

# Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening



As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provides a record of both the **process** and **decision**. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.
- whether or not equality, diversity, cohesion and integration is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an impact assessment.

<b>Directorate:</b> Environments and Neighbourhoods	<b>Service area:</b> Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Team
<b>Lead person:</b> Robert Curtis	<b>Contact number:</b> 0113 3957159

## 1. Title: Fuel Poverty Loan Fund, Request to Tender

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

Service / Function

Other

If other, please specify

## 2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

The Fuel Poverty Loan Fund will allow lower and middle income households to access energy efficiency improvements for which full grant support is limited to the most vulnerable households, and which many households will be required to pay a substantial contribution. This includes measures such as external wall insulation for which the household contribution can amount to thousands of pounds. The fund will be lent to lower and middle income households at 4.5 percent to cover shortfalls in grant funding and household contributions which would otherwise act as a barrier to the take up of measures.

The fund will also be available as a short term bridging loan at zero percent for cashback schemes in which households are expected to pay up front the whole cost of expensive improvements before receiving a large proportion of the funding back from central Government as cashback. Without such a fund, the requirement to pay

the whole cost up front could act as a barrier to take up amongst households on lower or middle incomes.

### 3. Relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

All the council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – city wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Also those areas that impact on or relate to equality: tackling poverty and improving health and well-being.

Questions	Yes	No
Is there an existing or likely differential impact for the different equality characteristics?	X	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?		X
Could the proposal affect how our services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?		X
Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?		X
Does the proposal involve or will it have an impact on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment</li> <li>• Advancing equality of opportunity</li> <li>• Fostering good relations</li> </ul>	X	

If you have answered **no** to the questions above please complete **sections 6 and 7**

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above and;

- Believe you have already considered the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 4**.
- Are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 5**.

#### 4. Considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

If you can demonstrate you have considered how your proposals impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you have carried out an impact assessment.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below (use the prompts for guidance).

• **How have you considered equality, diversity, cohesion and integration?** (think about the scope of the proposal, who is likely to be affected, equality related information, gaps in information and plans to address, consultation and engagement activities (taken place or planned) with those likely to be affected)

The fund will be used to supplement the Warm Homes Service, managed by Care and Repair and the Better Homes Yorkshire scheme which will commence in early 2015. The intention of Leeds City Council is to provide assistance to as many private households as possible through the Better Homes Yorkshire scheme, with additional support for vulnerable households. The Warm Homes Service is already designed to assist vulnerable low income households who suffer from a cold related illness, and we have already set up the discretionary fuel poverty fund which will provide additional grant support to those suffering from a cold related illness and who are on a low income. However, even with this extra support for the most vulnerable, there are likely to be a large number of lower income households who will require this finance mechanism in order to overcome barriers to the installation of energy efficiency measures in their homes.

• **Key findings** (think about any potential positive and negative impact on different equality characteristics, potential to promote strong and positive relationships between groups, potential to bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other, perception that the proposal could benefit one group at the expense of another)

The fund will have a positive impact by enabling low and middle income groups who need to have energy efficiency measures, but who currently face financial barriers, to do so in the following circumstances:

- Part of the grant element of the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is aimed at households in receipt of income related benefits and who are either over age sixty, have a child in full time education or a disability. This means that there are a large number of people on very low incomes who do not meet the household criteria as

well as a large number of people on low incomes who have just too high an income to claim an income related benefit, but who are in danger of falling into fuel poverty and who could be put off installing energy efficiency measures. The loan would provide a way for these households to install energy efficiency measures at a reasonable cost.

- Even where a household is eligible for grant assistance through ECO, resources for this are allocated on the basis of a market mechanism, meaning that measures are often under or unresourced for individual households. The fund will allow households who miss out in this way to make up any shortfall at a reasonable cost.
- Many expensive hard to treat measures such as solid wall insulation will require a substantial household contribution, regardless of the personal circumstances of the householder. This fund will allow lower and middle income households, for whom this contribution might act as a barrier, to finance this work at a reasonable cost over time.
- Government cash back schemes such as the Green Deal Home Improvement Fund, typically require households to pay the whole cost of expensive energy efficiency measures up front, even though they will be eligible for a substantial proportion of the funding back. The short term bridging loan facility will allow households to overcome this barrier.

In conclusion, whilst we already try to assist lower income households to obtain support for energy efficiency measures, this fund will allow us to spread this support further.

- **Actions**

**(think about how you will promote positive impact and remove/ reduce negative impact)**

Since the purpose of the fund is to widen accessibility of energy efficiency improvements to a wider range of households who need them, we cannot identify any negative impacts that the fund will have.

We will promote the positive impact by ensuring that the Warm Homes Service and Better Homes Leeds contractors are in a position to promote the loans to individual households where appropriate.

We will also continue to promote Better Homes Yorkshire and the Warm Homes Service directly across the Council and through partner organisations in the voluntary sector.

**5. If you are **not** already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you **will need to carry out an impact assessment.****

Date to scope and plan your impact assessment:

Date to complete your impact assessment

Lead person for your impact assessment  
(Include name and job title)

**6. Governance, ownership and approval**

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening

<b>Name</b>	<b>Job title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Robert Curtis	Programme Officer	16/12/2014
<b>Date screening completed</b>		16/12/2014

**7. Publishing**

Though **all** key decisions are required to give due regard to equality the council **only** publishes those related to **Executive Board, Full Council, Key Delegated Decisions** or a **Significant Operational Decision**.

A copy of this equality screening should be attached as an appendix to the decision making report:

- Governance Services will publish those relating to Executive Board and Full Council.
- The appropriate directorate will publish those relating to Delegated Decisions and Significant Operational Decisions.
- A copy of all other equality screenings that are not to be published should be sent to [equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk) for record.

Complete the appropriate section below with the date the report and attached screening was sent:

For Executive Board or Full Council – sent to <b>Governance Services</b>	Date sent:
For Delegated Decisions or Significant Operational Decisions – sent to appropriate <b>Directorate</b>	Date sent:
All other decisions – sent to <a href="mailto:equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk">equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk</a>	Date sent: