

FINANCIAL SECURITY: 2019/20 APPENDIX E

Overall Equality Impact Assessment of proposals

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.

FINANCIAL SECURITY: 2019/20 APPENDIX E

Overall Equality Impact Assessment of proposals

Savings Proposals 2019/20

Prior to their consideration at Executive in November 2018, all savings proposals were 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, assistant directors and other appropriate managers have drafted Brief or Full EqIAs. These have been summarised over the following pages and will inform the recommendations made at Executive on 23 January and 13 February 2019. Action to further analyse or mitigate the impact on equality groups is identified where appropriate.

The following activity has been taken / will take place:

- November 2018 – February 2019 EqIAs finalised considering further evidence as necessary
- January and February 2019 Consideration of all completed EqIAs at Council meetings

Summary Of Equality Impact Assessments Appendix E

Saving Ref	Saving proposed	Summary of impact	Action	Contact Officer
SA2	Cease payment of excesses on strimmer claims	<p>Unequal impact:</p> <p>Socio Economic Lower income households may have only basic car or home insurance that does not provide coverage and/or may find it more difficult to pay the excess.</p>	No further action or EqIA is required	Clare Fletcher
SC23	Charge for retrospective permissions granted	<p>Unequal impact</p> <p>Disability Disabled tenants who need adaptations would apply via Stevenage Borough Council as an OT assessment would need to be carried out before any works are completed. The works are paid from the aids and adaptation budget.</p> <p>Socio Economic Tenants on lower incomes may find it more difficult to make the payment. Arrangements could be made to negotiate payment plans on a case by case basis according to circumstances through the concessions policy.</p>	<p>Full EQIA completed</p> <p>Publicise the introduction of the charges as widely as possible in February 2019 before implementation in April 2019.</p> <p>Provide adequate training and support for the Customer Service Centre (CSC) and Housing & Investment Team.</p> <p>Ensure that staff identify low income and vulnerable residents and follow the concessions policy.</p>	Jaine Cresser

Saving Ref	Saving proposed	Summary of impact	Action	Contact Officer
			<p>Consult on the new terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement, which include recharges of retrospective permissions.</p> <p>Review after 6 months to assess the impact and see if it has adversely affected particular equality group(s).</p> <p>Review of the charges to be undertaken as part of annual fees and charges setting mechanism.</p>	
SE2	Replacement waste container charges	<p>Negative impact: Socio Economic Replacement container charges may discourage residents to participate with refuse and recycling services if they are charged for a replacement container.</p>	<p>The Council will seek to apply a concessionary rate for those receiving income derived benefit.</p> <p>Replacement containers will be provided free of charge where irreparable damage or loss of a container is the fault of the Council.</p>	Craig Miller

Saving Ref	Saving proposed	Summary of impact	Action	Contact Officer
			The charge will be reviewed alongside corporate fees and charges setting process 2019/20.	
HRA	Rent and service charge setting for 2019/20	<p>Positive impact:</p> <p>Socio Economic The rent decrease will be applied across all tenancies prescribed by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 regardless of circumstances.</p> <p>Those who receive services for which a service charge is made will be charged the actual cost of these services. Some of these service charges will be eligible for Universal Credit (UC) Housing Cost element and Housing Benefit (HB).</p> <p>Unequal impact:</p> <p>Socio Economic The rent reduction applies to all tenants subject to Clause 21 of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. However, properties exempt from this clause will have the rent increased by CPI + 1%. (Currently this is circa 87 Low Start Shared Ownership (LSSO) properties and one shared ownership property – it may also include emergency and temporary accommodation).</p> <p>52% (as at the end of 2017/18) of tenants are reliant on HB to cover the rent and HB eligible service charges. Only some service charges</p>	<p>Full EQIA completed (HRA & SC18 combined).</p> <p>Communicate rent and charges through notification letters, FAQ sheets and the website, giving the opportunity for residents to discuss their concerns with staff and get support in applying for any relevant benefits.</p> <p>Review whether any elements of the independent living service should be eligible for housing benefit.</p>	Jaine Cresser

