be easier to adapt to changing needs).
- Homelessness

The consultation asked whether our objectives are right. Their responses told us:

Objective 1 - 86.8% agreed.

Objective 2 – 84.3%agreed.

Objective 3 – 86.5%agreed.

Objective 4 – 82.6%agreed.

From those who engaged with the consultation 84.4% described themselves as white British and 15.6%% stated they were from a BME background.

14.4% of respondents said that they were disabled, which is high compared to an approximate figure of 4.6% based on those claiming either Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments or Attendance Allowance.

There were more female respondents than male (a slightly higher percentage than the Dorset population generally).

There was a wide range of ages of respondents and a good geographical spread. It is noted that responses from younger residents is lower than expected.

Age	Percentage
19-24	0.9%
25-34	4.9%
35-44	9.6%
45-54	13.4%
55-64	24.9%
65 or over	37.3%
Not answered	1.8%
Prefer not to say	7.1%
Under 18	0.1%

8. Who have you engaged and consulted with as part of this assessment?

Pre-consultation strategy development engagement phase

Extended Leadership Team

Elected Members

Staff members both from an employee and personal perspective, as well as specific groups or representatives including Housing Services, Adult Social Care & Housing Leadership Forum, Low Carbon Dorset, Adults Services, Children's Services, Planning Services.

Public Health Dorset

EDI Reference Group

Landlord Forum

Consultation Phase Responses Include:

Elected Members

General Public

Registered Providers

Integrated Care Strategy Group

Health Agencies

Developers

Town and Parish Councils

Community Groups

Charities

9. Is further information needed to help inform decision making?

No further information is required to inform the strategy.

The high-level themed delivery plan identifies future work to formulate, share and apply data so that future decisions to deliver the strategy will be data led.

Is an EQIA required?

Not every proposal will need an EqlA. The data and research should inform your decision whether to continue with this EqlA. If you decide that your proposal does not need an EqlA, please answer the following question:

This policy, strategy, project or service does not require an EqlA because (provide details):

Yes

Assessing the impact on different groups of people

For each of the protected characteristics groups below, please explain whether your proposal could have a positive, negative, unclear or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is and if unclear or negative please explain what mitigating actions will be taken.

- use the evidence you have gathered to inform your decision making.
- consider impacts on residents, service users and employees separately.
- if your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option.
- see guidance for more information about the different [protected characteristics](#).

Key to impacts

Positive Impact	• the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
Negative Impact	• protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against

