Kirklees Council - Public Sector Equality Impact Assessment

KIRKLEES COUNCIL (BUXTON HOUSE, HUDDERSFIELD) COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2024

The purpose of this assessment is to assess the potential impact on people with 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") of the Council taking a decision to make the CPO and implement the Project.

Kirklees Council ("the Council") is subject to the general Public Sector equality Duty ("PSED") under section 149(1) of the Act. The Council understands that it must have due regard to the following objectives when exercising relevant public functions:

- (a) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act (s.149(1)(a));
- (b) The need to advance equality or opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (s.149(1)(b)). This involves having due regard to the needs to:
 - (i) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
 - (ii) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and
 - (iii) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- (c) The need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (s.149(1)(c)). This includes having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding (s.149(5)).

The protected characteristics are Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, and Sexual Orientation. In addition, it is the Council's policy to consider unpaid carers, Low income, Gypsy, Roma or Traveller Communities and the armed forces community and those who have experienced Care.

The assessment is intended to demonstrate how the Council has had due regard to their PSED objectives above in relation to the delivery of the Project. Specifically, this assessment has been prepared to:

- assess whether one or more groups could experience disproportionate or differential effects as a result of the proposal being implemented.
- assess both potential positive and negative effects; and
- consider ways in which any negative effects could be removed or mitigated.

Dated: 22.10.2024

Step 1: Background	The objective is to ensure the successful delivery of the Project by ensuring that the Order Land is delivered in accordance with the Project timescales and objectives.
1. What are you assessing?	The impact of the making of the KIRKLEES COUNCIL (BUXTON HOUSE, HUDDERSFIELD) COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER (CPO) 2024 and the impact of implementation of the Project.
	The land subject to the Order is situated between Albion Street and New Street in Huddersfield town centre and comprises one flat held on a long lease. ("the Order Land") as shown on the plan accompanying the Order ("the Order Map").
	The "Order Land" is required, to facilitate the redevelopment of Buxton House (the "Project"). The remainder of the land required for the Project is already in the ownership of Kirklees Council.
	The Council has obtained a planning permission to develop the Project, including the Order Land.
2. What are the aims and purpose of this proposal?	Summary of Planned regeneration of Buxton House
	Background
	Buxton House is a high-rise tower block built in the 1960s. It is situated between Albion Street and New Street in Huddersfield town centre and comprises:
	 a pedestrian walkway, retail and hospitality units at ground floor level. retail and hospitality units at first floor level. Residential accommodation in the form of flats and bedsits from floors 2-11.
	Due to Buxton House being identified as a High-Risk Residential Block under fire safety guidance issued by the Hackitt Review, surveys were

undertaken, and a Building Safety Case was developed in 2020. The condition of the structure and remaining useful life of Buxton House was also assessed. The Fire Risk Assessment for the building advises major fire safety improvements are required to establish effective compartmentalisation between the flats and improve escape routes.

On 16 February 2021 Cabinet approved a consultation exercise with secure tenants and leaseholders of Buxton House on two proposals to address the fire safety issues: refurbishment or demolition and rebuild. This consultation took place between March and June 2021.

In July 2021 a Cabinet decision was taken to refurbish Buxton House to address the fire safety concerns and building defects which had been reported in the surveys. This decision reflected the majority preference of those consulted.

Detailed designs have been produced and a planning permission for the refurbishment was approved on 15 July 2024.

The Scheme will deliver a modern, thermally efficient residential building for Huddersfield which will significantly improve the quality, safety and choice of affordable accommodation on offer in the town centre as well as addressing the blight arising from the presence of long term vacant commercial units. This will achieve economic, social and environmental well-being benefits for the acquiring Council's area and the residents of the refurbished Buxton House.

Since these decisions were taken and as of September 2024:

- Five long leasehold interests have been acquired.
- There remains one long leasehold interest to be acquired by the Council.
- 32 secure tenants have been rehoused.
- 23 remaining secure tenants continue to be rehoused via the choicebased lettings list within Kirklees and have the opportunity to return to Buxton House once the redevelopment is completed where appropriate housing is available.