Saving Ref	Saving proposed	Summary of impact	Action	Contact Officer
		<p>are eligible for UC Housing Cost element and HB. For example heating charges are exempt and tenants and leaseholders are expected to pay this. Water charges are also exempt from the decrease and UC Housing Cost element and HB.</p>		
SC18	<p>Increase contribution to support costs to £2 per year as part of phased support costs agreed in 2016/17</p>	<p>Positive impact:</p> <p>Socio Economic Results from the STAR survey in 2018 have shown that residents identified the emergency alarm service and the supported housing officer as the 2nd and 3rd most important priority associated with living in their property. The application of the support charge will help to ensure that the Council can continue to deliver this service.</p> <p>Negative impact:</p> <p>Age Residents of independent living and flexicare schemes who will have to pay the increased charge are predominantly older people. Conversely however, the costs are currently subsidised by the wider tenant population, who have a younger age profile and do not benefit from the service.</p> <p>Disability The residents that are charged a support charge are predominantly older and disabled people as this accommodation is for people over 55 years old or for people with a disability.</p> <p>Socio Economic The support charge is not eligible for housing benefit and could have</p>		<p>Jaine Cresser</p>

Saving Ref	Saving proposed	Summary of impact	Action	Contact Officer
		<p>a negative impact for those on lower incomes in terms of affordability.</p> <p>This group of residents may also be affected by increases in Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) affecting the overall amount that older and disabled people can afford to pay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCC now charge for some of their community based adult social care services that they used to provide for free. This has impacted on many people over 60 in the independent living/flexicare schemes as they are in receipt of some care due to their age/medical conditions. The low care band in flexicare doubled and this has had an impact on residents being able to afford care • HCC funding for Flexicare housing related support is due to end on 31st March 2019, which would mean more cost to Stevenage Borough Council, which we may need to pass on to residents. <p>However, the introduction of the charge is considered to be fairer than under current arrangements, whereby support charge costs are subsidised by the wider tenant population who do not benefit from the service.</p> <p>Furthermore, the charge has been introduced on an incremental basis, to mitigate the impact, rather than applying the full amount of £18.30 per week in one 'hit'.</p> <p>For those tenants who are not eligible for HB or who are on partial HB, the rent reduction will to some extent offset the impact of the charge.</p>		

Saving Ref	Saving proposed	Summary of impact	Action	Contact Officer
SE11	Charge an administration fee for managing the VCO garages	<p>Possible negative impact</p> <p>Age, Race, Disability, Religion or belief and Socio Economic characteristics Financial implication associated with £104 annual charge per garage. Cost is considered to be proportionate and reasonable within the context of overall operating costs of VCO's.</p> <p>Possible positive impact</p> <p>Age, Race, Disability, Religion or belief and Socio Economic characteristics Will stimulate review of the organisations actual need for a garage and may provide an opportunity to rationalise liabilities associated with use of a third party resource/asset.</p>	Review of charge application and EQIA to ensure continued applicability.	Craig Miller
SC11	Broker the Council's commercial skip business through a third party provider	<p>Socio-economic The Council will continue to ensure that the charges applied for the provision of skips remain proportionate and are reasonable in terms of market conditions at the time of being set.</p>	Charges will be reviewed as part of the annual fees and charges setting mechanism as normal.	Craig Miller
SC 6	Provide Sanctum vaults for ashes interments at the Almonds Lane & Weston Road Cemeteries	<p>Positive Impact</p> <p>Disability Sanctums can be located along path edges and access routes within Cemeteries. These memorial types can as a result be a more accessible memorial solution for mourners who are less mobile.</p> <p>Socio Economic Sanctums may provide a more affordable burial option for low</p>	No further action or EqIA is required.	Craig Miller

Saving Ref	Saving proposed	Summary of impact	Action	Contact Officer
		<p>income households when compared to costs associated with standard grave burials.</p> <p>Unequal Impact</p> <p>Religion or Belief Sanctums would not be a viable option for faith denominations that only utilise grave burials for their deceased.</p>		

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

What is being assessed?	Insurance Claims - Damage Caused To Property owned by Members of the Public by Grasscutting Operatives Using Strimmers	What are the key aims of it?	To enforce the legal protocol/process of dealing with these claims thus saving taxpayers' money.		
Who may be affected by it?	Customers: External				
Date of full EqIA on service area (planned or completed)	N/A				
Form completed by:	Debbie Gibson	Start date	01/10/18	End date	TBA
		Review date		30/04/19	

What data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	Internal Public Liability (PL) Claims Experience	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	n/a	Race	n/a
Disability	n/a	Religion or belief	n/a
Gender reassignment	n/a	Sex	n/a
Marriage or civil partnership	n/a	Sexual orientation	n/a
Pregnancy & maternity	n/a	Socio-economic ¹	Unequal impact: Lower income households may have

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.

