



Stevenage Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment

Stevenage Borough Local Plan
2011 - 2031



What is the legal background of equality and diversity?

The Equality Act 2010

Everyone's right to be treated fairly is covered in law by the Equality Act 2010, which came into force in October 2010. The Act protects nine characteristics and they are:

Age	Disability	Gender reassignment
Marriage or civil partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Race
Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual orientation

When a person feels that they have not been treated fairly because of any of these characteristics it is called unlawful discrimination.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

Section 149 of The Equality Act 2010 is called the Public Sector Equality Duty. Stevenage Borough Council has a statutory obligation to comply with the requirements of the Duty which are to carry out our functions in a way that gives due regard to the need to:

- **Remove discrimination, harassment, victimisation** and any other conduct that is unlawful under this Act
- **Promote equal opportunities** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't
- **Encourage good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)?

A process that helps us to evidence and understand the impacts that our decisions might have on different types of people, and improve them where we can. These decisions can relate to existing services, policies and functions, procurement exercises, plans for future changes and new projects.

It is designed to help us think about both positive and negative impacts on people and look at how to avoid disadvantage or further improve our services.

The aim is to make sure that we plan, develop and deliver fair and inclusive services and that we promote equality and positive relationships between the different communities that we serve.

Although the assessment of any socio-economic impact has been removed from the Act, officers at Stevenage are encouraged to use their discretion in assessing impact on people who are less fortunate because of their social and / or economic background.

Why do we do them?

EqlAs have been used at Stevenage for a number of years and are a really useful way of showing how we consider the needs of our diverse communities and staff. And by using them effectively, we'll be able to mitigate any potential legal challenge of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. EqlAs help us to:

- Consider the differing needs of people in our community and workforce
- Demonstrate to all of our stakeholders that we place great importance on meeting and understanding the needs of different residents and employees
- Ensure that decisions are made in a fair, transparent and accountable way
- Focus our activity on delivering positive outcomes for our communities instead of being process-driven
- Meet our legislative requirements under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

Who should complete EqlAs?

Anyone who has to develop and deliver policy, strategy, projects, and services, or make decisions that could impact on people. There should be more than one officer involved in developing the EqlA so that a range of views can be considered. For example a:

- Project manager and lead officers involved in the project
- Service manager and staff involved in delivering the service
- Policy / strategy developer and representatives from other SDUs who will be delivering the function.

How do I complete it?

This toolkit should provide you with most of the information you need to get started, including a few pointers to help you to decide which level of EqlA will be most useful. The two options are a Brief EqlA and a Full EqlA.

You'll see as you go through the toolkit that in addition to using your expertise, the decisions and potential impacts identified should be evidenced as far as possible. A great way of evidencing is by way of consulting with people who are likely to be affected by the outcome, and by analysing local data.

You may find that you complete a Brief EqlA and identify a need to further analyse the impact in a Full EqlA. This is a great example of how it can help to inform and guide decision-making, and demonstrates to our customers, staff and stakeholders that we take equality and inclusion seriously.

When should an EqlA be started?

In the early stages of your activity and certainly before any decision is made. It's very unlikely that it will be completed in one go – you'll find it useful to keep coming back to it, updating as new evidence comes to light, or as different viewpoints are taken into account.

It's a good idea to keep copies of previous versions – not just to help you to keep track, but it can also demonstrate where we have changed a decision or planned direction in light of a potential impact on particular groups.

Your EqlA should not be completed at the end of the process as:

- Your decision could cause discrimination, or benefit certain equality groups more than others
- Time and resource could be used inefficiently if the decision has to be reviewed
- You could miss an opportunity to further promote equality and inclusion
- Your decision could fail to meet the council's statutory requirements and create a risk of legal challenge.

What kinds of things should I consider?

When completing an EqlA it's helpful to think about the following:

Negative / Positive / Unequal impact

It's unlikely that a decision will impact on people in light of every characteristic. Where there is no impact or actions identified, feel free to add N/A (not applicable).

Please be aware that where there is a negative impact, you will not necessarily be expected to mitigate this. The aim of the EqlA is to demonstrate that we have given due regard to the potential impact on people and have taken action as far as is practical and reasonable.

- How will different groups of people be affected if the decision is implemented as planned?
- Does the data and evidence collected highlight problems that need to be addressed, such as disadvantage, discrimination and harassment?
- Does the evidence suggest increased or lower than expected (unequal) uptake, access or participation by different groups?
- Are there any rules, requirements or regulations around it that might affect accessibility?
- Is there evidence of better outcomes for different groups?
- Are current measures in place and having a positive impact on particular groups?

