

Priority Based Budgeting 2: 2015/16

Summary of draft Equality Impact Assessments

Equality at Stevenage Borough Council

Stevenage Borough Council as a service provider, employer and community leader is committed to achieving equal opportunities for everyone. We want to deliver services that are fair, accessible and open to everyone who needs them.

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) are an important part of the process in ensuring that our intention is translated into action. They help to ensure that decisions are made in a fair, transparent and accountable way, considering the needs and the rights of different people in the community.

Based on the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, the EqIA considers the impact on the following groups when making decisions, updating policies and starting new projects:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marital status
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

Although non-statutory, the Council has chosen to adopt the Socio-Economic Duty and so decision-makers should use their discretion in considering the impact on people in terms of their social or economic background.

EqIAs also help the council to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). The Duty states that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is unlawful under this Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

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Savings Proposals 2015/16

Prior to their consideration at Executive in November 2014, the savings proposals have been reviewed to determine any potential impact on Stevenage residents in terms of their protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. The majority of these have no public impact and so have not been subject to any further EqIA.

Where a negative, positive or disproportionate impact is likely, Heads of Service and other appropriate managers have drafted Brief or Full EqIAs. These have been summarised over the following pages and will inform the recommendations made to Council in January 2015. Action to mitigate or further analyse the impact on equality groups is identified where appropriate.

The following activity has also taken place:

August – October 2014 – Seeking residents' priorities for fees and charges, Council Tax and service provision

November – December 2014 – Consultation on individual proposals as appropriate

November 2014 – January 2015 – EqIAs finalised considering further evidence and consultation results

January 2015 – Consideration of all completed HRA EqIAs at Council

Savings Proposals 2016/17 and 2017/18

Savings proposals for subsequent years as part of the three-year priority based approach have also been reviewed to determine any potential impact on local people. These savings will be agreed in principle in the first instance, and will be subject to further assessment and agreement as part of future annual Budget-setting processes.

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Saving Ref	Saving proposed	Summary of impact	Action	Contact Officer
HS18	The provision of a room, currently not being used by service users, as emergency accommodation at Wellfield Court.	<p>Positive</p> <p>Age Positive impact on young mothers as there will be an additional accommodation unit available.</p> <p>Sex Positive impact as predominantly used for mothers.</p> <p>Pregnancy and maternity Will offer one more unit for accommodation, as predominantly used for those expecting or with young children.</p> <p>Socio-economic Will also affect those who are homeless and waiting a decision on whether we have a duty to re house and those where a decision is yet to be made. This could be households with any range of issues.</p> <p>Potential Negative</p> <p>Other This proposal would result in the loss of resident access to staff in the evenings. However, recent feedback shows that residents prefer to contact staff for support during the day, which would continue.</p>	Develop and finalise this EqIA for Consultation with staff will not commence until Mid-January. Following this there will be consultation with residents. Both should be concluded by the end of February 2015.	Jaine Cresser

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Brief Equality Impact Assessment For a minor operational change / review / simple analysis

What is being assessed?	HS18: The provision of a room, currently not being used by service users, as emergency accommodation at Wellfield Court.	What are the key aims of it?	Consideration is being given to using alternative space at Wellfield Court as emergency accommodation and charging rent for this in the same way we would charge for a guest room.			
Who may be affected by it?	Those who find themselves needing or using temporary or emergency accommodation at Wellfield Court					
Date of full EqIA on service area (planned or completed)	Dec 2014					
Form completed by:	Jaine Cresser Emma Barron	Start date	3/11/14	End date	5/11/14	
		Review date				

What data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	Recent feedback from residents was that they preferred to use the staff who visit the site during the day rather than the bank staff who occupy this room during the evening	Have any information gaps been identified along the way? If so, please specify	No
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Explain the potential positive, negative or unequal impact on the following characteristics and how likely this is:			
Age	Positive impact on young mothers as there will be an additional accommodation unit available.	Race	
Disability		Religion or belief	
Gender reassignment		Sex	Positive impact as predominantly used for mothers.
Marriage or civil partnership		Sexual orientation	

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Pregnancy & maternity	Will offer one more unit for accommodation, as predominantly used for those expecting or with young children.	Socio-economic ¹	Will also affect those who are homeless and waiting a decision on whether we have a duty to re house and those where a decision is yet to be made. This could be households with any range of issues.
Other	This proposal would result in the loss of resident access to staff in the evenings. However, recent feedback shows that residents prefer to contact staff for support during the day, which would continue.		

Where there is a likely positive impact , please explain how it will help to fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment		Promote equal opportunities	This will introduce one further unit to the block.	Encourage good relations	

What further work / activity is needed as a result of this assessment?

Action	Responsible officer	How will this be delivered and monitored?	Deadline
Consultation with staff will not commence until Mid-January. Following this there will be consultation with residents. Both should be concluded by the end of February.		Staff consultation will run as per procedural consultations	Feb 2015

Approved by Strategic Director: Matthew Partridge

Date: 5/11/14

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.