			only basic car or home insurance that does not provide coverage and/or may find it more difficult to pay the excess
Other	N/A		

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		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
None - but note that where we have been negligent in not complying with health and safety legislation and risk then liability may be conceded.	Debbie Gibson	Delivered by Insurance Team following due process and monitored by the Insurance Manager (depending on volume of claims and follow on regarding any post claim complaints)	N/A

Approved by Assistant Director (Finance and Estates)

Date: 1st November 2018

Full Equality Impact Assessment

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

What is being assessed?		Introduction of Retrospective Permissions Charge – 1 year pilot	
Lead Assessor	Karen Long		Assessment team
Start date	31 Dec 18	End date	04 Jan 2019
When will the EqIA be reviewed?	4 Jan 2019		Elizabeth Ddamulira

Who may be affected by it?	Residents who carry out property alteration before applying for permission.
What are the key aims of it?	<p>We reviewed retrospective permissions requested over the last three years and found that this number has increased and this has impacted on current resources.</p> <p>It is proposed that we introduce a charge to all residents that carry out property alteration without permission first, which is a breach of the tenancy terms and conditions.</p> <p>The proposed charge will vary between £100-£500 depending on the extent of the alterations carried out and whether the alterations meet the required regulations and standards.</p> <p>To encourage tenants to request permission before any alterations are made to the property so that we can offer an expert opinion on whether they are viable or compromise the integrity of the building.</p> <p>To generate income to cover the cost of processing and administrative cost incurred by Council.</p>

What positive measures are in place (if any) to help fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment		Promote equal opportunities	This also aligns to the Council's aim to be financially sufficient and recover costs of services where possible.	Encourage good relations	

What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	There has not been any direct public consultation with regard to this particular decision; however, it was taken as a proposal to Housing Management Advisory Board (HMAB) on 25 th October 2018 and it was supported. HMAB includes resident members. It will also be included as part of the consultation on the revised tenancy agreement in January/early February 2019. It is understood that residents will not welcome the proposal and this is to be expected.
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In assessing the potential impact on people, are there any overall comments that you would like to make?	<p>The proposed charges will apply to all equality groups of Council tenants, although we will be looking at the concessions policy to ensure that this does not impact negatively on vulnerable and low income households as soon as is practicably possible.</p> <p>There are currently no proposals to consider any other exemptions.</p> <p>It is difficult to estimate who could be potentially impacted by this charge. We therefore intend to take all possibilities into consideration when assessing the equality impacts of this charge. We will review the pilot after 6 months to assess the impact and see if it has adversely affected particular equality group(s).</p> <p>We can utilise information primarily from our demographic profile to ensure that any service users that are vulnerable or on low incomes are not adversely impacted by this pilot.</p>
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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	<p>The introduction of a charge will be equally applicable to all users and no potential impact has been identified specific to this equality group.</p> <p>In addition, the proposal does not exclude an individual or group with a protected characteristic from contacting/speaking/emailing/writing with officers regarding their issue.</p>
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment					
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Disability e.g. physical impairment, mental ill health, learning difficulties, long-standing illness					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	The introduction of a charge will be equally applicable to all users and no potential impact has been

				<p>identified specific to this equality group.</p> <p>In addition, the proposal does not exclude an individual or group with a protected characteristic from contacting/speaking/emailing/writing with officers regarding their issue.</p> <p>For those tenants who need adaptations they would apply via Stevenage Borough Council as an OT assessment would need to be carried out before any works are completed. The works are paid from the aids and adaptation budget.</p>
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Gender reassignment N/A				
Positive impact		Negative impact		<p>The introduction of a charge will be equally applicable to all users and no potential impact has been identified specific to this equality group.</p> <p>In addition, the proposal does not</p>

					exclude an individual or group with a protected characteristic from contacting/speaking/emailing/writing with officers regarding their issue.
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment					
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Marriage or civil partnership N/A					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	<p>The introduction of a charge will be equally applicable to all users and no potential impact has been identified specific to this equality group.</p> <p>In addition, the proposal does not exclude an individual or group with a protected characteristic from contacting/speaking/emailing/writing with officers regarding their issue.</p>
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment					
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Pregnancy & maternity – N/A					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	<p>The introduction of a charge will be equally applicable to all users and no potential impact has been identified specific to this equality group.</p> <p>In addition, the proposal does not exclude an individual or group with a protected characteristic from contacting/speaking/emailing/writing with officers regarding their issue.</p>
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment					
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Race – N/A					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	<p>The introduction of a charge will be equally applicable to all users and no potential impact has been identified specific to this equality group.</p> <p>In addition, the proposal does not exclude an individual or group with a protected characteristic from</p>

