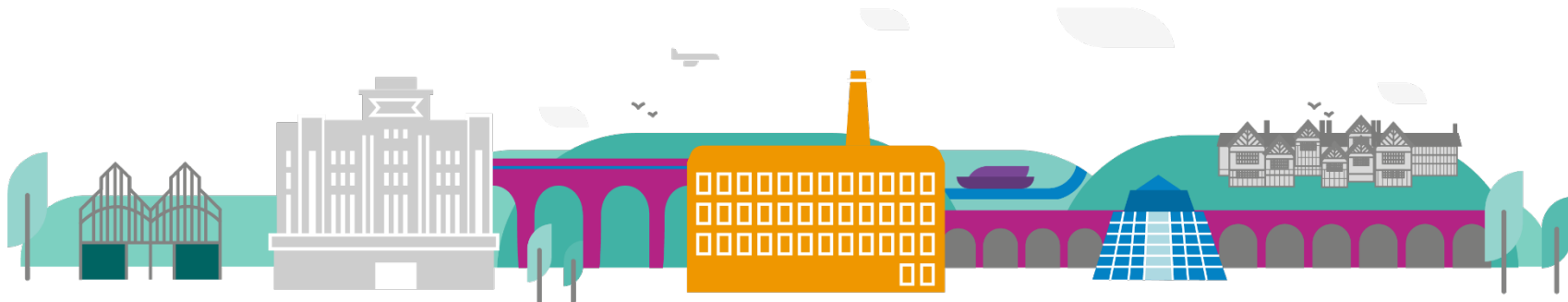


Stockport Town Centre Residential Design Guide Equality Impact Assessment

January 2024



Equality Impact Assessment

Title of report or proposal	Stockport Town Centre Residential Design Guide		
Lead officer(s)	Hannah Mitchell (hannah.mitchell@stockport.gov.uk)	Date	25/01/2024
Aims and desired outcomes of the proposal Are you trying to solve an existing problem?			
<p>The Stockport Town Centre Residential Design Guide sets out the council's expectations for all residential development in Stockport Town Centre.</p> <p>The document provides detailed guidance on key residential design aspects that are fundamental to achieving high-quality and sustainable development. However, it is not prescriptive and encourages innovation and creativity. The document provides generic design standards, as well as design guidance which reflects the different character areas of Stockport Town Centre. The overall output is a document that will inform planning submissions of residential developments in the town centre. It will also support decision-making and the discussion of applications determined under the current policy position set out in the Stockport Core Strategy. It has also been written to stay relevant in the longer term to complement new and emerging policies.</p> <p>In terms of desired outcomes, this guidance will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help make a meaningful contribution to the delivery of new homes • Support our brownfield-first approach to development • Improve the quality, design and use of homes to address the challenges of climate change • Protect the heritage and character of Stockport Town Centre by ensuring developments complement and enhance their surroundings <p>The guidance will positively impact people from different groups in relation to the design of residential development in Stockport Town Centre. Key aspects of the guidance include the development of mixed tenure and types of housings, allowing people from different groups to reside alongside one another. The guidance also encourages the creation of spaces that support a variety of uses and users, such as accessible communal residential areas and shared streets.</p>			
Scope of the proposal Include the teams or service areas from the Council and outward-facing services or initiatives			
<p>The guidance was prepared by Planit and 5Plus Architects on behalf of the council. The council's Planning, Development and Regeneration, Nature Development, Highways, Heritage and Drainage officers have also been involved in developing the guidance.</p>			

The guidance builds upon existing policies in the Stockport Core Strategy, providing detailed guidance on town centre residential development and examples of best practice. It is intended to complement, rather than duplicate, other planning documents. It also supports other existing initiatives such as the Town Centre Living Development Framework.

What are the possible solutions you have been / will be exploring?

You should refer to any business cases, issues papers or options appraisals

The council adopted The Design of Residential Development SPD in 2007 with the aim of achieving high-quality inclusive design in residential developments throughout the borough. This document did not specify design guidance for Stockport Town Centre resulting in some developments gaining planning consent which whilst acceptable in policy terms, do not meet our high-quality and sustainable design aspirations for the area. It was therefore decided that a design guide should be developed to set out the council's expectations for residential development in Stockport Town Centre. Work on the Town Centre Residential Design Guide began in 2020. Following policy updates and societal responses to the pandemic, the final draft is now ready for public consultation. This guide has been produced using examples of best practice and case studies.

