

Equality and Safety Impact Assessment

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** (Section 149 of the Equality Act) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making – it encourages public bodies to be more efficient and effective by understanding how different people will be affected by their activities, so that their policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people’s needs. The Council’s Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) includes an assessment of the community safety impact assessment to comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and will enable the Council to better understand the potential impact of proposals and consider mitigating action.

Name or Brief Description of Proposal	COUNCIL RIGHT TO BUY RECEIPT PROPOSALS AND APPROVAL TO SPEND
Brief Service Profile (including number of customers)	
<p>The Government has introduced temporary flexibilities for the expenditure of Right to Buy Receipts which can be applied during 2024/25 and 2025/26. These allow the Council to apply Right to Buy Receipts to cover 100% of the cost of acquiring additional properties to the Council’s affordable housing stock.</p> <p>This paper seeks consent to use those flexibilities for a programme of property purchases to provide additional properties to alleviate Housing Register and Temporary Homeless accommodation pressures.</p> <p>Based on an assumption of an average property purchase cost of £200k, plus a 15% on cost allowance, the Council could buy up to 78 properties under this initiative. This would impact on up to 78 households through provision of additional affordable accommodation.</p>	
Summary of Impact and Issues	
<p>The Council has a very long Housing Register (people waiting for affordable accommodation), which stands at 8,186 households as at 10/09/24.</p> <p>There is also currently an unprecedented level of demand for temporary accommodation, with 172 households in temporary accommodation and 195 in emergency accommodation, with around 150 households awaiting offers of long-term housing before they can transition out. This equates to approximately 120 families in B&B or nightly paid accommodation.</p> <p>This level of housing need has a devastating impact on those families waiting for accommodation, particularly those in emergency accommodation.</p> <p>Also, B&B or nightly paid accommodation is very expensive for the Council to</p>	

provide, and can only legally be used for a maximum of 6 weeks for any given family.

Unspent Right to Buy Receipts have to be paid to MHCLG with interest if they are not spent within set time limits. The Council currently holds £5.515m which will have to be paid to MHCLG along with £1.498m interest if it is not spent by 31/03/25.

Potential Positive Impacts

Using the Right to Buy Receipts to provide additional affordable accommodation will provide much-needed accommodation to meet housing need in the city.

If the monies are successfully spent in full, it will avoid the need to pay £1.498m in interest to MHCLG for the first year of the project, with further interest to be saved in future years if the money is spent.

The use of the temporary flexibilities for the expenditure of Right to Buy Receipts is especially attractive, as currently the Council can apply the Receipts to 100% of the costs of providing replacement properties (usually, only a much lower percentage of the costs can be applied).

The ability to reduce the use of B&B or nightly paid accommodation results in considerable savings for the Council. It also improves the options available to families in need of emergency accommodation, having a positive impact on the lives of those families.

Although this programme of purchases would only have a very minor impact on the availability of affordable housing stock in the city, given the length of the Housing Register, any additional properties are helpful to meet need.

Responsible Service Manager	Sue Jones
Date	08.10.24
Approved by Senior Manager	
Date	

Potential Impact

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
Age	N/A	
Disability	N/A	
Gender Reassignment	N/A	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	N/A	
Pregnancy and Maternity	N/A	
Race	N/A	
Religion or	N/A	

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
Belief		
Sex	N/A	
Sexual Orientation	N/A	
Community Safety	N/A	N/A
Poverty	The provision of additional affordable homes should have a positive impact on those families to whom they are allocated.	All properties purchased under this programme will provide affordable housing.
Health & Wellbeing	<p>The provision of better options for emergency family accommodation will offer improved health & wellbeing outcomes for families.</p> <p>The provision of additional affordable accommodation with security of tenure will have a positive impact on people to whom they are allocated.</p>	<p>A number of the properties to be purchased under this programme will be used to provide additional emergency family accommodation.</p> <p>All properties will add to the city's affordable housing stock.</p>
Other Significant Impacts	N/A	N/A