



**South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council**

# **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

## **FIRST HOMES**

The First Homes Interim Statement has been developed jointly between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed using the City Council's format for both areas. No negative impacts have been identified.

## Cambridge City Council & South Cambridgeshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This tool helps the Councils ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to have due regard to the need to –

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

<b>1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service:</b>
First Homes Interim Statement
<b>2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)</b>
Will be available at: <a href="https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/housing-and-related-strategies">https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/housing-and-related-strategies</a> and <a href="https://www.scambs.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategy/housing-strategy-and-policy/">https://www.scambs.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategy/housing-strategy-and-policy/</a>
<b>3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?</b>
<p>A national requirement has been introduced that 25% of affordable housing on section 106 developments must be delivered as First Homes, a new product aimed at First Time Buyers.</p> <p>This Interim Position Statement shows how the two councils will implement the new national First Homes policy using the flexibilities allowed.</p> <p>It will be reviewed when the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy is refreshed in 2023 and as part of the development of the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.</p>
<b>4. Responsible Service</b>
Cambridge City Council – Housing Services South Cambridgeshire District Council – Affordable Homes

**5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick those that apply)**

- Residents of Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District
- Developers wishing to build in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District

Please state any specific client group or groups (e.g. Council tenants, tourists, people who work in the area but do not live here):

- Households living and/or working in Greater Cambridge who wish to access affordable home ownership as first time buyers.

**6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this? (Please tick)**

New Policy

**7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)**

Yes (Please provide details):

Other council departments:

- Joint Planning Service
- Housing Development Agency (City)
- Housing Development New Build Team (South Cambs)

External partners:

- Registered Providers
- Housing developers

**8. Has the report on your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service gone to Committee? If so, which one?**

Cambridge City Council: Housing Scrutiny Committee 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022

South Cambridgeshire District Council: Cabinet 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022

**9. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?**

- National statistical and survey data
- Local housing needs data
- Other evidence used in the Issues and Options paper on First Homes

See links below

**10. Potential impacts**

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

**(a) Age**

**Note that this refers to any group of people of a particular age (e.g. 32 year-olds) , or within a particular age range (e.g. 16-24 year-olds) – in particular, please consider any safeguarding issues for children and vulnerable adults**

Younger people – POSITIVE IMPACT

[ONS Population Estimates for 2020](#) show that Cambridge City in particular has a relatively young population compared to the rest of Cambridgeshire and many other parts of the country. People aged 24 and under, including students, make up around 40% of the City's population.

Around 26% of the population in the City is aged 25-44, and 24% in South Cambs, compared with 25% in Cambridgeshire as a whole.

[Statista research](#) reports that at March 2021 the average age of a first time buyer was 31.

Younger people have been finding it increasingly difficult to get on the housing ladder over recent years, having to remain longer with parents or in expensive private rented accommodation. However, [The English Housing Survey 2018-19](#) reported that after more than a decade of decline, the proportion of 25-34 olds in owner occupation nationally has increased and there are no almost equal proportions of that age group living in the private rented and owner occupied sectors.

[The English Housing Survey Private Rented Sector report 2019-20](#) says that younger private renters are more likely than older private renters to expect to own a home in the future. More than three quarters of private renters aged 16 to 24 (78%) and those aged 25 to 34 (77%) nationally say they expect to buy a home in the future

The councils are proposing to bring forward First Homes where developers wish to do so rather than a percentage requirement. This is likely to mean that fewer First Homes will be delivered and therefore could have a negative impact on private renters and first time buyers on incomes of around £50,000 or more, and /or those with access to reasonably large deposit wanting to purchase a First Home.

However, applying the national requirements locally to all new s106 developments would mean that, in Cambridge at least, First Home buyers would only be able to purchase a one-bedroom home. Some two-bedroom properties could be available in South Cambridgeshire but First Homes would not deliver any larger homes for young people with families.