Who has been involved in the solution exploration?

Please list any internal and external stakeholders

Internal stakeholders involved in the development of the guidance include Planning Policy officers, Planning officers and the Regeneration and Development team. The council's Nature Development officers have also reviewed the Sustainability Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment carried out in support of the guidance.

Statutory consultees (Natural England, Historic England, and the Environment Agency) are set to be consulted.

A public consultation on the contents of the document is set to take place. All responses received will be taken into consideration and incorporated where appropriate. Efforts have been made to ensure this document is accessible using photographs and illustrations to showcase good practice and explain design concepts. These measures enable a wide range of people to engage with the document.

What evidence have you gathered as a part of this EqlA? Which groups have you consulted or engaged with as part of this EqlA?

Sources can include but are not limited to: Statistics, JSNAs, stakeholder feedback, equality monitoring data, existing briefings, comparative data from local, regional or national sources.

Groups could include but are not limited to: equality / disadvantaged groups, VCSFE organisations, user groups, GM Equality panels, employee networks, focus groups, consultations.

This document adds further detail to the Stockport Core Strategy which has already been subject to an EqlA.

This document has been written using guidance from internal stakeholders. We are also preparing to consult both statutory consultees and the public. The council's Equalities team have been consulted as part of this EqlA and will continued to be involved throughout this process. This EqlA will continue to be updated with findings from our engagement process and with results from the consultation.

Are there any evidence gaps that make it difficult or impossible to form an opinion on how the proposed activity might affect different groups of people?

We are preparing to consult both the statutory consultees and the public. Once the consultation period has concluded we will consider all responses and amend the guidance accordingly. Until we have reviewed all consultation responses, it is difficult to understand how the guidance will affect different groups of people. It is also important to note that due to the nature of public consultation, not all groups of people will be captured. However, in producing the guidance this has been considered by looking at examples of best practice, utilising independent experts and holding discussions with a range of internal stakeholders.

Step 1: Establishing and developing the baseline

To assess the impacts of your proposal, you first need to understand how things are now. This will vary depending on your proposal, but consider who will be affected by the proposed changes: for example, who currently accesses a service or lives in an area? What works well for them? Are you aware of any issues? Are there any groups that are underrepresented?

Characteristic	Demographic of residents / service users	What works well How does the current provision or service meet the needs of people in different protected characteristics?	Current problems / issues This could include low levels of access or participation from certain demographic groups in current service or scheme; or disadvantages or barriers for particular groups
Age	All ages groups	Stockport Town Centre is well connected and well serviced making it an ideal location for people from different ages to live.	There is a lack of intergenerational housing in Stockport. Different types / tenures of housing are largely segregated and there lacks suitable residential developments in the town centre for families and the older population. Increasing the amount of intergenerational housing in Stockport Town Centre would support the development of a more sustainable community.
	Children	Stockport Town Centre is well serviced by schools, shops and leisure facilities making it an ideal location for families.	There is a lack of large apartments and townhouse in the town centre. Increasing the number of these units would entice families into town centre living as they offer a feasible alternative to larger suburban homes traditionally preferred by families. Existing residential developments in the town centre lack internal and external common space that cater to children, such as play or crèche facilities, which prevents families from residing in the town centre.
	Young people	Stockport Town Centre is becoming an increasingly sought-after place to live, work and play.	Stockport Town Centre currently lacks high-quality affordable residential units for younger people.

