

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	Southampton City Council Housing Strategy 2026-2031
Brief Service Profile (including number of customers)	
<p>Southampton City Council (SCC) is the statutory housing authority responsible for delivering housing services to residents under the Housing Act 1985 and Housing Act 1996. The council manages approximately 16,000 council-owned homes and 2,200 leasehold and share ownership properties, alongside its strategic oversight of housing provision across the city, including the private rented sector and housing associations.</p> <p>Key responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managing council stocks ▪ Addressing homelessness ▪ Ensuring compliance with regulatory consumer standards ▪ Supporting improvements in the private rented sector in line with the upcoming Renters Reform Bill ▪ Overseeing transformation programmes via the Housing Improvement Board <p>Southampton faces many housing challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overcrowding affects 5.8% of households, compared to the national average of 4.5% in England ▪ Fuel poverty impacts over 10% of households, with damp and mould contributing to poor health and wellbeing 	

- Private renting is disproportionately high, with 29.2% of households renting privately compared to 19% nationally
- Our council housing quality requires urgent attention, with less than half of homes meeting the Decent Homes Standard.

The SCC Housing Strategy 2026-2031 aims to address these challenges through a cross-cutting approach that improves landlord services, increases housing supply and quality, and supports resilient communities. It is designed to align with the Council's Corporate Plan and respond to regulatory scrutiny, resident feedback, and emerging legislative duties.

Summary of Impact and Issues

Southampton faces a number of housing challenges that affect people's health, safety and overall quality of life. The housing strategy responds to those issues, setting out a clear plan to improve housing, meet demand, and stronger communities. Key issues include:

- **Housing Quality Condition:** Less than 50% of the council-owned homes meets the Decent Homes Standard. Many properties need urgent repairs and upgrades to make them safer and healthier.
- **Private renting:** A large number of people rent privately, but not all homes meet expected standards. New national rules (Renters Reform Act) are coming, and our services must adapt to protect tenants.
- **Demand and Access:** Over 8,000 households are on the housing waiting list, with some families waiting over 11 years, especially for larger homes. There is a clear need for more affordable and suitable housing.
- **Homelessness and Housing Insecurity:** Rough sleeping has tripled in recent years. Over 600 homeless families with children were recorded in 2024, and many more in temporary accommodation. Rising rents and living costs are placing low-income households at risk.
- **Health and Safety:** Damp, mould, and fuel poverty are affecting resident's health, especially those who are older, disable, and have young children.
- **Community Safety:** Antisocial behaviour and disrepair affect parts of the city. Better housing and local investment will help create safer, more resilient neighbourhoods.
- **Local Plan Alignment:** The scale of these challenges also reflects wider pressures in Southampton's Local Plan, which sets out ambitions to address population growth, land use, and long-term infrastructure needs.

Potential Positive Impacts

The strategy is making a difference by creating homes where people want to live, supporting resilient communities, and laying strong foundations for future growth.

- Through improved investment, over 9,500 council homes will be brought up to the Decent Homes Standard. We will be tackling damp, mould, insulation, and improving fire, gas and electrical safety, etc.
- The new Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy ensures tenant voices shapes the housing services. From complaint resolution to community schemes like Junior Neighbourhood Wardens.
- Adaptations and Downsizing support will create homes that match the needs. Helping families access the right size property and enabling independent living for residents with disabilities.
- New build housing meets high sustainability and design standards, aligning with Net Zero 2035 targets.
- Improved quality and security for the private rented sector tenants
- Increased availability of housing with specific focus on affordability, energy efficiency, adaptability for specific needs to support resilient and successful communities.
- Regeneration of communities with better housing and supporting community investment.
- Develop partnerships to support delivery ambition.

Responsible Service Manager	Jamie Brenchley
Date	28 th July 2025
Approved by Senior Manager	Debbie Ward
Date	24 th July 2025

Potential Impact

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
Age	In Southampton, the age range* of adults is 66.6%, aged between 18-64 years and 13.7%, aged 65 years and over.	We are improving housing stock by retrofitting existing homes, offering independence with

* Mid-year estimate 2023 (ONS)

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
	<p>The older population is projected to grow proportionately more than any other group in Southampton in the next few years. The over 65 population is set to increase by 18.2%, or 7,021 people, between 2023 and 2030, with the over 75 population set to increase by 17.9%, or 3,448 people[†]. This demographic shift brings both opportunities and challenges for housing, health, and community wellbeing</p> <p>The following age-related impacts have been considered, in relation to the proposed changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rising demand for accessible homes - Increased risk of hospital admissions - Loneliness and isolation - Pressure on residential care - Fuel poverty and poor conditions - Accessibility of information 	<p>support through our using housing options, approving new housing designs with adaptability facilities, improving access to housing advice for older people and carers – especially around downsizing, care options, and financial support, etc. However, we will continue to monitor to ensure age-appropriate housing provision.</p>
Disability	<p>Disabled residents, whether living with physical, sensory, learning, or mental health conditions face persistent barriers in accessing safe, and suitable housing. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited supply of accessible homes especially for wheelchair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategy includes provision of adaptable homes and supported accommodation. ▪ Retrofit existing stock using

