



Stevenage Local Plan – Partial Update

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Form

Date created	February 2026
Owner	Assistant Director/Strategic Director/Head of Service
Version	1.0
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Business Unit and Team	Planning & Regulation Unit Planning Policy Team

Please [click this link](#) to find the EqIA guidance toolkit for support in completing the following form.

For translations, braille or large print versions of this document please email
equalities@stevenage.gov.uk.

First things first:

Does this policy, project, service, or other decision need an EqIA?

Title:	Stevenage Local Plan – Partial Update
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:	
Remove discrimination and harassment?	Yes
Promote equal opportunities?	Yes
Encourage good relations?	Yes

If you answered 'Yes' to one or more of the above questions you should carry out an EqIA.

Or 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 below and seek approval from your Assistant Director before confirming this by sending this page to equalities@stevenage.gov.uk.

Equality Impact Assessment Form

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

What is being assessed?		Stevenage Local Plan – Partial Update			
Lead Assessor	Lewis Claridge		Assessment team	Planning Policy Team: Lewis Claridge (Head of Planning Policy) Sarah Martins (Team Leader) Sally Talbot (Principal Planning Officer / Team Leader) Thomas Frankland (Principal Planning Officer) Asma Zakir (Graduate Planning Officer)	
Start date	February 2023	End date		Adoption: TBC, projected July 2026	
When will the EqIA be reviewed? (Typically every 2 years)		With any modifications to the proposed plan			

Who may be affected by the proposed project?	The project will to some extent affect all residents of Stevenage and may also affect some residents of neighbouring authorities.
What are the key aims of the proposed project?	<p>The key aims of the project are twofold:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To ensure that the local plan remains consistent with national planning policy; and 2. To ensure that the local plan remains aligned with the council's priorities (in particular by ensuring that development in the borough mitigates and adapts to climate change).

What positive measures are in place (if any) to help fulfil our legislative duties to:

Remove discrimination & harassment	In addition to the protections afforded by the Equality Act, the National Planning Policy Framework effectively requires local plans to plan positively for people with a range of protected characteristics. This includes planning for: specialist housing for older people and people with disabilities; facilities for Gypsies and Travellers; health infrastructure; accessible transport infrastructure; education (including for those with special educational needs); and community facilities (including places of worship). The effectiveness of these policies is examined in public by a government-appointed inspector prior to the local plan being adopted by the council.	Promote equal opportunities	The local plan promotes equal opportunities by properly planning for people with protected characteristics e.g. planning for the right type of care and accommodation will allow older people and people with disabilities to live as independently as possible within the community. The approach taken to this process is firmly evidence-based and that evidence is robustly tested at examination.	Encourage good relations	Good relations between those with protected characteristics and those without is a natural consequence of promoting equal opportunities between those groups. Notwithstanding, the local plan is also subject to multiple rounds of consultation, which includes various infrastructure and service providers catering to people with protected characteristics as well as the wider public. The council must demonstrate that any and all views expressed have been appropriately taken into account and this is again tested at examination.
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What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	<p>(Note – This list is not exhaustive)</p> <p>Legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Equality Act 2010 (as amended)Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) <p>National Policy, Guidance and Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">National Planning Policy Framework – December 2024National Planning Policy Framework – December 2023National Planning Practice GuidancePlanning Policy for Traveller Sites – December 2024Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision Making (EHRC, 2014)Census 2011 and Census 2021 <p>Regional Policy, Guidance and Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 2018 – 2031Hertfordshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2019 – 2029Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2026Housing Market Areas Study (ORS, 2015)Strategic Housing Market Assessment (DCA, 2013)Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Update (ORS, 2015)Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Update Vol. 2 (ORS, 2016)Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Part II Update (ORS, 2023)
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Functional Economic Market Area Study (NLP, 2015)

Local Policy, Guidance and Evidence:

Sports Facility Assessment and Strategy 2014 – 2031 (Nortoft, 2014)

Stevenage Employment and Economy Baseline Study (NLP, 2013)

Strategic Employment Land Availability Assessment 2015

Employment Technical Paper 2015

Employment Technical Paper 2024

Open Space Strategy 2015

Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2016

Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2016

Climate Change Technical Paper 2024

Housing Technical Paper 2015

Housing Technical Paper 2024

Aspirational Housing Research Paper 2010

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2015

Gypsy and Traveller Site Search 2014

Retail and Leisure Capacity Study (CACI, 2013)

Retail Study 2014

Retail Study 2024

Future Town, Future Transport Strategy 2019

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2019

Mobility Strategy 2016

Climate Change Strategy 2020

Whole Plan and CIL Review Viability Study (AspinallVerdi, 2024)

In assessing the potential impact on people, are there any overall comments that you would like to make?