Characteristic	Demographic of residents / service users	What works well How does the current provision or service meet the needs of people in different protected characteristics?	Current problems / issues This could include low levels of access or participation from certain demographic groups in current service or scheme; or disadvantages or barriers for particular groups
	Older people	Stockport Town Centre is well located and well serviced by shops and leisure facilities making it an ideal location for older people.	Stockport Town Centre lacks high-quality residential units for the older population. Residential accommodation targeted to older people is often segregated and not always located near key services.
Disability Consider people with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities and mental health issues	44% of Stockport residents have a long-term health condition, which increases with age with 92% of those 85 and over. 34% of Stockport households have at least one member with a disability.	Stockport Town Centre is well located and has good public transport links. The area is also well serviced by shops and leisure facilities making it an ideal location for those with disabilities.	<p>Current residential units within the town centre often lack outdoor space and balconies. Accessible outdoor space and balconies are key to wellbeing for those that are unable to frequently leave their homes.</p> <p>The steep topography in Stockport Town Centre makes it difficult for some with disabilities to get around. In some areas, pavements are narrow and poorly connected. Cycle linkages are also poor and cycle parking is largely inaccessible for those with disabilities or special equipment.</p> <p>As the town centre develops and sustainability becomes a key focus, this often results in many parking spaces being lost. However, accessible parking is a necessary for some with disabilities.</p> <p>Much of the housing stock within the town centre is set to be brownfield development or relatively small scale plots. This type of development makes implementing lifts or accessible residential units difficult due to heritage and/or space constraints and may exclude those with disabilities from residing in these developments.</p>

Characteristic	Demographic of residents / service users	What works well How does the current provision or service meet the needs of people in different protected characteristics?	Current problems / issues This could include low levels of access or participation from certain demographic groups in current service or scheme; or disadvantages or barriers for particular groups
Gender reassignment A person whose individual experience of gender may not correspond to the sex assigned to them at birth.	According to 2021 data, less than 0.5% of Stockport residents are transgender. The guidance is intended to mitigate the impact of housing development where it creates an unacceptable impact on school places. It will not have direct equality impacts on this target group.	n/a	n/a
Maternity and pregnancy	The guidance is intended to mitigate the impact of housing development where it creates an unacceptable impact on school places. It will not have direct equality impacts on this target group.	n/a	n/a
Marriage and Civil Partnership	According to 2021 data, in Stockport 46.4% of people are married or in a civil partnership. 45.1% are same-sex couples living together, and 0.4% are opposite-sex couples living together. 0.9% of residents are married or in a civil partnership but are not living together. The guidance is intended to provide detailed design guidance on residential development in Stockport Town Centre. It will not have direct equality impacts on this target group.	n/a	n/a
Race Not all ethnic groups will have the same experiences so if possible specify whether the impact is likely to be different for	2021 data shows that Stockport is as ethnically diverse as the national average for England. 87% of Stockport residents are White and 12% are from a Black, Asian or Ethnic Minority background. The guidance is intended to provide detailed design guidance on residential development	n/a	n/a

Characteristic	Demographic of residents / service users	What works well How does the current provision or service meet the needs of people in different protected characteristics?	Current problems / issues This could include low levels of access or participation from certain demographic groups in current service or scheme; or disadvantages or barriers for particular groups
different ethnic groups e.g. Indian people, people of Black Caribbean heritage. This also includes Gypsy and Traveller populations	in Stockport Town Centre. It will not have direct equality impacts on this target group.		
Religion or Belief	<p>According to 2021 data, the largest religious group in Stockport is Christianity with 48% of the population identifying as Christian, although this is decreasing over time (a 15% percentage point decrease since 2011). Those with no religion are the second-most common (40%), which has been increasing alongside the Muslim population (5.5%).</p> <p>The guidance is intended to provide detailed design guidance on residential development in Stockport Town Centre. It will not have direct equality impacts on this target group.</p>	n/a	n/a
Sex	<p>51% of Stockport residents are female and 49% are male, in line with the national average.</p> <p>The guidance is intended to provide detailed design guidance on residential development in Stockport Town Centre. It will not have direct equality impacts on this target group.</p>	n/a	n/a
Sexual orientation	According to 2021 data, around 3% of Stockport's residents are gay, lesbian, bisexual.	n/a	n/a