	Of the commercial units all, but two are vacant. It is in retail units which are let will remain so throughout the thereafter.		
Who is responsible for the proposal you are assessing?	The Project is being undertaken by Kirklees Council		
4. Who is the Lead for this assessment?	Helen Martland, Service Manager - Development		
5. Who else is undertaking this assessment?	N/A		
6. Who would be affected by the proposal (adversely or positively, directly or indirectly)?	Those that may be directly affected by the making of the CPO and Progoing forward include:		and Project
	 The one remaining long leaseholder as defection. Tenants being decanted from Buxton House. The tenants and customers of the 2 retail upopen during the Project and thereafter but works undertaken on the premises. 	se. nits which a	re to remain
7. Is the proposal relevant to how the Council complies who are protected by the Equality Act 2010?	with the public sector general duty relating to people	Yes	No
The elimination of discrimination and harassment		Х	
The advancement of equality of opportunity		Х	
The fostering of good relations		Х	
The protection and promotion of human rights		Х	
Note: As a general rule, any policy that affects people is lil	kely to be relevant across all protected groups	<u> </u>	

Step 2 - Information Gathering

8. Are there any human rights issues? If so, what are they?

(For example, could this proposal result in the failure to safeguard the right to privacy?)
(The 16 basic rights are listed at Appendix 1).

Article 1 of the First Protocol to the Convention states that "... Every natural or legal person is entitled to peaceful enjoyment of his possessions" and "no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by the law and by the general principles of international law...".

Whilst occupiers and owners in the Order Land will be deprived of their property if the Order is confirmed and the powers are exercised, this will be carried out in accordance with the law, in this case the Act. The Order is being pursued in the public interest as required by Article 1 of the First Protocol. The public benefits associated with the Scheme are set out in the Statement of Reasons. The Council considers that the Order will strike a fair balance between the public interest in the implementation of the proposals and those private rights which will be affected by the Order.

Article 6 of the Convention provides that: "In determining his civil rights and obligations...everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law".

The regeneration proposals, including those associated with the Order Land, have been extensively publicised and consultation has taken place with the communities and parties that may be affected by the Order. All those affected by the Order will be notified, will have the right to make representations and/or objections to the Secretary of State, and objecting parties will have the right to be heard at a public inquiry if objections are made. It has been held that the statutory processes are compliant with Article 6 of the Convention.

Article 8 of the Convention states that:

"Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence...interference is justified however, if it is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for its prevention

of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedom of others."

The Council considers that any interference with this right that would result from the exercise of the powers conferred by the Order will be in accordance with the law (namely the Human Rights Act 1998), give effect to a legitimate aim (namely securing required improvements to fire safety at Buxton House and providing better quality more environmentally friendly housing for the Council's social tenants, as well as bringing regenerative benefits to Huddersfield Town Centre), and will be proportionate having regard to the public benefits to be secured.

Those whose interests are acquired under the Order will also be entitled to compensation which will be payable in accordance with the compulsory purchase Compensation Code, assessed on the basis of the market value of the property interest acquired, disturbance (i.e., reasonable moving costs and costs/losses directly related to the compulsory acquisition) and statutory loss payments. The reasonable surveying and legal fees incurred by those affected in transferring interests to the Council will also be paid by the Council. The Compensation Code has been held to be compliant with Article 1 of the First Protocol to the Convention.

The European Court of Human Rights has recognised in the context of Article 1 of the First Protocol that "regard must be had to the fair balance that has to be struck between the competing interests of the individual and the community as a whole".

Both public and private interests are to be considered in the exercise of the Council's powers and duties.

In promoting this Order, the Council has carefully considered the balance to be struck between the effect of acquisition on individual rights and the wider public interest in the redevelopment of the Order Land. Interference with Convention Rights is considered by the Council to be justified here in Order to ensure that Buxton House is compliant with the Building Safety Act 2022 and provides safe

homes for Council tenants in addition to the economic regeneration, environmental and public benefits which the proposals will bring.

The requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Convention, particularly the rights of property owners, have therefore been fully considered. There is a compelling case in the public interest for the Order to be made and confirmed, and the interference with the private rights of those affected that would be the inevitable result of the exercise of the compulsory powers conferred by the Order would be lawful, justified and proportionate.

The proposal to remodel Buxton House was made public through the Council's democratic decision-making process when the Cabinet reports from July 2021 and March 2024 were published on the Council's website. The opportunity for the public to view the plans in detail has been given through the consideration of the planning applications to make representations on the proposals. No representations from members of the public were received through the statutory planning consultation process.

9. What has been done to date in terms of involvement and consultation with regard to this proposal?

Consultation began in February 2021 when consultation packs containing information about the current state of the block and details of the two options for improvements. to Buxton House were sent to residents and leaseholders of Buxton House. 66% of respondents were in favour of remodelling and refurbishing the building to bring it up to modern standards.