					contacting/speaking/emailing/writing with officers regarding their issue.
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment					
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 – N/A					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	<p>The introduction of a charge will be equally applicable to all users and no potential impact has been identified specific to this equality group.</p> <p>In addition, the proposal does not exclude an individual or group with a protected characteristic from contacting/speaking/emailing/writing with officers regarding their issue.</p>
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment					
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Sex – N/A					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	<p>The introduction of a charge will be equally applicable to all users and no potential impact has been identified specific to this equality group.</p> <p>In addition, the proposal does not exclude an individual or group with a protected characteristic from contacting/speaking/emailing/writing with officers regarding their issue.</p>
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment					
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Sexual orientation – N/A e.g. straight, lesbian / gay, bisexual					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	<p>The introduction of a charge will be equally applicable to all users and no potential impact has been identified specific to this equality group.</p> <p>In addition, the proposal does not exclude an individual or group with a protected characteristic from contacting/speaking/emailing/writing</p>

					with officers regarding their issue.
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment					
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Socio-economic² e.g. low income, unemployed, homelessness, caring responsibilities, access to internet, public transport users, social value in procurement					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	<p>The introduction of a charge will be equally applicable to all users.</p> <p>In addition, the proposal does not exclude an individual or group with a protected characteristic from contacting/speaking/emailing/writing with officers regarding their issue.</p> <p>However, tenants on lower incomes may find it more difficult to make the payment. Arrangements could be made to negotiate payment plans on a case by case basis according to circumstances through the concessions policy.</p>

²Although 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.

Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Other – N/A			
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			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	
Future Review and Monitoring			

What are the findings of any consultation with:

Staff?	None	Residents?	
Voluntary & community sector?		Partners?	
Other stakeholders?			

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		
Negative / unequal impact, barriers to inclusion or improvement opportunities identified	2a. Adjustments made	Consideration will be made in line with the concession policy. Following the 6 month review outcome consider the annual review of the charge.
	2b. Continue as planned	Sustainable service provision is reliant upon us being able to collect income where it is possible to do so.
	2c. Stop and remove	

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?
Publicise the introduction of the charges as widely as possible in February 2019 before implementation in April 2019.	This will help communication and understanding of this charge. It will also encourage proactive permission requests coming through.	Elizabeth Ddamulira	28 Feb 19	
Provide adequate training and support for Customer Service Centres (CSC) and Housing & Investment Team	This will help communication and understanding of this charge.	Elizabeth Ddamulira	28 Feb 19	
Ensure that staff identify low income and vulnerable residents and follow the concessions policy	This will address some of the social economic challenges faced by residents.	Elizabeth Ddamulira	Ongoing	
To consult on the new terms	This will help communication	Keith Wilson	Mid Feb	

and conditions of the tenancy agreement which includes recharges of retrospective permissions	and understanding of this charge. It will also encourage proactive permission requests coming through.		19	
Review after 6 months to assess the impact and see if it has adversely affected particular equality group(s)	To ensure that a particular equality group(s) are not adversely impacting on.	Elizabeth Ddamulira	Oct 19	
Review to be undertaken as part of annual fees and charges setting mechanism as normal	This is to ensure that charges are value for money and transparent.	Elizabeth Ddamulira	July 19	

Approved by Assistant Director / Strategic Director: Jaïne Cresser, Assistant Director (Housing and Investment)
Date: 8th January 2019

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

Brief Equality Impact Assessment

For a minor operational change / review / simple analysis

What is being assessed?	Proposal to apply a £40 per wheelie bin and £6 per recycling box for replacement waste containers.		<p>The Council is proposing a charging policy for waste containers provide as replacements for those lost or damaged by residents. A charge of £40 for a replacement wheelie bin and £6 for a replacement box is proposed.</p> <p>The Council spent £80,000 on replacement containers in 2017/18.</p> <p>This proposal along with a pilot to implement a more cost effective solution for recycling boxes aims to reduce expenditure on replacement containers.</p> <p>The Council will provide a replacement container free of charge where damage or loss is caused by the collection resource.</p> <p>A concession will be applied for those who receive income derived benefits.</p>			
Who may be affected by it?	All low rise households within Stevenage.					
Date of full EqIA on service area (planned or completed)	A full EqIA will be carried out as part of the second phase of the Business Unit Review of Stevenage Direct Services. This will inform the operating model and ensure services understand who the Council's customers are and their current and future needs.					
Form completed by:	Lloyd Walker		Start date	31/10/18	End date	01/11/18
			Review date	01/11/2020		

