

**Initial equality impact assessment screening form**

This form is an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to an activity, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.

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| <b>Directorate:</b>                                                                                       | Resources & Governance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Service Area:</b>                                                                                      | Housing Services                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Activity being screened:</b>                                                                           | Rent Setting Policy 2026-2031                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Officer(s) carrying out the screening:</b>                                                             | Claire Gardner-Queen                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>What are you proposing to do?</b>                                                                      | Implement a rent setting policy across Housing Services.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?</b>                                         | <p>This policy explains how Darlington Borough Council calculates and increases rents and service charges (where these are applicable) for homes that sit within the HRA.</p> <p>The main source of income for the HRA is the rent and service charges paid by tenants. It is a ring-fenced account, which means that the income received can only be spent on services to homes within the HRA. These services include repairs and maintenance, collecting rent, letting properties to new tenants, dealing with anti-social behaviour and providing tenancy management for our tenants. The income received also helps fund the provision of new Council homes and upgrades of our existing homes.</p> <p>The policy will ensure that the Council adheres to legal and regulatory requirements when calculating and increasing rents and service charges, particularly in relation to the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) Rent Standard and the government's Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing. It sets out how we set the recharges, through service charges, for other services provided such as grounds maintenance and communal heating.</p> <p>The use of this policy is covered by Housing legislation and government guidance.</p> <p>It is considered a regulatory requirement along with good practice to have a rent setting policy.</p> |
| <b>Does the activity involve a significant commitment or removal of resources?</b><br>Please give details | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

Is there likely to be an adverse impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or any other socially excluded groups?

As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:

- To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics?
- Does the activity relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important?
- Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the activity relates to?

If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be a significant adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate.

| Protected characteristic                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Yes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | No | Don't know/ Info not available |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|--------------------------------|
| Age                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | x  |                                |
| Disability                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | x  |                                |
| Sex (gender)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | x  |                                |
| Race                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | x  |                                |
| Sexual Orientation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | x  |                                |
| Religion or belief                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | x  |                                |
| Gender reassignment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | x  |                                |
| Pregnancy or maternity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | x  |                                |
| Marriage or civil partnership                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | x  |                                |
| <b>Other</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |    |                                |
| Carer (unpaid family or friend)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | x  |                                |
| Low Income                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | x  |                                |
| Rural Location                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | x  |                                |
| <b>Does the activity relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.</b>                                                                                          | <p>Housing Services provide accommodation to over 5000 tenants and garage tenants, some of are vulnerable and have disabilities. Some Council tenants are on a low income and could be reliant upon welfare benefits as the main source of household income.</p> <p>All tenants have the propensity to have some protected characteristics, however, are not adversely impacted by the policy. The policy simplifies current legislation and government guidance and explains how this is put into practice by Housing Services.</p> |    |                                |
| <b>Will the activity have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.</b> | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |    |                                |

|                                          |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                       |  |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Decision (Please tick one option)</b> | EIA not relevant or proportionate: | <b>x</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Continue to full EIA: |  |
| <b>Reason for Decision</b>               |                                    | <p>The introduction of this rent setting policy will assist Housing Services in continuing to set rent and service charges in line with legislation and government guidance. It assists us in meeting regulatory requirements from the Rent Standard and Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard too.</p> <p>It will ensure that Members, tenants and prospective tenants are assured that Council house rent and service charges are set in line with guidance.</p> <p>The policy will be reviewed every 5 years, or when a legislative or regulatory standard change is made.</p> |                       |  |
| <b>Signed (Assistant Director)</b>       |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                       |  |
| <b>Date</b>                              |                                    | <b>09/06/2026</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                       |  |