Characteristic	Demographic of residents / service users	What works well How does the current provision or service meet the needs of people in different protected characteristics?	Current problems / issues This could include low levels of access or participation from certain demographic groups in current service or scheme; or disadvantages or barriers for particular groups
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual	The guidance is intended to provide detailed design guidance on residential development in Stockport Town Centre. It will not have direct equality impacts on this target group.		
Socioeconomic status	2021 data looking at 4 areas of potential deprivation (education, employment, health and housing) shows that 49% of households in Stockport were deprived in at least one of these 4 areas.	Stockport Town Centre is well connected and well serviced making it an ideal location for people from different backgrounds to live.	In Stockport Town Centre there is a lack of affordable housing. This issue is expected to increase as the area develops. Consequently, there is a need to ensure a mix of residential tenure and typologies. This will enable those from different socioeconomic statuses to reside within the town centre and will help foster a more sustainable community.
Other Please add in here any additional relevant comments or feedback where the protected characteristic is not known	Community groups	Stockport Town Centre is well connected and well serviced making it an ideal location for people from different backgrounds to live.	Within urban environments, people can often be isolated leading to issues like loneliness. The guidance encourages community groups to be established in new developments. This will encourage residents to get to know their neighbours, interact and share experiences.
You are encouraged to consider the below characteristics where you have relevant data, especially if your proposal is predicted to disproportionately impact one or more of these groups.			
Carers	Those that care for people that live in Stockport Town Centre or travel to the area.	Stockport Town Centre is well connected and well serviced with lots of shops and leisure facilities.	Inaccessible homes and public spaces in the town centre make it difficult for carers to provide care for people. Having accessible homes and public spaces like streets and pathways, will make their jobs easier.

Characteristic	Demographic of residents / service users	What works well How does the current provision or service meet the needs of people in different protected characteristics?	Current problems / issues This could include low levels of access or participation from certain demographic groups in current service or scheme; or disadvantages or barriers for particular groups
Those experiencing homelessness	Those wanting to live in Stockport Town Centre	Stockport Town Centre is well connected and well serviced making it an ideal location for people to live.	In Stockport Town Centre there is a lack of affordable housing. This issue is expected to increase as the area develops. Consequently, there is a need to ensure there will be a mix of residential tenure and typologies, including social housing. This will enable those experiencing homelessness to reside within the town centre and will help foster a more sustainable community.
Veterans	The document is intended to provide detailed design guidance on residential development in Stockport Town Centre. It will not have direct equality impacts on this target group.	n/a	n/a
Asylum seekers and refugees	Those wanting to live in Stockport Town Centre	Stockport Town Centre is well connected and well serviced making it an ideal location for people to live.	In Stockport Town Centre there is a lack of affordable housing. This issue is expected to increase as the area develops. Consequently, there is a need to ensure there will be a mix of residential tenure and typologies, including social housing. This will enable asylum seekers and refugees to reside within the town centre and will help foster a more sustainable community.

Step 2: Identifying impacts the proposal will have compared with the baseline

To explore the impacts of your proposal, you should use your baseline as a comparison with how things would be after your proposal. Think about how this would differ from the baseline for people with each protected characteristic. Include any sources of data you have used (including desktop research and engagement activity).

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
<i>Add more rows where needed</i>		<i>Is the impact positive or negative?</i>	<i>How have you become aware of an impact or inequality? Is it from research, have you been advised by another party, has a member of the public or a stakeholder made you aware, did someone from this or another characteristic make the claim?</i>	<i>What is the impact or inequality that has been identified? What is the frequency of claim for it? What is the rationale behind the issue, inequality or impact claimed?</i>	<i>Is there any evidence to support or deny the claim? Provide full details. Has the inequality or impact claimed been tested with people from the relevant characteristic? Have you researched the claimed issue? If yes, what has been learned and from what source(s)?</i>
	Age – older people	Positive	Research and case study examples	There is not enough suitable accommodation for the older population in Stockport Town Centre. This is resulting many older people being reluctant to leave their homes or living in segregated older persons housing elsewhere in the borough despite the town centre being well located and well serviced for their needs. The guidance encourages intergenerational living which supports the development of more sustainable communities.	New residential developments in the town centre are being marketed towards the younger population. Integrational housing is key to sustainable development. Local and national research shows that the older population are keen to downsize and reside in more urban settings.

