

Equality Impact Assessment

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| Directorate: Chief Executive's | |
| Service: Housing | |
| Name of Officer/s completing assessment: Francesca Stott | |
| Date of Assessment: 5/6/26 | |
| Name of service/function or policy being assessed: Housing Strategy 2026-2031 | |
| 1. | <p>What are the aims, objectives, outcomes, purpose of the policy, service change, function that you are assessing?</p> <p>The Housing Strategy 2026-2031 is a corporately adopted strategy which provides the Council's strategic framework for housing over the next five years. It aims to increase affordable housing supply, prevent and reduce homelessness, improve housing quality, create inclusive neighbourhoods, improve sustainability and energy efficiency, and strengthen landlord services for residents. The Strategy supports wider priorities relating to health, regeneration, economic growth and reducing inequalities.</p> <p>At its core, the Strategy is structured around five priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increase affordable housing supply and build more new homes for residents.2. Work to end homelessness and meet housing need, ensuring housing is affordable and accessible to all residents.3. Create neighbourhoods and homes where residents want to live, work and play and address inequalities.4. Address the sustainability and zero-carbon challenges in new and existing homes.5. Be the best landlord we can be, improve the quality and management of our Council Housing. <p>Together, these priorities set a clear direction for delivering safe, secure, affordable and sustainable homes that meet the needs of residents and support thriving communities across Slough.</p> |

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| 2. | <p>Who implements or delivers the policy, service or function? State if this is undertaken by more than one team, service, and department including any external partners.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy will be owned and overseen by the Council’s Housing Directorate, which will lead its implementation and coordinate delivery across the organisation. Successful delivery of the Strategy will require a whole-council approach, working closely with Planning, Public Health, Adult Social Care, Children’s Services, Regeneration, Finance and Corporate Services. The Council will also work in partnership with Registered Providers, private landlords, developers, health partners, voluntary, community and faith sector organisations, government agencies and other stakeholders to support delivery of the Strategy’s priorities and achieve improved housing outcomes for residents.</p> |
| 3. | <p>Who will be affected by this proposal? For example who are the external/internal customers, communities, partners, stakeholders, the workforce etc. Please consider all of the Protected Characteristics listed (more information is available in the background information). Bear in mind that people affected by the proposals may well have more than one protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy applies to all wards in the borough and to people of all ages and residing in all tenures. All Slough residents across all housing tenures. Particular impacts are expected for people experiencing homelessness, council tenants, private renters, older people, disabled residents, care leavers, larger families, residents experiencing overcrowding, low-income households, minority ethnic communities and residents requiring supported or adapted housing.</p> <p>Housing affordability and housing conditions continue to present challenges for many residents. House prices are around 10.1 times average earnings in Slough, compared with 7.7 nationally. Nearly one third of households rent privately and overcrowding remains a significant issue, affecting approximately 16% of households overall and almost half of households in the private rented sector. The population of Slough is 149,577 (2021 Census). It is densely populated with 45.8 people per hectare (the average in England is 4.5). Slough’s healthy life expectancy is significantly below national averages – 58.1 years for men compared to 63.2 nationally, and 59.8 for women compared to 63.5 nationally. 71% of Slough’s Lower-tier Super Output Areas (LSOAs) fall below the national average of the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). 114,926 (76.9%) of our residents live in areas which fall within the 20% most deprived nationally for the barriers to housing domain of the 2019 IMD. This rises to 95% for ‘wider barriers’ sub-domain which focuses on indicators relating to access to housing such as affordability.</p> |

Age

Slough has a comparatively young population, with around 29% of residents aged under 18, the second highest proportion in England. The Borough also has a higher-than-average birth rate and continues to experience significant demand for family housing, with many households containing dependent children. Child poverty remains a challenge, with over 9,000 children living in relative low-income families. At the same time, while Slough has a smaller proportion of older residents than many areas, the number of older people is increasing. There are over 4,000 single pensioner households, creating increased risks of loneliness and social isolation, and 17.5% of older residents receive Pension Credit, indicating higher levels of pensioner poverty than the national average. Slough also has comparatively high levels of children receiving support through Children in Need and Early Help services, highlighting the importance of ensuring housing provision meets the needs of children, young people, care-experienced young people and older residents.