Residents and Leaseholders were consulted again on their views on the initial designs for the remodelling project in August 2023. This was by means of 3 drop-in sessions held in a vacant flat in Buxton House. Council officers conducted flat to flat calls prior to the events to promote the consultation. Of the 38 properties occupied at the time of the events, 31 residents (82%) completed an opinion survey either at or after the event The consultation was also used as an opportunity to update residents and leaseholders on the proposed remodelling program and engage with Council tenants about the need to find them alternative accommodation.

Following the submission of the planning application in January 2024, a statutory planning consultation process took place. Members of the public had an appropriate opportunity to express support for the scheme or raise concerns by way of objection to the planning application. No representations were received from any members of the public in response to the statutory consultation.

A further engagement exercise with residents and leaseholders was carried out in April 2024 to showcase the planning submission and answer queries. The session again was held in a vacant flat in Buxton House with residents receiving a hand-delivered invitation in advance.

Common themes of the feedback received were:

- a desire to feel safe particularly a better more visible entrance
- higher quality communal spaces
- requests for a mixed community (not just single person households)
- a modern home
- A desire for renovation of Buxton House to retain proximity to the town centre and amenities.
- A dislike of the noise from the bar below Buxton House

In addition to these formal consultations, residents have been kept up to date through regular newsletters, ad-hoc drop-in sessions, housing officers 1-1 support, written communications, the Homes and Neighbourhood team have been accessible and responsive throughout.

When rehousing residents, the Council has undertaken in-depth discussions and gathered relevant information from all affected parties to understand their housing need and rehousing preference. Data collected includes details of family members, health conditions, mobility and personal safety needs, including any existing arrangements they have for help and support, periods of hospitalisation, GP details and preferences for rehousing. Residents with specific needs identified through this process are being supported to find accommodation that meets their needs and to mitigate any equality impacts where possible.

Throughout the consultation and delivery to date officers have sought to ensure that equality of opportunity is provided to all tenants affected by the Project.

Representations can also be made in the context of the compulsory purchase process which allows objections to be made which will be considered by the Secretary of State if not resolved. Furthermore, those directly affected by the CPO (i.e. the landowners or others with a relevant interest in the land required for the Project) may be entitled to statutory compensation if the CPO are confirmed and the powers are exercised.

11. Have you used any other information that is relevant to the proposal to inform your assessment? If so, please detail.

This decision affects a small number of people, and it is not appropriate to comment on individual demographics.

The demographic information for the Huddersfield Town Centre LSOA in which the project is situated shows that the population is predominantly white, aged between 16 and 64, of Christian or no religion and does not have a condition that limits their day-to-day activity. This suggests that the project will not disproportionately affect anyone who is disadvantaged by their protected characteristic.

Given that only a small number of people are affected by the proposal, it is not possible or appropriate to isolate data on their protected characteristics. However, the Council will remain alert to its duties to advance equality, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not during the course of this project.

Many people are keen to remain in the town centre and the town centre location was identified as one of the reasons why residents stated they would prefer the building to be remodelled rather than demolished. However, the information we have gathered through the resident consultation process does not suggest that there are any residents who would find it difficult to relocate away from the town centre because of a particular protected characteristic. Officers have taken time to understand residents' wishes in terms of relocation requirements and wherever possible, given the limited council accommodation available in

	the town centre, are supporting them to bid for appropriate properties in their preferred locations.
	All residents have been offered the opportunity to return to Buxton House on completion of the project, provided the accommodation they select is appropriate for their household make up. However, it is not expected that 100% of residents will wish to return as some have chosen to move further afield to be closer to family.
12. Are there any gaps in the information collected to date?	One individual affected by the Project has been uncontactable. Therefore, there may be protected characteristics of which the Council is unaware. The Council will continue to try to engage this individual.
If so, how will these be addressed?	

Step 3: Considering the potential impact and identifying mitigating action.

13. Note below any likely impact on equality for each individual group and identify what action could be taken to reduce or improve the impact. *For determining potential impact, please choose from the following: Neutral/Low/Medium/High

Protected group	*Potential	Details of the impact	Actions to mitigate negative impact
	Negative impact – LOW	The CPO process, including consultation, could exclude specific demographic groups if not undertaken in a sensitive, inclusive manner.	The Council will continue to engage with affected parties sensitively and put in place appropriate measures to mitigate any disadvantage.
Age	Positive impact - HIGH	Residents aged 16-65 are overrepresented amongst the remaining tenants compared to the borough average (92% at Buxton House compared with 64% across	The Council will ensure that documents are made available in an appropriate format as required such as large print /hard copy for those who may not have access to the internet.