The Local Plan considers a broad range of topics and accordingly has the potential to affect many different groups with protected and non-protected characteristics. However, the current exercise amounts to only a partial update of the plan and is therefore considerably narrower in scope. The main changes being proposed in the update are:

- A new strategic climate change policy and accompanying chapter of detailed climate change policies
- Clarification of the council's residual housing requirement up to 2031
- Updated requirements for affordable housing and accessible housing
- An updated policy for the Station Gateway Opportunity Area
- Updated policies for flood risk and sustainable drainage
- Changes to use classes to reflect the amended Use Classes Order

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	<p>The Local Plan Partial Update would have a significant positive impact on equality of opportunity by building on the existing provisions for older people in the adopted local plan, namely the requirements for developments to provide specialist accommodation for older people, to ensure that developments are accessible to people with limited mobility, and the general provisions and safeguards for healthcare infrastructure. The Local Plan Partial Update also continues to provide for the needs of younger people by continuing to safeguard land for educational uses.</p>
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	<p>The plan provides as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed update to Policy SP2(f) underscores the council's commitment to providing facilities to meet the needs of an ageing population. • Policy IT5 continues to require parking provision in line with the council's Parking Provision Supplementary Planning Document, which in turn has been recently amended to require a significant increase in the provision of blue badge parking spaces. • A requirement to provide sheltered or supported housing on the South-East of Stevenage site is maintained under Policy HO4. • Policy TC4 requires any development to accommodate all users with the opportunity area. • Support for sheltered and supported housing schemes elsewhere is maintained under Policy HO10. • The proposed update to Policy HO11 would require 10% of all homes delivered through major residential schemes to be suitable for wheelchair users, with an additional 40% being readily adaptable. • Policy GD1 continues to require ease of movement "for all users" within development schemes. • Policy HC3 continues to safeguard Lister Hospital and its surroundings for healthcare uses. • Policy HC5 continues to safeguard Land at Ridlins Playing Fields for new healthcare uses. • Policy HC9 continues to safeguard the former Barnwell East school site for educational facilities. <p>These provisions are evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 2018 – 2031 • Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Housing Market Assessment (DCA, 2013) • Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Update (ORS, 2015) • Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Update Vol. 2 (ORS, 2016) • Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Part II Update (ORS, 2023) • Housing Technical Paper 2015 • Housing Technical Paper 2024 • Future Town, Future Transport Strategy 2019 • Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2019 • Mobility Strategy 2016 • Engagement with the Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board • Engagement with Hertfordshire County Council 	
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	<p>The needs of people of different age groups naturally shift as demographics change within the borough. It is expected that new opportunities will arise in the future as this happens. Accordingly, the local plan and the underlying evidence base is kept under regular review.</p>	<p>What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)</p> <p>Nothing at present. However, the needs of the population are constantly shifting and the plan and evidence base are accordingly kept under regular review.</p>

Disability e.g., physical impairment, mental ill health, learning difficulties, long-standing illness	
Positive impact	<p>The Local Plan Partial Update would have a significant positive impact on equality of opportunity by building on the existing provisions for people with disabilities in the adopted local plan, namely the requirements for developments to provide specialist accommodation for wheelchair users and people with limited mobility, to ensure that developments are accessible to people with limited mobility, and the general provisions and safeguards for healthcare infrastructure. The Local Plan Partial Update also continues to provide for the needs of younger people by continuing to safeguard land for educational uses, which includes facilities for special educational needs.</p>
Please evidence the data and information	<p>The plan provides as follows:</p>