Evidence of potential impact

Collect, analyse and record information and data relating to the protected characteristics or any other groups that may be affected. Examples could include:

- Service user data
- Results of consultation, involvement activities or surveys
- Feedback from service users on their outcomes and experiences
- Information about the town, its wards and local communities such as Census data
- Comparisons made with similar policies / services in other departments or authorities
- Recommendations from inspections, audit reports and reviews
- National, regional and local research findings
- Information from partners, trade unions and local groups from the voluntary and community sector.

Opportunities to promote equality and inclusion

- What more can we do to positively impact on these groups?
- Is there an opportunity to improve access and outcomes for different groups?
- How can communications be used more effectively?
- Is there an opportunity to promote positive attitudes and good relations between different groups?

What do we still need to find out?

- What gaps in evidence and information have been found?
- How can these be filled?
- When will this information be captured and reviewed in completing this EqIA?

You should collate and assess all the information you need **before a decision** on your activity is made. If you don't there is an increased risk of exposing the council to legal challenge, if a wrong, inappropriate or ineffective decision is made.

Consultation

As a co-operative council, we aim to involve our staff, communities and stakeholders in decision-making as much as possible. This should always be proportionate to the scale of the decision being made, how many people might be affected or interested and the level of impact it will have.

- How have the views and knowledge of staff who will be delivering the service been considered? Have staff more generally been able to contribute?
- What have your customers fed back?
- Have you consulted the voluntary and community sector in making your decision? How will they be engaged in future?
- Have you drawn on the knowledge of partnering organisations?
- How have other stakeholder been able to contribute and what have they said?



Conclusion and actions

- Have inequalities, inclusions issues or opportunities to further improve equality and inclusion been identified?
- What adjustments have been made to your initial plan as a result of this EqIA?
- If you are continuing as planned or are stopping altogether, what are the reasons?
- What can be done to prevent, minimise or mitigate any negative or unequal impacts identified?
- How can you help people who are vulnerable, stereotyped or marginalised?
- What opportunities are there to remove discrimination and harassment, promote equal opportunities and encourage better relations amongst our communities?
- How could your function be more accessible to people who are underrepresented or don't currently use your service?

Where can I find more information?

Our intranet has lots of useful information, or you can email equalities@stevenage.gov.uk for help and guidance.

We also have a network of Equality Champions across the council – please ask your Head of Service for information on who your representative is.

How do I get started?

By turning over the page!

First things first: does this activity need an EqIA?

Subject of the assessment:	Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 - 2031	
Please answer Yes or No to the following questions:		
Does it affect staff, service users or the wider community?		Yes
Has it been identified as being important to particular groups of people?		Yes
Does it or could it potentially affect different groups of people differently (unequal)?		Yes
Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities or exclusion issues?		Yes
Will it have an impact on how other organisations operate?		Yes
Is there potential for it to cause controversy or affect the council's reputation as a public service provider?		Yes

Where a positive impact is likely, will this help to:	Please tick all that apply (✓)
Remove discrimination and harassment?	✓
Promote equal opportunities?	✓
Encourage good relations?	✓

If you ticked or answered Yes to one or more of these questions you should carry out an EqIA. There are two levels of analysis (Brief and Full) and in deciding which to go for, you should think about not just the number of people affected but the significance of the effect on them – both positive and negative.

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 If you answered No to all of the questions and decide that your activity doesn't need an EqIA you must explain below why it has no relevance to equality and diversity. You should reference the information you used to support your decision and seek approval from your Head of Service or Strategic Director before sending this to equalities@stevenage.gov.uk.

I determine that no EqIA is needed to inform the decision on the (insert name of subject being assessed).

Name of assessor:
 Role:
 Date:

Decision approved by:
 Role:
 Date:



Full Equality Impact Assessment

For a policy, project, service or other decision that is new, changing or under review

What is being assessed?		Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 - 2031			
Lead Assessor	Deborah Horner			Assessment team	Richard Javes Caroline Danby Sarah Barker
Start date	2011	End date	2031		
When will the EqIA be reviewed?	Review of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan subsequent to Adoption				

Who may be affected by it?	Everyone from all sectors of society. Everyone who lives and works in Stevenage, and those who pass through Stevenage. Residents, developers, householders, professional agents, architects, engineers, fire service, water authorities, persons with disabilities, elected members, other Council departments and functions. Other adjacent Local Authorities and their residents with regard to growth adjacent to their boundaries.
What are the key aims of it?	<p>The Stevenage Borough Local Plan identifies the main issues that are likely to affect Stevenage and sets policies to deal with them. It provides the answers to some important questions, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much housing and employment will be needed in the future and where will this be built? • Is any new land needed for important services like schools and hospitals? • How will we protect the environment and make sure that everyone can use open spaces near their home? • How do we reduce our impact on climate change and make people think about the way in which they travel?

