

Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form – Appendix 2

Please ensure that you refer to the Screening Form Guidance while completing this form.

Which service area and directorate are you from?

Service Area: Housing and Public Health

Directorate: Place

Q1 (a) What are you screening for relevance?

- New and revised policies, practices or procedures
- Service review, re-organisation or service changes/reductions, which affect the wider community, service users and/or staff
- Efficiency or saving proposals
- Setting budget allocations for new financial year and strategic financial planning
- New project proposals affecting staff, communities or accessibility to the built environment, e.g., new construction work or adaptations to existing buildings, moving to on-line services, changing location
- Large Scale Public Events
- Local implementation of National Strategy/Plans/Legislation
- Strategic directive and intent, including those developed at Regional Partnership Boards and Public Services Board, which impact on a public bodies functions
- Medium to long term plans (for example, corporate plans, development plans, service delivery and improvement plans)
- Setting objectives (for example, well-being objectives, equality objectives, Welsh language strategy)
- Major procurement and commissioning decisions
- Decisions that affect the ability (including external partners) to offer Welsh language opportunities and services

(b) Please name and fully describe initiative here:

This report proposes an increase in Council house rents and other fees and charges for 2024/25 in line with Welsh Government rent policy for properties within the HRA. The average increase for 24/25 is 6%. an increase of £6.56 per week. The proposed rent increase has taken into account the affordability of rents for contract holders. The following factors have been examined;

- Compared to other local housing providers Swansea Council rents are lower than Private Sector rents for all the property types shown. They are also lowest when compared to local Housing Associations for all property types except for 1 bed flats.
- Based on the latest published Welsh Government data, Our current average weekly rent compares favourably with other Welsh social landlords ranking 27th highest out of 50.
- The ONS considers an affordable rent to be one where it is no more than 30% of the income. The tables shown in Appendix 1 show that the proposed rents for 2024/25 does not exceed the ONS limit as a proportion of household income.

- It is estimated that around 70% of tenants are in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. These benefits will be increased to cover the proposed rent increase so tenants in receipt of these benefits will not be worse off.
- The latest tenants survey carried out in October 2021 found that 64.8% of tenants were either very satisfied or satisfied that their rent provided value for money. 24.4% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied and 10.9% were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- A number of commitments are in place to support contact holders who may be facing financial difficulties. These include;
 - There will be no evictions due to financial hardship for the term of the rent settlement in 2024-25, where tenants engage with their landlords.
 - During this time we will continue to provide targeted support to those experiencing financial hardship to access support available.
 - We will participate in a joint campaign, encouraging tenants to talk to their landlord if they are experiencing financial difficulties and access support available.

Arrears Prevention is now key and lots of support is provided at signings to prevent arrears becoming an issue in the first place. Support is also needed for tenants who are still on legacy benefits and claiming HB, preparing/supporting tenants in obtaining backdates and mandatory reconsiderations. Support is provided at every stage during the tenancy meaning fewer evictions and court action with these actions only being used as a last resort. We have formulated our own in-house rents strategy which explores every avenue and works with our partners in Housing options/TSU/support agencies to prevent court action.

These measures include;

- Ensuring sustaining tenancies and supporting tenants is at the core of our business.
- Developing our approach to early welfare benefits, financial inclusion and income maximisation advice and support.
- Focusing on proactive early interventions to increase engagement at a much earlier stage.
- Identifying and working with sub-groups of tenants and vulnerable tenants most at risk of eviction.
- Exploring trauma and psychologically informed approaches to Housing Management.
- Exploring further Managed Moves.
- Ensuring that eviction is an action of last resort where all other methods have failed and that if an eviction does take place provision is made available to ensure that it does not result in homelessness.

Q2 What is the potential impact on the following: the impacts below could be positive (+) or negative (-)

further	High Impact		Medium Impact		Low Impact		Needs investigation
	+	-	+	-	+	-	
Children/young people (0-18)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Older people (50+)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other age group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Future Generations (yet to be born)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race (including refugees)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asylum seekers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gypsies & travellers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or (non-)belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty/social exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carers (inc. young carers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community cohesion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q3 What involvement has taken place/will you undertake e.g. engagement/consultation/co-productive approaches? Please provide details below – either of your activities or your reasons for not undertaking involvement

The maximum increase was set by the Minister after consultation with all social landlords throughout Wales together with tenant representative groups. In addition, an all Wales meeting between the Welsh Governments representatives and stakeholder groups took place before the Minister made her decision. In making the decision the Minister took into account the affordability issues together with need to increase income to invest in the condition of the social housing stock to tackle important issues such as damp and mold and fuel poverty together with need to increase the social housing stock to help tackle homelessness. The decision to increase rents by lower than the 6.7% maximum allowed under the Welsh Governments was made after further consideration of the affordability impact on contract holders that are not in receipt of benefits.