<p>you used to support this assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy IT5 continues to require parking provision in line with the council's Parking Provision Supplementary Planning Document, which in turn has been recently amended to require a significant increase in the provision of blue badge parking spaces. A requirement to provide sheltered or supported housing on the South-East of Stevenage site is maintained under Policy HO4. Policy TC4 requires any development to accommodate all users with the opportunity area. Support for sheltered and supported housing schemes elsewhere is maintained under Policy HO10. The proposed update to Policy HO11 would require 10% of all homes delivered through major residential schemes to be suitable for wheelchair users, with an additional 40% being readily adaptable. Policy GD1 continues to require ease of movement "for all users" within development schemes. Policy HC3 continues to safeguard Lister Hospital and its surroundings for healthcare uses. Policy HC5 continues to safeguard Land at Ridlins Playing Fields for new healthcare uses. Policy HC9 continues to safeguard the former Barnwell East school site for educational facilities. <p>These provisions are evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 2018 – 2031 Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2026 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (DCA, 2013) Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Update (ORS, 2015) Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Update Vol. 2 (ORS, 2016) Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Part II Update (ORS, 2023) Housing Technical Paper 2015 Housing Technical Paper 2024 Future Town, Future Transport Strategy 2019 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2019 Mobility Strategy 2016 Engagement with the Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board Engagement with Hertfordshire County Council 		
<p>What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?</p>	<p>The needs of people with disabilities naturally shift as demographics change within the borough. It is expected that new opportunities will arise in the future as this happens.</p>	<p>What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)</p>	<p>Nothing at present. However, the needs of the population are constantly shifting and the plan and evidence base are accordingly kept under regular review.</p>

	Accordingly, the local plan and the underlying evidence base is kept under regular review.		
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Gender Reassignment					
Positive impact	N/A	Negative impact	N/A	Unequal impact	N/A
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	The local plan is not known to affect any areas of the borough particularly relied upon by people with this protected characteristic and given that it is concerned with the development of land, any wider impacts are highly unlikely.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	N/A		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Nothing at present. However, the needs of the population are constantly shifting and the plan and evidence base are accordingly kept under regular review.	

Marriage or Civil Partnership					
Positive impact	N/A	Negative impact	N/A	Unequal impact	N/A
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	The local plan is not known to affect any areas of the borough particularly relied upon by people with this protected characteristic and given that it is concerned with the development of land, any wider impacts are highly unlikely.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	N/A		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Nothing at present. However, the needs of the population are constantly shifting and the plan and evidence base are	

			accordingly kept under regular review.
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Pregnancy & Maternity					
Positive impact	N/A	Negative impact	N/A	Unequal impact	N/A
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	The local plan is not known to affect any areas of the borough particularly relied upon by people with this protected characteristic and given that it is concerned with the development of land, any wider impacts are highly unlikely.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	N/A		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Nothing at present. However, the needs of the population are constantly shifting and the plan and evidence base are accordingly kept under regular review.	

Race	
Positive impact	The Local Plan Partial Update would have a positive impact on removing discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and fostering good relations by maintaining the existing provision for Gypsy and Traveller sites in the adopted local plan. The Local Plan Partial Update is otherwise not known to affect any areas of the borough especially relied upon by people of any particular race or ethnicity.
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	<p>The plan provides as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy HO12 safeguards land north of Graveley Road for up to 16 pitches.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy HO13 provides broad support for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in other locations where there is a demonstrable need. <p>These provisions are evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gypsy and Traveller Site Search 2014 		
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	<p>The needs of people of different races and ethnicities naturally shift as demographics change within the borough. It is expected that new opportunities will arise in the future as this happens. Accordingly, the local plan and the underlying evidence base is kept under regular review.</p>	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Nothing at present. However, the needs of the population are constantly shifting and the plan and evidence base are accordingly kept under regular review.

Religion or Belief			
Positive impact	The plan has a positive impact on equality of opportunity and good relations by maintaining protections for existing places of worship and support for new places of worship.		
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	<p>Policy HC6 continues to require strong justification for the demolition or redevelopment of places of worship.</p> <p>Policy HC7 continues to provide broad support for new places of worship across the borough.</p> <p>Neither of these policies make any distinction between different faiths (or denominations, branches, sects, etc.)</p>		
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	The needs of people with different religions and beliefs naturally shift as demographics change within the borough. It is expected that new opportunities will arise in the future as this happens. Accordingly, the local	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Nothing at present. However, the needs of the population are constantly shifting and the plan and evidence base are accordingly kept under regular review.

	plan and the underlying evidence base is kept under regular review.		
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Sex					
Positive impact	N/A	Negative impact	N/A	Unequal impact	N/A
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	The local plan is not known to affect any areas of the borough particularly relied upon by people of different sexes and given that it is concerned with the development of land, any wider impacts are highly unlikely.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	N/A		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Nothing at present. However, the needs of the population are constantly shifting and the plan and evidence base are accordingly kept under regular review.	