[†] Small Area Population Forecast (Hampshire County Council)

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
	<p>users and families needing adapted properties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Long waiting times for suitable accommodation often leading to delayed hospital discharge or reliance on residential care ▪ Inaccessible digital systems ▪ Hidden needs such as sensory sensitivities or mental health conditions, which are often overlooked in housing assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve housing assessments ▪ Ensure accessibility standards and specialist housing pipelines are maintained.
Gender Reassignment	Trans and non-binary residents may face significant barriers in accessing safe, inclusive housing.	Embed inclusivity in consultation and housing service training.
Care experienced	<p>Young people leaving care often face significant housing challenges, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited access to stable housing ▪ Higher risk of homelessness ▪ Barriers to tenancy sustainment, due to trauma, financial insecurity, or lack of experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporate transitional support within supported housing offers. ▪ Local Plan used to ensure suitable homes.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	While this group may not face widespread housing barriers, certain situations such as relationship breakdowns or tenancy disputes can affect housing stability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We will ensure there is a fair treatment in housing allocations ▪ Provide clear guidance on tenancy rights and housing options during relationship breakdowns

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Embed inclusive language in housing communications.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Pregnancy and maternity can significantly affect housing needs and stability.	Ensure housing allocations consider family composition and needs.
Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In Southampton, ethnicity profile[‡] is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ 68.1% white British ➢ 12.6% White Other ➢ 10.6% Asian/Asian British ➢ 3.3% Mixed ➢ 3.0% Black/Black British/Caribbean or African ➢ 2.3% Other ▪ Minority ethnic groups are more likely to live in overcrowded or poor-quality housing, and face barriers to home ownership. ▪ According to Shelter, black-led households are 12 times likely to live in temporary accommodation than white-led householders nationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure culturally competent service delivery and community engagement. ▪ Strengthen data collection and analysis – Tenant & Leaseholder Engagement Strategy (awaiting approval). ▪ Promote inclusive engagement during consultations, ensuring diverse voices shape housing decisions and priorities.
Religion or Belief	<p>Religion and belief can shape housing needs, preferences, and experiences of discrimination. In Southampton:</p> <p>Over 160 Languages are spoken, and the city's faith communities includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 43.4% no religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respect faith-specific needs within housing design and engagement.

[‡] 2021 Census (ONS)

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40.1% Christian 5.6% Muslim 1.7% Sikh 1.3% Hindu 0.5% Buddhist 0.1% Jewish 0.7% Other 6.6% not answered <p>Religious practices may influence housing preferences, such as proximity to places of worship, dietary requirements, or space for prayer.</p>	
Sex	<p>Sex can influence housing outcomes due to structural inequalities, safety concerns, and caregiving roles. In Southampton:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 48% female and 51% male. Women are more likely to experience housing insecurity Single mothers represent a significant proportion of households in temporary accommodation Men are overrepresented among rough sleepers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender-sensitive service planning where relevant. Ensure fair and transparent housing allocations.
Sexual Orientation	<p>This can influence housing experiences due to discrimination, stigma, and lack of inclusive services.</p> <p>The following statistic for Southampton is as follows[§]:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain inclusive policy frameworks and frontline service training.

[§] 2021 Census (ONS)

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 86.8% Straight or Heterosexual (aged 16 and over) 2.0% gay or lesbian 2.4% bisexual 0.6% - Other 8.3% - did not answer the question 	
Community Safety	<p>This is fundamental to housing stability, tenant wellbeing, and neighbourhood cohesion. In Southampton:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-social behaviour (ASB) and hate incidents remain key concerns, particularly in high-density housing and temporary accommodation. Tenants report feeling unsafe due to poor lighting, neglected communal areas, and slow response to ASB complaints. Domestic abuse and exploitation are exacerbated by housing insecurity and lack of trauma-informed support. Poor housing conditions including damp, overcrowding, and inadequate repairs can contribute to stress, conflict, and breakdown of community trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align with Crime and Disorder Act requirements and local safety initiative. Strengthen partnerships with police, safeguarding teams, and community organisations to tackle ASB and hate incidents.
Poverty	<p>Poverty is a key driver of housing need, insecurity, and poor health outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote energy-efficient upgrades and rent moderation schemes. Strengthen links with welfare and financial support services.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure inclusive housing allocations.
Health & Wellbeing	<p>Housing is a key determinant of health. Poor housing conditions, insecurity, and lack of access to support services can exacerbate physical and mental health issues. In Southampton:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Life expectancy varies by up to 8 years between wards. ▪ Fuel poverty affects over 10,000 households ▪ Overcrowding and damp are linked to stress, sleep deprivation, and childhood illness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have embedded the health equity into the housing strategy, recognising housing as a lever for improved health outcomes. ▪ Improve housing quality and energy efficiency. ▪ Introduce measurable reduction targets and accountability mechanisms (e.g., Damp Reduction Scheme under Awaab's Law)
Other Significant Impacts		