The proposals in this report are based on the objective of maximising the resources available for investment in the housing stock to maintain the WHQS and to build affordable housing in line with the More Homes Programme. Tenants will need to be notified of the proposed increase in

accordance with the provisions of section 104 of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 which states;

- (1) The landlord may vary the rent payable under a secure contract by giving the contract-holder a notice setting out a new rent to take effect on the date specified in the notice.
- (2) The period between the day on which the notice is given to the contract-holder and the specified date may not be less than **two months**.

Q4 Have you considered the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 in the development of this initiative:

- a) Overall does the initiative support our Corporate Plan's Well-being Objectives when considered together?
Yes No
- b) Does the initiative consider maximising contribution to each of the seven national well-being goals?
Yes No
- c) Does the initiative apply each of the five ways of working?
Yes No
- d) Does the initiative meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs?
Yes No

Q5 What is the potential risk of the initiative? (Consider the following impacts – equality, socio-economic, environmental, cultural, legal, financial, political, media, public perception etc...)

High risk

Medium risk

Low risk

Q6 Will this initiative have an impact (however minor) on any other Council service?

Yes No **If yes, please provide details below**

Building Services, Legal, Finance

Q7 What is the cumulative impact of this proposal on people and/or communities when considering all the impacts identified within the screening and any other key decisions affecting similar groups/ service users made by the organisation?

(You may need to discuss this with your Service Head or Cabinet Member to consider more widely if this proposal will affect certain groups/ communities more adversely because of other decisions the organisation is making. For example, financial impact/poverty, withdrawal of multiple services and whether this is disadvantaging the

same groups, e.g., disabled people, older people, single parents (who are mainly women), etc.)

A significant number of Housing tenants will not be impacted by the proposed rent increase as they are in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. These benefits will be increased to cover the proposed rent increase so tenants in receipt of these benefits will not be worse off. Arrears prevention is a key priority for the Housing Service and a number of measures are in place to support tenants who may be facing financial difficulty. These include;

- Ensuring sustaining tenancies and supporting tenants is at the core of our business.
- Developing our approach to early welfare benefits, financial inclusion and income maximisation advice and support.
- Focusing on proactive early interventions to increase engagement at a much earlier stage.
- Identifying and working with sub-groups of tenants and vulnerable tenants most at risk of eviction.
- Exploring trauma and psychologically informed approaches to Housing Management.
- Exploring further Managed Moves.
- Ensuring that eviction is an action of last resort where all other methods have failed and that if an eviction does take place provision is made available to ensure that it does not result in homelessness.

Outcome of Screening

Q8 Please describe the outcome of your screening below:

- **Summary of impacts identified and mitigation needed (Q2)**
 - **Summary of involvement (Q3)**
 - **WFG considerations (Q4)**
 - **Any risks identified (Q5)**
 - **Cumulative impact (Q7)**

An IIA screening form has been completed and reviewed. The agreed outcomes recognize that there will be some impacts however arrears prevention is a key priority for the Housing Service and a number of measures are in place to support tenants who may be facing financial difficulty. These include;

- Ensuring sustaining tenancies and supporting tenants is at the core of our business.
- Developing our approach to early welfare benefits, financial inclusion and income maximisation advice and support.
- Focusing on proactive early interventions to increase engagement at a much earlier stage.
- Identifying and working with sub-groups of tenants and vulnerable tenants most at risk of eviction.

- Exploring trauma and psychologically informed approaches to Housing Management.
- Exploring further Managed Moves.
- Ensuring that eviction is an action of last resort where all other methods have failed and that if an eviction does take place provision is made available to ensure that it does not result in homelessness support in place etc. Proposals for changing levels of funding in specific areas have been subject to a screening process.

(NB: This summary paragraph should be used in the relevant section of corporate report)

Full IIA to be completed

Do not complete IIA – please ensure you have provided the relevant information above to support this outcome

NB: Please email this completed form to the Access to Services Team for agreement before obtaining approval from your Head of Service. Head of Service approval is only required via email.

Screening completed by:
Name: Paul Lilley
Job title: Housing Finance and IT Manager
Date: 13/12/23
Approval by Head of Service:
Name: Carol Morgan
Position: Head of Housing and Public Health
Date: 13/12/23

Please return the completed form to accesstoservices@swansea.gov.uk