Disability

According to the 2021 Census, 11.3% of Slough residents are disabled under the Equality Act definition, meaning their day-to-day activities are limited by a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness. Of these, 5% of residents reported that their activities were limited a lot and 6.4% reported that they were limited a little.

Census data also shows that 15.1% of residents in Slough are disabled when combining those whose activities are limited a lot or a little, compared to 17.5% nationally. Slough experiences poorer health outcomes than the national average, with healthy life expectancy significantly below the England average for both men and women. In addition, over 10,700 residents are recorded as having depression and around 1,680 residents have a serious mental health disorder. These factors highlight the importance of ensuring that housing is accessible, adaptable and supports residents with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, long-term health conditions and mental health needs.

Gender Reassignment

In Slough, 0.9% of residents aged 16 and over reported that their gender identity was different from the sex they were registered at birth. A further 8.7% did not answer the question. National evidence suggests that transgender and gender-diverse people can experience inequalities in housing, health outcomes and access to services, including increased risks of homelessness, discrimination and social exclusion. The Housing Strategy seeks to ensure that housing services are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of all residents, regardless of gender identity, and that residents are able to access safe and appropriate housing free from discrimination.

Pregnancy and maternity:

In 2023, Slough had a Total Fertility Rate of 1.93 children per woman, significantly higher than the England average of 1.44. There were 2,268 live births to Slough residents in 2022/23.

Race/ethnicity

Slough is one of the most ethnically diverse local authority areas in England. 64% of residents identify as being from an Asian, Black, Mixed or Other ethnic background, with Asian residents representing the largest ethnic group at 46.7% of the population. White residents account for 36.0% of the population, while Black residents account for 7.6%, residents of Mixed ethnicity 4.0%, and those from Other ethnic groups 5.7%.

Slough's diversity is a significant strength and is reflected in the Borough's communities, workforce and local economy. However, evidence nationally and locally demonstrates that some ethnic minority communities are more likely to experience housing inequalities, including overcrowding, affordability pressures, poorer housing conditions and barriers to accessing suitable accommodation. The Housing Strategy therefore seeks to ensure that housing services, housing supply and housing quality improvements respond to the needs of Slough's diverse communities and help reduce inequalities in housing outcomes.

Religion and belief:

According to the 2021 Census, Slough is one of the most religiously diverse local authority areas in England. The largest religious group is Christian, comprising 32.0% of the population, followed closely by Muslims at 29.4%. Slough has significantly higher proportions of Muslim, Sikh and Hindu residents than England as a whole, with Muslims accounting for 29.4% of the population compared to 6.7% nationally, Sikhs 11.3% compared to 0.9%, and Hindus 7.8% compared to 1.8%. Residents reporting no religion account for 13.1% of the population, substantially lower than the England average of 36.7%.

Sex

According to the 2021 Census, Slough has a broadly even population split, with females accounting for 50.5% of residents (80,005 people) and males accounting for 49.5% (78,495 people). This is broadly consistent with the national population profile. The Housing Strategy recognises that housing needs and experiences can vary between men and women, including in relation to homelessness, domestic abuse, caring responsibilities and access to affordable housing. The Strategy seeks to ensure that housing services and housing provision are accessible and responsive to the needs of all residents.

Sexual orientation

According to the 2021 Census, 2,313 residents aged 16 and over identified as having an LGBT+ sexual orientation, representing 1.9% of Slough's adult population. This includes 806 residents (0.7%) who identified as gay or lesbian, 1,095 (0.9%) who identified as bisexual and 335 (0.3%) who identified as pansexual. The proportion of residents identifying as LGBT+ is lower than the England average of 3.2%. A further 11,677 residents (9.8%) did not answer the question. National evidence suggests that LGBT+ individuals can experience inequalities in housing outcomes, including increased risks of homelessness, discrimination and barriers to accessing services. The Housing Strategy seeks to ensure that housing services are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of all residents.