What positive measures are in place (if any) to help fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	N/A	Promote equal opportunities	N/A	Encourage good relations	N/A

What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	The Stevenage Borough Local Plan and the evidence base studies which has informed the Plan.
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In assessing the potential impact on people, are there any overall comments that you would like to make?	No
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Evidence and impact assessment

Explain the potential impact and opportunities it could have for people in terms of the following characteristics, where applicable:

Age					
Positive impact	✓	Negative impact		Unequal impact	✓
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		See Appendix A (EqIA Screening Matrix) which sets out whether the policies contained in the Local Plan have a positive, unequal or negative impact.			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	N/A	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	N/A		

Disability					
e.g. physical impairment, mental ill health, learning difficulties, long-standing illness					
Positive impact	✓	Negative impact		Unequal impact	✓
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		See Appendix A (EqIA Screening Matrix) which sets out whether the policies contained in the Local Plan have a positive, unequal or negative impact.			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		N/A	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		N/A

Gender reassignment					
Positive impact	✓	Negative impact		Unequal impact	✓
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		See Appendix A (EqIA Screening Matrix) which sets out whether the policies contained in the Local Plan have a positive, unequal or negative impact.			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		N/A	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		N/A

Marriage or civil partnership			
Positive impact	✓	Negative impact	Unequal impact ✓
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		See Appendix A (EqIA Screening Matrix) which sets out whether the policies contained in the Local Plan have a positive, unequal or negative impact.	
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	N/A	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	N/A

Pregnancy & maternity			
Positive impact	✓	Negative impact	Unequal impact ✓
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		See Appendix A (EqIA Screening Matrix) which sets out whether the policies contained in the Local Plan have a positive, unequal or negative impact.	
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	N/A	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	N/A

Race			
Positive impact	✓	Negative impact	Unequal impact ✓
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		See Appendix A (EqIA Screening Matrix) which sets out whether the policies contained in the Local Plan have a positive, unequal or negative impact.	
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Religion or belief			
Positive impact	✓	Negative impact	Unequal impact ✓
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		See Appendix A (EqIA Screening Matrix) which sets out whether the policies contained in the Local Plan have a positive, unequal or negative impact.	
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	N/A	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	N/A

Sex			
Positive impact	✓	Negative impact	Unequal impact ✓
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		See Appendix A (EqIA Screening Matrix) which sets out whether the policies contained in the Local Plan have a positive, unequal or negative impact.	
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	N/A	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	N/A

Sexual orientation e.g. straight, lesbian / gay, bisexual			
Positive impact	✓	Negative impact	Unequal impact ✓
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		See Appendix A (EqIA Screening Matrix) which sets out whether the policies contained in the Local Plan have a positive, unequal or negative impact.	
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	N/A	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	N/A

Socio-economic¹			
e.g. low income, unemployed, homelessness, caring responsibilities, access to internet, public transport users			
Positive impact	✓	Negative impact	Unequal impact
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		See Appendix A (EqIA Screening Matrix) which sets out whether the policies contained in the Local Plan have a positive, unequal or negative impact.	
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	N/A	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	N/A

Other			
please feel free to consider the potential impact on people in any other contexts			
Positive impact	✓	Negative impact	Unequal impact
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		See Appendix A (EqIA Screening Matrix) which sets out whether the policies contained in the Local Plan have a positive, unequal or negative impact.	
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	N/A	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	N/A

What are the findings of any consultation with:

Staff?	N/A	Residents?	N/A
Voluntary & community sector?	N/A	Partners?	N/A
Other stakeholders?	N/A		

¹Although non-statutory, the council has chosen to implement the Socio-Economic Duty and so decision-makers should use their discretion to consider the impact on people with a socio-economic disadvantage.

Overall conclusion & future activity

Explain the overall findings of the assessment and reasons for outcome (please choose one) :		
Negative / unequal impact, barriers to inclusion or improvement opportunities identified	2a. Adjustments made	N/A
	2b. Continue as planned	No negative impacts have been identified. Some unequal impacts have been identified. This is however where a policy ensures that either an existing healthcare or community asset would be protected or an equal facility be provided as compensation. This would have an 'unequal' impact on residents of Stevenage, as the facility is already in place and will have no perceived positive impact on the groups if it is retained.

