

# Integrated Impact Assessment Form

Promoting Equality, Human Rights and Sustainability



# Integrated Impact Assessment Form

## Promoting Equality, Human Rights and Sustainability

<b>Title of Policy/ Proposal</b>	Proposals to Increase Council House Rents
<b>Completion Date</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
<b>Completed by</b>	Deborah Piner
<b>Lead officer</b>	Stephanie Irvine

### Type of Initiative:

Policy/Strategy

Programme/Plan

Project

Service

Function

Other

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New or Proposed

Changing/Updated

Review or existing

### 1. Briefly describe the policy/proposal you are assessing.

Set out a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy being developed or reviewed (e.g. objectives, aims) including the context within which it will operate.

Due to a proposal to increase council house rents, a consultation is being undertaken with tenants, local tenants and residents groups and ELTRP but the final decision to increase will be taken by East Lothian Council Elected Members.

**2. What will change as a result of this policy?**

Following the consultation with tenants, all the feedback received will be considered by council at a series of council committee meetings and council house rents, **may** increase next financial year.

**3. Do I need to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment?**

High Relevance	Yes/no
1. The policy/ proposal has consequences for or affects people	Yes
2. The policy/proposal has potential to make a significant impact on equality	No
3. The policy/ proposal has the potential to make a significant impact on the economy and the delivery of economic outcomes	No
4. The policy/proposal is likely to have a significant environmental impact	No
Low Relevance	
5. The policy/proposal has little relevance to equality	N/A
6. The policy/proposal has negligible impact on the economy	N/A
7. The policy/proposal has no/ minimal impact on the environment	N/A
<b>If you have identified low relevance please give a brief description of your reasoning here and send it to your Head of Service to record.</b>	

**If you have answered yes to 1, 2, or 3 above, please proceed to complete the Integrated Impact Assessment.**

If you have identified that your project will have a significant environmental impact (4), you will need to consider whether you need to complete a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

**4. What information/data/ consultation have you used to inform the policy to date?**

Evidence	Comments: what does the evidence tell you?
Data on populations in need	We are carrying out a consultation with all our current council tenants, local tenants and residents groups and ELTRP (January/February 2021). Equalities Monitoring Information (on gender, age, disability, age, income and ethnic origin) will be captured from tenants who complete and return our consultation questionnaire. In addition, we are also asking tenants due to the current pandemic if their financial situation has been made worse by COVID-19.
Data on service uptake/access	We are expecting a favourable return to our survey which in the previous years has attracted a good return rate. (10%). This year due to the current climate we are emailing the information out to approximately a third of our tenants.
Data on quality/outcomes	N/A
Research/literature evidence	Project Group comprising of council staff from Community Housing, Revenues and Finance, Cabinet Spokesperson for Housing & and members of East Lothian Tenants & Residents Panel (ELTRP) have designed and agreed an approach for this year's rent consultation. This includes designing a customer friendly consultation leaflet which includes key information for tenants on what their rent pays for. It also includes a questionnaire for tenants to give their views on the proposal to consider a potential increase of 2%. The Group also agreed this year to email out the consultation documents to those tenants who we have an email address for and also to

	send a text reminder to tenants that have registered a mobile phone number with us.
Service user experience information	Representatives of ELTRP's Executive Committee have been fully involved in drafting the documents through a special meeting and also by being represented on the Project Group.
Consultation and involvement findings	We will gather all the feedback received from tenants during the consultation and prepare a report for Council. (Results of previous consultations have shown that tenants were in agreement with our plans to increase rents to maintain existing services, improve our existing housing stock and our commitment to our new build programme)
Good practice guidelines	Scottish Housing Regulator Thematic Inquiry – How social landlords consult tenants about rent increases. TIS Guide on Rent Setting: Getting the best from your consultations. TIS Digital Toolkit.
Other (please specify)	We are planning to hold an online consultation event in partnership with East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel on 28 <sup>th</sup> January 2021. A paper will be produced on the outcomes of the event and will feed in to the consultation report.
Is any further information required? How will you gather this?	No

## 5. How does the policy meet the different needs of groups in the community?

	<b>Issues identified and how the strategy addresses these</b>
<b>Equality Groups</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people, people in the middle years,</li> <li>• Young people and children</li> <li>• Women, men and transgender people</li> </ul>	<p>The proposed rent increase could have an effect on all equality groups if they are council tenants. Having considered factors, equalities groups would not be disproportionately disadvantaged.</p> <p>If a decision is taken by Council to</p>

