

Appendix B

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Regeneration of the Elizabeth House Sheltered Housing Scheme
2. What are the aims of the plan?
 - 2.1 The existing development is not fit for purpose, none of the properties meet modern access and mobility standards and the bedsits in Elizabeth House have shared communal bathrooms. As a result the scheme is being let to applicants with low housing need not requiring sheltered accommodation. The proposal is to demolish the existing properties and provide new affordable housing focused on older people with some provision for younger residents with and without disabilities
 - 2.2 The new scheme will include an extra care scheme, provision for older people with dementia, adults with learning disabilities and other disabilities. It will provide homes and services for a much wider range of residents and enable residents, who currently would have to be considered for residential care, to remain in the community.
3. In what way might the regeneration impact negatively on some groups of people?
 - 3.1 The development will require more than half of the residents to be moved from the site. However, there is the potential for 34 tenants to remain on site and move when the new properties become available for letting. Five tenants living at Elizabeth House have already made their own alternative arrangements for accommodation and have moved. Five other tenants from the scheme were already registered on the housing waiting list and actively seeking a move. A further four tenants have registered on the housing waiting list following the Council's decision and ten have identified a preference to move out of the borough, primarily to be near friends or relations.
 - 3.1.2 The rehousing of older residents, many of whom will not be in the best of health or keen to move, will need to be undertaken with care. Officers have experience of rehousing residents from other sheltered schemes and are aware of the stress that can and will be created for the residents and staff involved.
 - 3.1.3 Moving residents will have an impact on the local sheltered community. The Council will maximise the opportunity for as many residents as possible to remain on site in Elizabeth House until new properties become available for letting at the scheme.
 - 3.1.4 The Council will take full responsibility for securing accommodation and making arrangements for all the residents who will need to move. This

will include making Homeloss Loss payments, paying for removal and disconnection/ reconnection of services.

- 3.1.5 All the residents of the sheltered scheme have been given a guarantee that they will be able to return and live in one of the new homes on completion of the works.
- 3.1.6 Age – The new scheme will reduce the rehousing opportunities for younger older people without mobility problems to move to this development. This situation has only arisen because the properties have become unsuitable for letting as true sheltered accommodation to tenants with mobility problems. There are good opportunities for younger older people without mobility problems to be rehoused elsewhere in the borough. All the existing sheltered housing tenants have been given a guarantee that they can return on completion of works, irrespective of whether they have mobility problems or not.
- 3.1.7 Disability – The inclusion of a disabled persons flat at 1 Pond Hill Gardens will result in a disabled family having to move. The Council will take full responsibility for securing suitable accommodation for the family and arranging their rehousing package and move.
- 3.1.8 Gender – No negative impact identified.
- 3.1.9 Race – No negative impacts identified.
- 3.1.10 Religion/belief - No negative impacts identified.
- 3.1.11 Sexual Orientation - No negative impacts identified.
- 3. (b) In what ways does the regeneration of the Elizabeth House scheme promote more equal access and better match diverse needs.
 - 3.2.1 Age – The new development's extra care facilities and Life Time Homes standards, throughout the scheme, will enable more older people to live longer in the community. Affordable housing may also be made available to some younger people excluded from the current scheme.
 - 3.2.2 Disability – All of the new homes will be built to modern Life Time Homes standards allowing access throughout to the disabled and improved options for adaptation should the need arise.
 - 3.2.3 Gender – The replacement of the bedsit accommodation with one and two bedroomed self contained accommodation will increase the opportunity for couples of all genders to live together.
 - 3.2.4 Race – The provision of self contained accommodation to replace bedsits with shared accommodation will address any concerns

prospective residents from BME communities may have in respect of sharing facilities.

3.2.5 Religion/belief – As above.

3.2.6 Sexual orientation – The replacement of the bedsit accommodation with one and two bedroomed self contained accommodation will increase the opportunity for couples of all sexual orientations to live together.

4. Is there evidence of public concern (e.g. complaints)? Have staff raised concerns? Is there local or national research to suggest there could be a problem?

4.1 The decision of The Executive to regenerate the scheme has not been welcomed by many residents living in the scheme and local area. A petition was received from approximately 800 signatories requesting the council reconsider its proposals in preference to refurbishment. In response consultants have been appointed to compare the merits of both options. The findings of the consultants, their recommendations and those of officers form the main body of the attached report.

5. How and with whom has consultation been undertaken as part of the assessment of section 3?

5.1 There has been ongoing consultation with residents since the decision of The Executive in July 2008. This resulted in the Council appointing residents to compare the merits of refurbishment with new build. Consultation will continue when undertaking the Town Planning Brief, drawing together a specification for the new scheme and determining the rehousing process.

5.2 The Executive Member and Executive Head of Community Living are meeting with residents, after the Executive has considered the options, to share the outcome and discuss the impact on residents.

6. Can the adverse affects of the scheme be justified?

6.1 The regeneration will have a negative impact on the residents, who will have to move to enable the regeneration to take place, and the local community during the period the works are undertaken.

6.2 It is regrettable that the residents will be inconvenienced by having to be moved from their homes. However, the scheme is no longer fit for purpose, is not suitable for remodelling and will only fall into further decline if the site is not regenerated.

6.3 The Council has a responsibility to ensure that suitable action is taken to make best use of the site for the future and increasing needs of older people. There are good opportunities for younger older people without mobility problems to be rehoused elsewhere in the borough.

- 6.4 The inconvenience created by a development of this size to local residents is regretted but is inevitable. The Council will work with the developer to ensure that nuisance is kept to a minimum.
7. Monitoring the impact of the regeneration and service provision in the future.
- 7.1 There will be regular reports to The Executive mapping progress of the scheme. The rehousing of the residents will be kept under review and periodic reports provided identifying trends and providing resident feedback.
- 7.2 The take up and letting of the new scheme accommodation will be subject of a separate report on completion of the works. Thereafter, the allocation process will be subject to the Council's allocation policies and monitoring processes.
8. Actions to be taken as a result of this assessment
- 8.1 The attached report recommends a phased development in order to enable as many residents as possible to remain on site during the works and to provide accommodation which will meet the long term needs of the borough's ageing population.