Replacing all the affordable home ownership on a new development with First Homes, rather than having some shared ownership or other low cost affordable housing would also mean that younger people with only a small deposit would not be able to afford to purchase an affordable home.

Where First Homes do come forward, the decision to still allow some shared ownership or other forms of affordable home ownership will allow additional affordable home ownership options for young people.

## Older people - POSITIVE IMPACT

According to [Cambridgeshire Insight Population Reports](#) based on Office of National Statistics data, the older population is expected to rise in both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire.

In Cambridge City in 2020 there were an estimated 16,648 people aged 65 and over making up 13.3% of the City's population. By 2043 this figure is expected to rise to 23,697 people; 18.8% of the City's population.

In South Cambridgeshire the 31,785 people estimated to be aged 65 and over in 2020 (19.8% of the district's population) is expected to rise to 43,023 and make up 26% of the district population by 2043.

There is a nationally recognised shortage of housing options for older people. For example, a survey in 2020, [Coming of Age: Better Housing Options for Older People](#) showed that nearly 90% of people surveyed thought the government should widen housing options for older people, and that more than half of older people are interested in moving but lack good local downsizing options.

With the average age of a first time buyer being around 31, older people are much less likely to be first time buyers than younger people. Implementing First Homes only where developers wish to bring them forward will help to ensure that new affordable housing is available to all age groups rather than those making up the first time buyer market.

## **(b) Disability**

**Note that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.**

## Disability – POSITIVE IMPACT

Census data suggests that around 13% of residents in Cambridge and 13.9% of residents in South Cambridgeshire have a long-term activity limiting illness.

More recently the [Family Resources Survey 2019/20](#) found that 22% of the UK population reported a disability (up from 19% in 2009/10) Although the Eastern Region showed a slightly lower than average disability rate at around 21%.

Mobility was the most prevalent impairment reported nationally, with 49% of disabled people saying this applied to them.

[Papworth Trust's Facts and Figures 2018, Disability in the United Kingdom report](#) states that disabled people face problems in finding adequate housing, which is a major barrier to independent living. Disabled people are also four times more likely to be unemployed or not seeking work than non-disabled people. The report also says that disabled people are twice as likely as non-disabled people to be social housing tenants, and two thirds of single disabled people living alone are in poverty. Mobility issues are most prevalent amongst those of state pension age.

The [Joseph Rowntree Foundation report UK Poverty 2022](#) says that the poverty rate for individuals who live in families where someone is disabled is higher than those who live in families where no-one is disabled. Also, of all families in poverty, just under half contain someone who is disabled, compared with 3 in 10 of families not in poverty.

First Homes are only available to first time buyers. Also, owing to the cost of a First Home, disabled people are less likely to be able to access these than social/affordable rent housing unless they are able to raise a sizeable deposit.

Not to require First Homes unless developers wish to provide them, minimising the impact on social/affordable rent for those on low incomes, and still allowing some other intermediate tenure housing will help to provide a range of affordable housing options to meet disabled people's needs.

### **(c) Gender reassignment**

Gender reassignment:

No impact has been identified specific to this equality group

### **(d) Marriage and civil partnership**

No impact has been identified specific to this equality group.

### **(e) Pregnancy and maternity**

Pregnancy and maternity: POSITIVE IMPACT

Only 7 applicants currently on the housing registers in Greater Cambridge are recorded as being pregnant. However, although the numbers are small, maximising the delivery of social/affordable rent housing should benefit such applicants.

### **(f) Race & ethnicity**

**Note that the protected characteristic 'race' refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.**

Race & ethnicity: POSITIVE IMPACT

The [English Housing Survey Private rented Sector report 2019-20](#) found that on the whole ethnic minority and white private renters were just as likely as each other to expect to buy a home in the future.

[The Joseph Rowntree Fund report UK Poverty 2022](#) says that poverty rates between ethnic groups varies significantly with some groups at a much higher risk of poverty than others. However, Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups as a whole are more likely to be single earner households than white households. Ethnic minorities are also more likely to have higher rates of in-work poverty and child poverty.