Sexual Orientation e.g., straight, lesbian / gay, bisexual					
Positive impact	N/A	Negative impact	N/A	Unequal impact	N/A
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	The local plan is not known to affect any areas of the borough particularly relied upon by people with this protected characteristic and given that it is concerned with the development of land, any wider impacts are highly unlikely.				

What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	N/A	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Nothing at present. However, the needs of the population are constantly shifting and the plan and evidence base are accordingly kept under regular review.
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Socio-economic¹

e.g., low income, unemployed, homelessness, caring responsibilities, access to internet, public transport users, social value in procurement

Positive impact	The Local Plan Partial Update would have a significant positive impact on equality of opportunity by building on existing provisions for people of different socio-economic statuses in the adopted local plan. This includes provision for affordable housing, aspirational housing, houses in multiple occupation, and public transport. The plan also continues to safeguard land to provide a sufficient number and range of jobs to support all sectors of the community.
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	<p>The plan provides as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy SP3 plans for 140,000m² of employment land across the borough up to 2031 • This is supported by detailed Policies EC1 to EC7 • Policy SP5 plans for a wide range of infrastructure, including affordable housing • Policy SP6 plans for sustainable transport, including new public transport facilities • This is supported by detailed Policy IT6 • Policy SP7 plans for 7,600 new homes up to 2031, including a significant proportion of affordable units (across a range of different affordable tenures), as well as aspirational housing • This is supported by detailed Policies HO7, HO8 and HO9 • Policy TC4 requires any development to accommodate all users with the opportunity area.

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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed update to Policy HO11 would require 10% of all homes delivered through major residential schemes to be suitable for wheelchair users, with an additional 40% being readily adaptable. • New Policy HO14 offers broad support for new houses in multiple occupation, which fulfil a similar role to small affordable housing units <p>These provisions are evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 2018 – 2031 • Housing Market Areas Study (ORS, 2015) • Strategic Housing Market Assessment (DCA, 2013) • Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Update (ORS, 2015) • Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Update Vol. 2 (ORS, 2016) • Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Part II Update (ORS, 2023) • Functional Economic Market Area Study (NLP, 2015) • Stevenage Employment and Economy Baseline Study (NLP, 2013) • Strategic Employment Land Availability Assessment 2015 • Employment Technical Paper 2015 • Employment Technical Paper 2024 • Housing Technical Paper 2015 • Housing Technical Paper 2024 • Aspirational Housing Research Paper 2010 • Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2015 • Future Town, Future Transport Strategy 2019 • Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2019 		
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	<p>The needs of people of different socio-economic status naturally shift as demographics change within the borough. It is expected that new opportunities will arise in the future as this happens. Accordingly, the local plan and the underlying evidence base is kept under regular review.</p>	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	<p>Nothing at present. However, the needs of the population are constantly shifting and the plan and evidence base are accordingly kept under regular review.</p>

Additional Considerations

Please outline any other potential impact on people in any other contexts

Positive impact	N/A	Negative impact	N/A	Unequal impact	N/A
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	The local plan is not known to affect any areas of the borough particularly relied upon by people with other non-protected characteristics.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	N/A		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Nothing at present. However, the needs of the population are constantly shifting and the plan and evidence base are accordingly kept under regular review.	

Consultation Findings

Document any feedback gained from the following groups of people:

Staff?	Please see consultation statements.	Residents?	Please see consultation statements.
Voluntary & community sector?	Please see consultation statements.	Partners?	Please see consultation statements.
Other stakeholders?	Please see consultation statements.		

Overall Conclusion & Future Activity

Explain the **overall findings** of the assessment and **reasons for outcome (please choose one)**:

1. No inequality, inclusion issues or opportunities to further improve have been identified

As detailed above, the Local Plan Partial Update would have a positive impact on all three of the council's statutory duties by building upon the existing provisions for people with protected and non-protected characteristics in the adopted local plan. The needs of these groups are however constantly shifting and for this reason, the plan is kept under regular review (at least every five years but next review is scheduled for immediately after the conclusion of this partial update).



Approved by Assistant Director:

Date: 2.2.2026

Please send this EqIA to equalities@stevenage.gov.uk for critical friend feedback and for final submittance with the associated project.