<p>(includes issues relating to pregnancy and maternity)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disabled people (includes physical disability, learning disability, sensory impairment, long-term medical conditions, mental health problems)</li> <li>• Minority ethnic people (includes Gypsy/Travellers, migrant workers, non-English speakers)</li> <li>• Refugees and asylum seekers</li> <li>• People with different religions or beliefs (includes people with no religion or belief)</li> <li>• Lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people</li> <li>• People who are unmarried, married or in a civil partnership</li> </ul>	<p>increase rents this will allow the council to maintain existing housing services, continue with investment in the development of new homes, maintain and improve our existing housing stock.</p> <p>This is all explained and financial information is provided in the consultation documents.</p> <p>We will email out the consultation documents to those tenants who we have an email address for. Post to tenants who do not have an email address and for those tenants who have specific needs, we will provide the consultation documents in other formats or languages and assistance on request.</p> <p>Tenants will be able to contact staff in the Service Development Team for support or assistance for the duration of the consultation and this may include signposting tenants to other services or agencies for assistance or advice.</p> <p>This includes this year Welfare Advice and Financial Support due to COVID-19.</p>
<p><b>Those vulnerable to falling into poverty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployed</li> <li>• People on benefits</li> <li>• Single Parents and vulnerable families</li> <li>• Pensioners</li> <li>• Looked after children</li> <li>• Those leaving care settings (including children and young people and those</li> </ul>	<p>The proposed rent increase could have an effect on all falling into poverty if they are council tenants. Having considered factors, equalities groups would not be disproportionately disadvantaged.</p> <p>If a decision is taken by Council to increase rents, this will allow the council to maintain existing housing services, continue with investment in the development of new homes, maintain</p>

<p>with illness)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homeless people</li> <li>• Carers (including young carers)</li> <li>• Those involved in the community justice system</li> <li>• Those living in the most deprived communities (bottom 20% SIMD areas)</li> <li>• People misusing services</li> <li>• People with low literacy/numeracy</li> <li>• Others e.g. veterans, students</li> </ul>	<p>and improve our existing housing stock.</p> <p>This is explained and financial information is provided in the consultation documents.</p> <p>Tenants who may be entitled to housing benefit, universal credit or who may be experiencing financial difficulties are provided with information through the consultation about how they can get help and support they need by contacting the Council’s Benefits or Financial Inclusion Team.</p> <p>This year, this includes Welfare Advice and Financial Support due to COVID-19.</p> <p>For tenants who have specific needs, we will provide the consultation documents in other formats or languages and assistance on request.</p> <p>Tenants will be able to contact staff in the Service Development Team for support or assistance the duration of the consultation and may be signposted to other services or agencies for assistance or advice.</p>
<p><b>Geographical communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural/ semi rural communities</li> <li>• Urban Communities</li> <li>• Coastal communities</li> </ul>	<p>There is no difference between geographical communities and so comments already made above are also relevant here.</p>

**6. Are there any other factors which will affect the way this policy impacts on the community or staff groups?**

A final decision on the proposal to increase rents and the level at which they will be increased by, will be taken by the Council at a special budget meeting in February 2021.

**7. Is any part of this policy/ service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?**

If yes, how have you included equality and human rights considerations into the contract?

Yes and this is done through our corporate procurement process. The Tenants Information Service, who are currently contracted to provide the independent development support to tenants, tenants groups and ELTRP, are an Equal Opportunities Employer and have a statement promoting equal opportunities within their current contract document. TIS are a tenant led organisation committed to supporting tenants and landlord organisations through the current pandemic and have provided a Digital Toolkit to enable digital engagement to continue meaningful participation.

**8. Have you considered how you will communicate information about this policy or policy change to those affected e.g. to those with hearing loss, speech impairment or English as a second language?**

Yes, we will communicate the outcome of this year's rent consultation and council's budget meeting to all our tenants by way of letter, email, by posting information on the council website and will then follow up with information in our tenants' newsletter, Homefront.

These publications and methods of communication will provide tenants with the option to request the information in alternative formats e.g. braille, large print, and audiotape or in their own language.

**9. Please consider how your policy will impact on each of the following?**

Objectives	Comments
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<b>Equality and Human rights</b>	
Promotes / advances equality of opportunity e.g. improves access to and quality of services, status	Neutral impact but by increasing rents we will be able to improve the quality of service for all tenants.
Promotes good relations within and between people with protected characteristics and tackles harassment	N/A
Promotes participation, inclusion, dignity and self control over decisions	N/A
Builds family support networks, resilience and community capacity	N/A
Reduces crime and fear of crime	N/A
Promotes healthier lifestyles including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• diet and nutrition,</li> <li>• sexual health,</li> <li>• substance misuse</li> <li>• Exercise and physical activity.</li> <li>• Lifeskills</li> </ul>	N/A
<b>Environmental</b>	
Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in East Lothian (including carbon management)	N/A
Plan for future climate change	N/A
Pollution: air/ water/ soil/ noise	N/A
Protect coastal and inland waters	N/A
Enhance biodiversity	N/A

Encourage resource efficiency (energy, water, materials and minerals)	N/A
Public Safety: Minimise waste generation/ infection control/ accidental injury /fire risk	N/A
Reduce need to travel / promote sustainable forms or transport	N/A
Improves the physical environment e.g. housing quality, public and green space	Yes – rent increase will increase housing quality.
<b>Economic</b>	
Maximises income and /or reduces income inequality	N/A
Helps young people into positive destinations	N/A
Supports local business	N/A
Helps people to access jobs (both paid and unpaid)	N/A
Improving literacy and numeracy	N/A
Improves working conditions, including equal pay	N/A
Improves local employment opportunities	N/A

### 10. Action Plan

Identified negative impact	Mitigating circumstances	Mitigating actions	Timeline	Responsible person
N/A				


**11. Sign off by Head of Service**

Name Douglas Proudfoot

*Douglas Proudfoot*

Date 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021