		Kirklees). There is no concentration of young or older people in the building who may need specific mitigation on the grounds of age, therefore the Project does not impact significantly on a particular age group. One resident over the age of 65 has been identified. Once the Project is completed it will have a positive impact on tenants of all ages as it will provide homes compliant with modern fire safety standards. Older residents are more likely to have mobility and health problems which may make evacuation difficult and compartmentalisation particularly beneficial. The Project will provide homes which are more energy efficient and cheaper to heat.	Any venues used as part of the process are accessible both physically and by location (central and accessible by public transport). Older tenants are offered additional support including but not limited to: • Assistance packing up and dismantling furniture • Provision of taxis to viewings and to their new property. • Support to decorate their new property.
Disability	Negative impact – MEDIUM Positive impact - HIGH	Three residents have told the Council that they consider themselves to have a disability although they do not require adapted properties. The making of the CPO will not have a disproportionate effect on residents with a disability; however, they may find it harder to move and find appropriate accommodation and therefore there	 Tenants with disabilities are offered additional support including but not limited to: Assistance packing up and dismantling furniture Provision of taxis to viewings and to their new property. Support to decorate their new property. Officers are working with the individuals who have declared themselves to have a disability

		could be a short-term negative impact. In the long term the Project will be more accessible to those with physical disabilities, having an accessible entrance, new lifts and wider corridors which will have a positive impact. Additionally, it will provide safe, energy efficient homes for tenants.	to support them in finding suitable alternative accommodation.
Gender reassignment	NEUTRAL	The Council does not hold local data regarding this protected characteristic. It is not understood that anyone within this protected characteristic is amongst those identified as affected by this decision. There is no reason to believe that there would be any specific impact on this group as a result of the CPO.	The Council will continue to engage with affected parties sensitively and put in place appropriate measures to mitigate any disadvantage. We will remain alert to our duties to advance equality, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
Pregnancy and maternity	Negative impact – MEDIUM Positive impact – very HIGH	The data on the remaining tenants suggests that four are female. The Council is aware of one individual with this protected characteristic amongst those identified as affected by this decision. It is recognised that being required to move house whilst pregnant or with very young children could create a disadvantage and therefore this group will be negatively impacted by the need for rehousing.	Pregnant tenants or those with children are offered additional support including but not limited to: • Assistance packing up and dismantling furniture • Provision of taxis to viewings and to their new property. • Support to decorate their new property. The Council will continue to engage with affected parties sensitively and if the individual (or any other individuals with this characteristic)

		Once the Project is completed it will have a positive impact on this group as two-bedroom flats will be available. Currently the building is only suitable for single persons or couples. Additionally, it will provide safe, energy efficient homes for tenants.	be found to be disproportionately disadvantaged as a result of it, the Council will take appropriate steps to mitigate the disadvantage. We will remain alert to our duties to advance equality, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
Race	Negative impact – MEDIUM Positive impact - NEUTRAL	Buxton House has an over- representation of Black and other BAME groups compared to the average for Newsome ward (38% at Buxton House compared to 32% in Newsome). It is recognised that there may be specific cultural ties that these tenants wish to remain close to. Some of the residents of Buxton House have been identified for whom English is not their first language. This may make it more difficult for them to search for an alternative property or engage in the CPO process.	Officers are working with tenants who have expressed a desire to remain in the local area to help them find suitable properties. Residents with language needs that have been identified have been given the option to receive communications in alternative language.
Religion or belief	Negative impact – LOW	42% of remaining residents have chosen not to declare their religion to the Council. Of those who have	Any acquisitions of properties and requirements to move will not be arranged

	Positive impact NEUTRAL	declared their religion, 47% have no religion and therefore the effect of the proposals are neutral.	during times of religious significance for residents. The Council will endeavour to facilitate moves around tenant's religious festivals.
	13% of residents have declare religion as Muslim. The requito move during certain religion festivals could disproportional affect residents who follow the religion. Moving a resident away from place of worship could be detrimental.		No residents have so far advised us of a desire to remain close to a particular place of worship, so this not expected to have a negative impact on any resident. Should a resident advise us that they need to remain close to their place of worship, or a place of worship of a similar denomination, officers will assist tenants to, where possible, identify and bid for a suitable property that meets that requirement.
Sex or sexual orientation	NEUTRAL	The majority of the remaining occupiers of Buxton House (81%) are male. 52% of whom are heterosexual. It is not felt that these groups experience greater difficulty than others in securing alternative accommodation or will experience greater difficulty as a result of the project.	The Council will continue to engage with affected parties sensitively and put in place appropriate measures to mitigate any disadvantage.
Marriage and civil NEUTRAL partnership		People who are in a civil partnership will be treated the same as people who are married in all respects. There is no disproportionate impact on those who are married or in a civil partnership, or those who are not. All groups have access to the same options for rehousing away from	No mitigation required.