Detail the actions that are needed as a result of this assessment and how they will help to remove discrimination & harassment, promote equal opportunities and / or encourage good relations :				
Action	Will this help to remove, promote and / or encourage?	Responsible officer	Deadline	How will this be embedded as business as usual?
N/A				

Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Matrix

Policy	Equalities Group									
	Age	Gender	Gender reassignment	Marriage or civil partnership	Pregnancy & Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Socio-economic
Part II – Strategic Policies										
Policy SP1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy SP2: Sustainable Development in Stevenage	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy SP3: A strong, competitive economy	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy SP4: A Vital Town Centre	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy SP5: Infrastructure	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy SP6: Sustainable transport	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy SP7: High Quality Homes	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy SP8: Good Design	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy SP9: Healthy Communities	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy SP10: Green Belt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy SP11: Climate change, flooding and pollution	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy SP12: Green Infrastructure and the natural environment	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy SP13: The historic environment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Part III – Detailed Policies										
Policy EC1: Allocated Sites for Employment Development	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy EC2: Gunnels Wood Employment Area and Edge-of-Centre Zone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy EC3: Gunnels Wood Industrial Zones	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy EC4: Remainder of Gunnels Wood	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy EC5: Active frontages and gateways	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy EC6: Pin Green Employment Area	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy EC7: Employment development on unallocated sites	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy TC1: Town Centre	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy TC2: Southgate Major Opportunity Area	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy TC3: Central West Major Opportunity Area	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy TC4: Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy TC5: Central Core Major Opportunity Area	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy TC6: Northgate Major Opportunity Area	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy TC7: Marshgate Major Opportunity Area	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy TC8: Town Centre Shopping Area	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy TC9: High Street Shopping Area	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy TC10: Opportunity areas within the Primary Shopping Areas	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy TC11: New Convenience Retail Provision	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy TC12: New Comparison Retail Provision	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy TC13: Retail impact assessments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy IT1: Strategic development access points	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy IT2: West of Stevenage safeguarded corridors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy IT3: Infrastructure	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy IT4: Transport assessments and travel plans	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy IT5: Parking and access	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy IT6: Sustainable transport	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy IT7: New and improved links for pedestrians and cyclists	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy IT8: Public parking provision	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Policy HO1: Housing allocations	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy HO2: Stevenage West	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy HO3: North of Stevenage	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy HO4: South East of Stevenage	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy HO5: Windfall Sites	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy HO6: Redevelopment of existing homes	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy HO7: Affordable housing targets	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy HO8: Affordable housing tenure, mix and design	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy HO9: House types and sizes	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy HO10: Sheltered and supported housing	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy HO11: Accessible housing	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	+	0	0
Policy HO12: Gypsy and traveller provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy HO13: Gypsy and traveller provision on unallocated sites	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy GD1: High Quality Design	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy HC1: District, local and neighbourhood centres	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy HC2: Local shops	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy HC3: The Health Campus	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy HC4: Existing health, social and community facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy HC5: New health, social and community facilities	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy HC6: Existing leisure and cultural facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy HC7: New and refurbished leisure and cultural facilities	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy HC8: Sports facilities in new developments	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy HC9: Former Barnwell East secondary school	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy HC10: Redundant school sites	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy GB1: Green Belt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy GB2: Green Belt settlements	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy FP1: Renewable energy and energy efficiency	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy FP2: Flood storage reservoirs and Functional Floodplain	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy FP3: Flood Risk in Flood Zones 2 and 3	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy FP4: Flood Risk in Flood Zone 1	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy FP5: Contaminated Land	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy FP6: Hazardous Installations	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy FP7: Pollution	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy FP8: Pollution Sensitive Uses	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy NH1: Principal Open Spaces	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy NH2: Wildlife Sites	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy NH3: Green Corridors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy NH4: Green links	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy NH5: Trees and woodland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy NH6: General protection for open space	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy NH7: Open space standards	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy NH8: North Stevenage Country Park	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy NH9: Areas of Archaeological Significance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy NH10: Conservation Areas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

+ Positive Impact; - Negative Impact; 0 Unequal Impact

Approved by Head of Service / Strategic Director: Zayd Al-Jawad

Date: July 2016

Please send this EqIA to equalities@stevenage.gov.uk