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
	Age – children	Positive	Local research and examples	There is not enough suitable accommodation for the families with young children in Stockport Town Centre. Moreover, existing residential development in the town centre is not currently targeted towards families or children's needs, such as play or crèche facilities. This is leading many families to reside in suburban areas, resulting in increased car use. The guidance encourages intergenerational living which supports more sustainable communities.	Open space contributions, including children's play facilities, are currently being sought off many residential developments in the town centre as developments themselves are failing to provide these facilities.
	Age – younger people	Positive	Local research	Stockport Town Centre is becoming a more attractive place to live, work and play. However, there is currently a lack of suitable housing for younger people in Stockport Town Centre, and that which is available is often unaffordable. The guidance encourages a mix of housing types and tenures, and an increase in affordable housing units.	As Stockport Town Centre develops it will be important to ensure there are affordable housing options for local young people as others relocate from neighbouring boroughs.
	Disability Consider people with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities and mental health issues	Positive	Local research	<p>Many pedestrian routes in the town centre lack the ability to support mobility scooters and other mobility aids. This is making the town centre less accessible and supporting car use which in turn leads to traffic congestion and the negative impacts associated with this. The guidance encourages more accessible and connected streets and cycling provisions. This will make the Stockport Town Centre more accessible for a wider range of people. However, it is important to remember that parking is a necessary for some with disabilities. The guidance states that residential developments should endeavour to provide parking for those that need it both on-street and within developments.</p> <p>Current residential units within the town centre often lack outdoor space and balconies. Accessible outdoor space and balconies are key to wellbeing for those that are</p>	<p>It will be important that the council oversees public realm improvements to ensure that they are to standard and support wider connectivity beyond the immediate residential development.</p> <p>Balconies and outdoor space have become a key priority and selling point within urban</p>

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
				<p>unable to leave their homes frequently. The guidance encourage them in new developments.</p> <p>Much of the housing stock within Stockport Town Centre is set to be brownfield development or relatively small scale plots. This type of development often means implementing lifts or accessible residential units is difficult due to heritage and/or space constraints and may exclude those with disabilities from residing in these developments. The guidance highlights the importance of ensuring new residential developments provide accessible units for those with disabilities.</p>	living since the Covid-19 pandemic.
	Gender reassignment A person whose individual experience of gender may not correspond to the sex assigned to them at birth.	Neutral	n/a	There are no known or predicted impacts on this equality group.	n/a
	Maternity and pregnancy	Neutral	n/a	There are no known or predicted impacts on this equality group.	n/a
	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neutral	n/a	There are no known or predicted impacts on this equality group.	n/a
	Race Not all ethnic groups will have the same experiences so if possible specify whether the impact is	Neutral	n/a	There are no known or predicted impacts on this equality group.	n/a

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
	likely to be different for different ethnic groups e.g. Indian people, people of Black Caribbean heritage. This also includes Gypsy and Traveller populations				
	Religion or Belief	Neutral	n/a	There are no known or predicted impacts on this equality group.	n/a
	Sex	Neutral	n/a	There are no known or predicted impacts on this equality group.	n/a
	Sexual orientation Consider how the proposed policy may differently impact people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual	Neutral	n/a	There are no known or predicted impacts on this equality group.	n/a
	Socioeconomic status	Positive	Local research and case study examples	There is a lack of high-quality affordable housing in Stockport Town Centre. This is pricing many with lower socioeconomic status out of the area, making the population less diverse. The guidance encourages residential developments of mixed tenure and type, including social housing. This will increase the amount of affordable housing options in the town centre and allow more people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to reside in the area, which helps foster more sustainable communities.	The population in Stockport Town Centre is one of the most diverse in the borough. However, as the area develops, affordable housing will be key to ensure people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are not priced out.