Therefore BAME groups as a whole may be less likely financially to be able to access First Homes than white groups.

Not to require First Homes unless developers wish to provide them and minimising the impact on social/affordable rent for those on low incomes should help members of BAME groups to access homes that are more affordable.

### **(g) Religion or belief**

No impact has been identified specific to this equality group



#### **(h) Sex**

Women and Men: POSITIVE IMPACT

[The English Housing Survey 2019-20](#) reports that households in the social rented sector are more likely to have a female than a male household reference person. Those with lower incomes and lone parents are more likely to be eligible for social housing, attributes which are more prevalent amongst women.

The highest demand for social housing in Greater Cambridge is for one bedroom homes. Of applicants requiring studio or one bedroom accommodation the demand is split fairly evenly between men and women; (approximately 52% are men and 48% are women).

Not promoting First Homes where developers do not wish to bring them forward and protecting social housing delivery as far as possible will support both men and women who are not first time buyers and who would be unable to afford to purchase a first home. It will also allow for a better size mix of intermediate housing tenures; if only one-bedroom properties came forward for the intermediate market this could impact on the delivery of one-bedroom homes for those on the housing register due to the need to deliver mixed and balanced communities.

#### **(i) Sexual orientation**

No impact has been identified specific to this equalities group.

#### **(j) Rurality**

Rurality – POSITIVE IMPACT

With just over 100 villages within South Cambridgeshire District, a high priority for the Council is to promote vibrancy and sustainability to enable villages to grow and flourish through appropriate development supported by the local community.

- The ability to provide First Homes Exception Site schemes outside of the development framework is likely to see more homes delivered aimed at first time buyers. The Interim Statement looks to ensure that any First Homes Exceptions Sites should have a village connection applied to them, so that homes provided can go to local people as a priority. The Interim Statement also looks to protect rural exception sites that deliver a better mix of affordable homes for local people based on a village need.

**(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular – please consider the impact of any changes on low income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty**

Low income groups: POSITIVE IMPACT

Evidence in the First Homes Issues and Options paper accompanying the Interim Statement shows that to purchase a First Home capped at £250,000 with a 5% deposit, households would need an income of around £55,000 to be able to afford a mortgage based on 35% of their income. Those earning around £50,000 with a 10% deposit should also be able to afford a mortgage on this basis. Depending on the amount of subsidy developers are willing to provide, those benefiting most from First Homes are likely to be those who earn above the average full-time earnings for Greater Cambridge but cannot afford to buy on the open market.

Cambridge City Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy refers to various pieces of national and local data around poverty rates in Cambridge. For example, more than 1 in 10 Cambridge residents in 2017 lived in households claiming benefits. The Strategy recognises the link between high housing costs and poverty, and one of the five strategic objectives includes addressing the high cost of housing and reducing homelessness.

The First Homes Interim Statement aims to strike a balance between allowing some First Homes to come forward if required and protecting, as far as possible, delivery of social and affordable rent housing for those on low incomes.

**11. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqIA accordingly.)**

Equality impacts will be re-considered when the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy is refreshed in 2023. They will also be considered when the longer term approach to First Homes is assessed as part of the work on the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

**12. Do you have any additional comments?**

n/a

**13. Sign off**

Name and job title of lead officer for this equality impact assessment:

**Helen Reed, Housing Strategy Manager, Cambridge City Council**

Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted:

- **Julie Fletcher, Head of Housing Strategy, South Cambridgeshire District Council**
- **Tracey Harrison, Housing Development Officer, South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City Councils**
- **Maddie McGarvie, Housing Development & Policy Research Officer South Cambridgeshire District Council**
- **Julian Adams, Growth Projects Officer Cambridge City Council**

Date of EqIA sign off: 12th April 2022

Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: **2023 as part of the refresh of the wider Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy**

Date to be published on Cambridge City Council website: 15h April 2022 (estimated).

Date to be published on South Cambridgeshire District Council website 15th April 2022 (estimated).