		Buxton House and for moving back to Buxton House.	
Poverty/low income	Negative impact – MEDIUM Positive impact - HIGH	The CPO process, including consultation, could exclude specific demographic groups if not undertaken in a sensitive, inclusive manner. The requirement to move could have a more acute effect on those with low incomes due these residents having little, or no savings or disposable income and the costs associated with moving home. The Project will provide a thermally efficient building which should result in lower energy bills for residents.	The Council will make documents available for inspection in a central location which is cheaply accessible by foot or on public transport. The Council will provide printed documents to residents on request, who may not have the means or facility to print or access the internet. The Council will continue to engage with affected parties sensitively and put in place appropriate measures to mitigate any disadvantage. All tenants being required to move receive: • the Statutory Home Loss Payment • Payment of a removals firm • A payment for new carpets and blinds at their new home.
Unpaid carers	Negative impact – MEDIUM Positive impact - NEUTRAL	Unpaid carers may be affected by the proposal if they cannot remain living near the person for whom they care. The data gathered from residents as part of the consultation and rehousing process has not identified any current residents who have unpaid caring responsibilities and	The Council will continue to engage with affected parties sensitively and put in place appropriate measures to mitigate any disadvantage.

		who would scheme as	be disadvantaged by the a result.	
Gypsy, Roma and traveller communities	NEUTRAL	this protects amongst the by this deci- not to decla Council. Th believe that	ieved that anyone within ed characteristic is ose identified as affected sion, or they have chosen are their status to the tere is no reason to there would be any pact on this group as a e CPO.	
Armed Forces community	NEUTRAL	There are no tenants or leaseholders within this protected characteristic resident at Buxton House. There is no reason to believe that there would be any specific impact on this group as a result of the CPO		
Step 4 – Outcome of the asse	essment			
14. Note the impacts identified mitigate any high impact (i.e. a table)			would be able to Detriment to pai There is a high providing model compliant with the	all parties affected by the CPO and the Project o participate fully in the CPO process. It is provided to relocate positive impact across all groups of the Project rn, safe, energy efficient homes which are the latest fire and building safety standards. The Project has limited egatively on protected groups. The Council will appear to participate the council will be council will appear to participate the council will be council will appear to participate the council will be council will appear to participate the council will be council will appear to participate the council will be council will be council will appear to participate the council will be council wil
		respond sensitively in the	egatively on protected groups. The Council will event that any specific measures relating to re identified as being required.	

	nere a strategy for dealing with any unavoidable but awful impacts that cannot be mitigated?	•	•
	here a need to reconsider the proposal as a result of ting this assessment?	No	
decision	al. If you have identified high impact, you should er at this stage whether it is possible to proceed with		
	there monitoring arrangements in place? What are		is further developed, this Equalities Impact o ensure that any impacts are duly
Step 5	– Action Plan		
made to	detail any actions that are planned following completic o reduce or eliminate the effects of potential or actual her research.		
Ref	Proposed actions	Lead person	Timescale
	Consider specific measures required to ensure that	Helen Martland	Ongoing

the CPO process is undertaken sensitively and with regard to all protected characteristics. Discuss and agree proposed measures with the relevant

affected party (or their agent), as appropriate.

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Appendix 1 – Human Rights

Human rights are rights and freedoms that belong to all individuals, regardless of their nationality and citizenship. There are 16 basic rights in the Human Rights Act – all taken from the European Convention on Human Rights. For the purposes of the Act, they are known as 'the Convention Rights'. They are listed below:

(Article 1 is introductory and is not incorporated into the Human Rights Act)

Article 2: The right to life

Article 3: Prohibition of torture

Article 4: Prohibition of slavery and forced labour

Article 5: Right to liberty and security

Article 6: Right to a fair trial

Article 7: No punishment without law

Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life

Article 9: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

Article 10: Freedom of expression

Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association

Article 12: Right to marry

Article 14: Prohibition of discrimination

Article 1 of Protocol 1: Protection of property

Article 2 of Protocol 1: Right to education

Article 3 of Protocol 1: Right to free elections

Article 1 of Protocol 13: Abolition of the death penalty