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
You are encouraged to consider the below characteristics where you have relevant data, especially if your proposal is predicted to disproportionately impact one or more of these groups.					
	Carers	Positive	Research	Inaccessible homes and public spaces in the town centre make it difficult for carers to provide care for people. Having accessible homes and public spaces like streets and pathways, will make their jobs easier. The guidance encourages residential developments to provide accessible units and communal space, as well as public realm improvements.	n/a
	Those experiencing homelessness	Positive	Research	There is a lack of high-quality affordable housing in Stockport Town Centre. This is pricing many with lower socioeconomic status out of the area, making the population less diverse. The guidance encourages residential developments of mixed tenure and type, including social housing units. This will increase the amount of affordable housing in the town centre and allow people experiencing homelessness to reside in the area.	The population in Stockport Town Centre is one of the most diverse in the borough. However, as the area develops, affordable housing will be key to ensure people from local people experiencing homelessness are not priced out of their community.
	Veterans	Neutral	n/a	There are no known or predicted impacts on this equality group.	n/a
	Asylum seekers and refugees	Positive	Research	There is a lack of good quality affordable housing in Stockport Town Centre. This is pricing many with lower socioeconomic status out of the area, making the population less diverse. The guidance encourages residential developments of mixed tenure and type, including social housing. This will increase the amount of affordable housing in the town centre and allow asylum seekers and refugees to reside in the area.	The population in Stockport Town Centre is one of the most diverse in the borough. However, as the area develops, affordable housing will be key to ensure this is maintained.

Step 3: Identifying mitigating factors to minimise negative impacts

Step 2 identified potential impacts your proposal may have on people with different protected characteristics. If there are negative impacts, then you must consider how you could mitigate against (lessen) these negative impacts.

Impact no.	Impact summary	Suggested mitigation and rationale	Source of suggestion	Evidence for solution	Feasibility
	<i>Give a brief summary of the issue/inequality /impact</i>	<i>What is being suggested to mitigate for this. What is the rationale behind the suggestion?</i>	<i>Where does this suggestion come from? Have you consulted the characteristic(s) affected for solutions?</i>	<i>What evidence is there that the suggestion would solve the problem? How have you learned this? Has this been done elsewhere?</i>	<i>Within the financial envelope, how feasible is this solution? What are the cost implications? Could it indirectly affect anyone else? Can any other body help with the solution? If yes, how?</i>
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Please state if there are any additional comments or suggestions that could promote equalities in the future.

As stated above we will update this EqlA with results from our engagement and consultation work. If any future work comes out of this then this will be considered as part of the long-term impact of this work.

Step 4: Conclusions and outcome

It is strongly recommended to engage with people with protected characteristics to sense-check your conclusions before you indicate an outcome in this EqlA. Including feedback from this engagement activity will ensure your baseline assessment and your impacts are accurate, and that your mitigating actions are helpful and the best use of resources. It ensures that the proposal has been designed so that it is fair as possible to everybody.

If you have not undertaken any community engagement for this EqlA, please indicate this and explain why.

We will be undertaking the process of consultation soon, after which the EqlA will be updated to reflect the results from this. Aside from this consultation, we have not undertaken further community engagement for this EqlA as it is important that we progress the guidance as soon as possible given the vast residential development currently taking place in Stockport Town Centre.

If there are impacts identified that cannot be mitigated against, are there any justifications for not taking any action to improve the negative impacts that have been identified?

n/a

Are there any adverse impacts that can be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason? Please state why.

n/a

Are there any other proposals or policies that you are aware of that could create a cumulative impact?

This is an impact that appears when you consider services or activities together. A change or activity in one area may create an impact somewhere else.

This guidance is intended to add further guidance on policies within the Stockport Core Strategy. This guidance should also be used in conjunction with other relevant national and local planning documents and guidance.

Based on your equality impact analysis, please indicate the outcome of this EqIA.

Please indicate the outcome of the EqIA and provide justification and / or changes planned as required.

A.	No major barriers identified, and there are no major changes required – proceed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B.	Adjustments to remove barriers, promote equality and / or mitigate impact have been identified and are required – proceed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
C.	Positive impact for one or more of the groups justified on the grounds of equality – proceed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
D.	Barriers and impact identified, however having considered available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice – proceed with caution, knowing that this policy or practice may favour some people less than others. Strong justification for this decision is required.	<input type="checkbox"/>
E.	This policy identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination – stop and rethink.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please describe briefly how this EqIA will be monitored.

When will this be reviewed? What mitigating actions need to be implemented and when?

This EqIA will be continually reviewed and updated as the guidance develops.