4. **Impacts by group**

The following table provides an overview of the impact of the housing strategy on specific groups and by theme and indicates whether the impacts will be positive, negative or neutral.

| Characteristic | Positive , Negative, Neutral or Unknown Impact | Rationale for Assessment |
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| Age | Positive And Negative | <p>Younger residents, families with children, care leavers and older people are likely to benefit from the Strategy's commitment to increasing the supply of affordable housing, reducing homelessness, improving housing quality and increasing access to specialist and supported housing. The Strategy includes specific commitments relating to accommodation for families, older people, care leavers and residents requiring supported or adapted housing, which are expected to improve housing outcomes for these groups.</p> <p>However, some actions arising from the Strategy, including estate regeneration, redevelopment activity, major works programmes, housing decants and right-sizing initiatives, could have unintended negative impacts on some older residents. Older residents may be more likely to have long-standing community ties, health conditions or support networks that could be disrupted by changes to their housing circumstances. The Strategy therefore includes commitments to strengthen decant arrangements and ensure residents are supported through any future change programmes.</p> |
| Disability | Positive | <p>Disabled residents are more likely to require accessible, adapted or supported housing and can be disproportionately affected by poor housing conditions. The Strategy includes commitments to improve housing quality, increase the availability of specialist and adapted housing, improve energy efficiency and support independent living, which are expected to have a positive impact on disabled residents. The Council</p> |

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| | | will work with developers and partners to increase the supply of affordable, accessible and adaptable homes that meet a range of health, care and support needs. Increasing the supply of affordable housing is expected to improve access to safe, suitable and high-quality homes for disabled residents and those with long-term health conditions. The delivery of new housing developments may result in some temporary disruption for residents living near construction sites; however, these impacts are expected to be short term and managed through the planning and development process. Overall, the Strategy is expected to have a positive impact on disabled residents by supporting greater housing choice, improved housing quality and increased opportunities for independent living. |
| Gender Reassignment: | Neutral | The Strategy is intended to benefit all residents and does not contain any proposals that would disadvantage people who are transgender or gender diverse. Housing services and support will be delivered in accordance with equality legislation and principles of inclusivity. |
| Pregnancy and maternity: | Positive | Pregnant women and families with young children can be particularly affected by homelessness, overcrowding and poor housing conditions. The Strategy's focus on increasing affordable housing, reducing homelessness and improving housing quality is expected to support positive outcomes for these groups. |
| Race: | Positive | <p>Slough's Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnic communities are disproportionately affected by some of the housing challenges identified within the Strategy, including overcrowding, affordability pressures, homelessness and poor housing conditions. The Strategy's commitment to increasing the supply of affordable housing, reducing homelessness, improving housing quality and strengthening standards in the private rented sector is therefore expected to have a positive impact on these communities.</p> <p>The Strategy also includes measures to improve standards in privately rented accommodation through strengthened licensing, enforcement and regulation activity. This is expected to benefit residents living in poorer quality accommodation, including many households living in overcrowded conditions.</p> <p>The Strategy supports the delivery of a wider range of housing options, including larger family homes, supported housing and affordable homes, helping to ensure housing provision better reflects the needs of Slough's diverse communities. Improving access to safe, secure and affordable housing is expected to contribute to reducing housing inequalities and improving outcomes for residents across all ethnic groups.</p> |

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| | Religion and Belief: | Neutral | The Strategy is intended to benefit residents of all faiths and beliefs. Improved access to safe, affordable and suitable housing is expected to benefit all communities across the Borough. |
| | Sex | Positive | <p>Women can be disproportionately affected by some housing challenges, including homelessness, domestic abuse, caring responsibilities and housing affordability pressures. The Strategy includes commitments to reduce homelessness, improve access to affordable housing and develop a Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation delivery plan, which are expected to have a positive impact on women and families.</p> <p>The Strategy also seeks to improve the quality, safety and management of Council housing, strengthen repairs and maintenance services and improve standards in the private rented sector. These improvements are expected to benefit all residents regardless of sex.</p> <p>Through its focus on increasing affordable housing supply, supporting independent living and improving housing quality, the Strategy is expected to contribute positively to housing outcomes for both men and women. Measures to prevent homelessness, support vulnerable households and improve access to suitable accommodation are also expected to support residents experiencing housing instability or complex needs.</p> |
| | Sexual orientation: | Positive | <p>People who identify as LGBT+ may be at increased risk of homelessness, including hidden homelessness, family breakdown and housing insecurity. The Housing Strategy's commitment to homelessness prevention, reducing rough sleeping and improving access to safe, stable and affordable housing is therefore expected to have a positive impact on LGBT+ residents.</p> <p>The Strategy also includes measures to improve housing quality, strengthen landlord services and ensure residents can access safe and suitable accommodation. These improvements are expected to benefit all residents regardless of sexual orientation.</p> <p>Through its focus on reducing housing inequalities, improving housing standards and supporting vulnerable residents, the Strategy is expected to contribute positively to housing outcomes for LGBT+ communities.</p> |