Neutral Impact	• no change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	• not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Age	Positive Impact	By improving access to suitable, affordable housing, of the right type in the right place. By improving access to specialist accommodation required to meet needs. The Strategy, together with associated policies and documents, recognises the need for greater provision of housing for our aging population. This is outlined in the need to increase numbers of extra care and residential care properties. The strategy also reflects the need for new developments to meet enhanced building regulation standards, making them more accessible and easier to adapt. It also looks to support our working age, low-income, residents by increasing affordable housing options. By supporting developments which meet the needs of our rural communities, reducing the need for residents to move away from their communities and the risk of social isolation.
Disability	Positive Impact	By improving access to suitable, affordable housing, of the right type in the right place. By improving access to specialist accommodation required to meet needs. The strategy recognises the need for more bespoke housing and specialist housing options to meet the needs of our disabled residents. The strategy also reflects the need for new developments to meet enhanced building regulation standards making them more accessible and easier to adapt. Through carrying out current and future needs projections to ensure that housing is developed to meet the needs of our residents.
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Positive Impact	Whilst the strategy does not specifically identify housing for this group, it aims to improve to suitable, affordable housing, of the right type in the right place for all residents. Also by improving access to specialist accommodation required to meet needs.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral Impact	Whilst the strategy does not specifically identify housing for this group, it aims to improve to suitable, affordable housing, of the right type in the right place for all residents.
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive Impact	By improving access to suitable, affordable housing, of the right type in the right place. By improving access to specialist accommodation required to meet needs.
Race and Ethnicity	Positive Impact	By improving access to suitable, affordable housing, of the right type in the right place. By improving access to specialist accommodation required to meet needs. The strategy seeks to identify ways to make best use of existing social housing stock, including facilitating moves which would see larger currently under-occupied housing being used for those with a need for larger family sized homes. The report Meeting the housing needs of BAME households in England: the role of the planning system (.Bristow-Final-report.pdf (hw.ac.uk)) recognised a need for larger homes for BME households and that increasing the availability of bigger properties would have a positive impact. Through mapping housing needs we will be able to identify the number of homes needed to meet need.
Religion and belief	Neutral Impact	Whilst the strategy does not specifically identify housing for this group, it aims to improve to suitable, affordable housing, of the right type in the right place for all residents.
Sex (consider men and women)	Positive Impact	Whilst the strategy does not specifically identify housing for this group, it's aims are to increase access to housing for all residents and to identify where there is a need for specialist accommodation. This is likely to include the need to accommodation for those who are fleeing domestic abuse and violence as well as single sex accommodation for rough sleepers.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		By supporting the delivery of social rent housing which is more affordable for low-income families and single parent households. Identifying and projecting housing need, to influence housing delivery which meets with bedroom needs, ensuring children have the space to develop and mature.
Sexual orientation	Neutral Impact	Whilst the strategy does not specifically identify housing for this group, it aims to improve to suitable, affordable housing, of the right type in the right place for all residents.
People with caring responsibilities	Positive Impact	By improving access to suitable, affordable housing, of the right type in the right place. By improving access to specialist accommodation required to meet needs. The strategy recognises the need for more bespoke housing and specialist housing options to meet the needs of our residents. The strategy also reflects the need for new developments to meet enhanced building regulation standards making them more accessible and easier to adapt. By identifying the current and projected future needs of our households with residents requiring care, we can support the development of homes to meet needs and reduce the impact on carers more easily.
Rural isolation	Positive Impact	By improving access to suitable, affordable housing, of the right type in the right place. By improving access to specialist accommodation required to meet needs. The strategy also highlights the need to support developments in rural areas which have the support of community land trusts and community housing groups.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		Its aim is to increase housing options for rural areas with a view to encouraging local people to remain in the area, thereby building the local community and decreasing the risk of social isolation. The strategy also recognises the need to ensure that housing developments have the right infrastructure to support communities, including access to services, digital connectivity, and travel.
Socio-economic deprivation	Positive Impact	By improving access to suitable, affordable housing, of the right type in the right place. By improving access to specialist accommodation required to meet needs. Improving access to affordable accommodation by encouraging greater levels of social rent housing development in the Dorset Council area. By working with private sector landlords to increase the provision of housing for homeless and vulnerable applicants. By providing tenancy accreditation training to support residents to understand how to sustain their tenancy. The strategy reinforces the need for increased housing standards, particularly linked to energy efficiency and renewable energy sources, which are designed to make homes more affordable.
Single parents	Positive Impact	By improving access to suitable, affordable housing, of the right type in the right place. By improving access to specialist accommodation required to meet needs. By supporting the delivery of social rent housing which is more affordable for low-income families and single parent households.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Armed forces communities	Positive Impact	By improving access to suitable, affordable housing, of the right type in the right place. By improving access to specialist accommodation required to meet needs.

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

Overall, the housing strategy is likely to have a positive impact by increasing and improving access to housing which meets the current and projected needs of Dorset residents. By supporting, and enabling, the delivery of more homes which meet accessible homes standards, specialist supported and extra care accommodation, and housing which is genuinely affordable. Developing needs maps will ensure that we are focusing delivery on the right type of properties, in the right place, to provide access to homes for all our residents.

Action Plan

Summarise any actions required as a result of this EqIA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
Data Intelligence	Housing needs maps to be developed and used to support decisions to deliver the aims and objectives of the housing strategy	To be confirmed	To be determined by the housing board.

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA: Sarah Smith

Officers involved in completing the EqIA: Sarah Smith, Sharon Attwater, Andrew Billany

Date of completion: 17 October 2023

Version Number: 5

EqlA review date: January 2025

Inclusion Champion Sign Off: TBC

Equality Lead Sign Off: TBC

Next Steps:

- the EqlA will be reviewed by Communications and Engagement and if in agreement, your EqlA will be signed off.
- if not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqlA, to get a better understanding.
- EqlA authors are responsible to ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.

Please send to [Diversity and Inclusion Officer](#)

[Appendices](#)

[A – Housing Strategy](#)

[B – Consultation Report](#)