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| 5. | <p>What are the likely negative impacts for the group/s identified in (3) above? If so, then are any particular groups affected more than others and why?</p> <p>The Housing Strategy is expected to have an overall positive impact on residents by increasing housing supply, improving housing quality, reducing homelessness and supporting access to safe, secure and affordable homes. No significant adverse impacts have been identified at this strategic level.</p> <p>However, some activities arising from the Strategy, including regeneration schemes, major works programmes, housing decants, retrofit activity, enforcement action in the private rented sector and future changes to housing policies, may have the potential to affect some groups differently. Older residents, disabled residents, households with young children and residents requiring specialist support may be more vulnerable to disruption arising from housing-related change. These impacts will be considered in detail through project-specific Equality Impact Assessments as individual proposals are developed and implemented.</p> |
| 6. | <p>Have the impacts identified in (4) and (5) above been assessed using up to date and reliable evidence and data? Please state evidence sources and conclusions drawn (e.g. survey results, customer complaints, monitoring data etc).</p> <p>The assessment has been informed by a range of quantitative and qualitative evidence sources, including the 2021 Census, Office for National Statistics (ONS) data, the Slough Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), homelessness and temporary accommodation data, housing register data, affordability data, population projections, the Private Rented Sector and Houses in Multiple Occupation Housing Stock Condition and Stressors Report, public health data, and information contained within the Council's Housing Needs Assessment.</p> <p>This evidence demonstrates that housing affordability, homelessness, overcrowding, poor housing conditions and access to suitable housing disproportionately affect certain groups, including families, older residents, disabled residents and some ethnic minority communities. The Strategy is intended to help address these inequalities and improve housing outcomes across the Borough.</p> |
| 7. | <p>Have you engaged or consulted with any identified groups or individuals if necessary and what were the results, e.g. have the staff forums/unions/ community groups been involved?</p> <p>The Strategy has drawn on evidence from housing needs assessments, regulatory engagement, tenant and resident feedback, and consultation undertaken as part of related housing policies and strategies.</p> |

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| | <p>Following Cabinet approval, the Strategy will continue to inform engagement with residents, tenants, leaseholders, Registered Providers, community organisations and other stakeholders as individual actions and proposals are developed. Resident engagement with the strategy will be ongoing.</p> |
| 8. | <p>Have you considered the impact the policy might have on local community relations?</p> <p>The Housing Strategy is intended to have a positive impact on community relations by increasing access to safe, secure and affordable housing, improving housing quality and supporting the creation of inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods. The Strategy seeks to reduce housing inequalities and improve outcomes across all communities within the Borough. No adverse impacts on community relations have been identified.</p> |
| 9. | <p>What plans do you have in place, or are developing, that will mitigate any likely identified negative impacts? For example what plans, if any, will be put in place to reduce the impact?</p> <p>N/A The Borough has a Community Cohesion strategy and has a process in place for monitoring tension which can be drawn on if needed.</p> |
| 10. | <p>What plans do you have in place to monitor the impact of the proposals once they have been implemented? (The full impact of the decision may only be known after the proposals have been implemented). Please see action plan below.</p> <p>The delivery of the housing strategy will be integrated into Slough's performance management framework and service planning process, and overseen by an annual review by the relevant cabinet members.</p> |

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| What course of action does this EIA suggest you take? More than one of the following may apply | |
| Outcome 1: No major change required. The EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken | ✓ |
| Outcome 2: Adjust the policy to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better promote equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers identified? (Complete action plan). | |
| Outcome 3: Continue the policy despite potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality identified. You will need to ensure that the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You should consider whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact (see questions below). (Complete action plan). | |
| Outcome 4: Stop and rethink the policy when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. (Complete action plan). | |

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| <p>Name: Francesca Stott, Interim Chief of Staff</p> <p>Signed:Francesca Stott..... (Person completing the EIA)</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Signed:(Policy Lead if not same as above)</p> |
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