What data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	Replacement waste container data and benchmarking data for container charges applied by other local authorities.	Have any information gaps been identified along the way? If so, please specify	None
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Explain the potential positive, negative or unequal impact on the following characteristics and how likely this is:			
Age	n/a	Race	n/a
Disability	n/a	Religion or belief	n/a
Gender reassignment	n/a	Sex	n/a
Marriage or civil partnership	n/a	Sexual orientation	n/a
Pregnancy & maternity	n/a	Socio-economic ³	<p>Negative impact: Replacement container charges may discourage residents to participate with refuse and recycling services if they are charged for a replacement container.</p> <p>The Council will seek to apply a concessionary rate for those receiving income derived benefit. Replacement containers will be provided free of charge where irreparable damage or loss of a container is the fault of the Council.</p>
Other	n/a		

Where there is a likely positive impact , please explain how it will help to fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	No	Promote equal opportunities	No	Encourage good relations	No

³Although 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.

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

Action	Responsible officer	How will this be delivered and monitored?	Deadline
Review of charge application post application	Lloyd Walker	Review alongside corporate fees and charges setting process.	February 2020

Approved by Assistant Director (Stevenage Direct Services)

Date: 2nd November 2018

Full Equality Impact Assessment

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

What is being assessed?		HRA Rent and Service Charge (HRA) and Support Charge (SC18)			
Lead Assessor	Karen Long			Assessment team	Kelly Potts Elizabeth Ddamulira Ann Tomlin
Start date	1 Dec 18	End date	31/12/18		
When will the EqIA be reviewed?	4 Jan 2019				

Who may be affected by it?	<p>SC18: Residents living in independent living/flexicare housing that are in receipt of housing benefit, fairer charging, universal credit (UC) or 2003 protected (i.e. those in the service prior to the government supporting people grant funding starting in 2003). As at 1 January 2019 this affects 604 people. The remaining residents in independent living/flexicare already pay the full charge.</p> <p>HRA: All tenants paying rent and all tenants and leaseholders paying service charges</p>
What are the key aims of it?	<p>SC18: To contribute to the recovery of costs for providing the support/emergency response service to people living in independent living/flexicare schemes that historically have not had to pay anything towards the cost as we received housing related support funding from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). The support/alarm service is not eligible for housing benefit, but in order to be able to continue this service to residents we needed to introduce the initial weekly contribution of £2.00 in 2018/19 and propose to increase this to £4.00 in 2019/20. The total cost of the support/alarm service will be £18.30 per week so Stevenage Borough Council will still be subsidising the £14.30 per week. This option has the support of the housing portfolio holder.</p> <p>HRA: To reduce social rents by 1% until 2020/21 (for the properties as described in the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016) To increase the rents for all excluded properties by CPI + 1% To set the rent for all new homes or where adaptations or extensions have resulted in the property being increased in size (for example, and additional bedroom), in accordance with the formula rent as detailed in the rent and service charge policy.</p>

	<p>Subject to the Welfare reform and Work Act 2016, the rent payable by new tenants of existing social rent housing will be charged at the higher of the formula rent (i.e. the 'social rent rate'), or the actual rent (i.e. the 'assumed rent rate'), with the appropriate rent reductions applied.</p> <p>To charge actual costs for service charges.</p>
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What positive measures are in place (if any) to help fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	SC18: This will remove discrimination against other residents that pay the full cost for not being in receipt of housing benefit or fairer charging.	Promote equal opportunities	SC18 & HRA: This also aligns to the Council's aim to be financially sufficient and recover costs of services where possible.	Encourage good relations	

What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data of those on full/partial housing, fairer charging, universal credit or those that are protected due to supporting people implementation in 2003. • Age profile of independent/flexicare housing tenants • Northgate - Rent account information • Welfare reform and work Act (http://services.parliament.uk/Acts/2015-16/welfare-reform-and-work/documents.html) • Rents for social housing from 2020-21 - GOV.UK • http://www.parliament.uk/documents/impact-assessments/IA15-006F.pdf • Rent and service charge policy agreed by Exec 19 January 2016. • Rent and service charge increase/decrease for all properties (see chart below) • Rent, service charge and support charge increase/decrease per property in independent/flexicare living schemes (see tables below)
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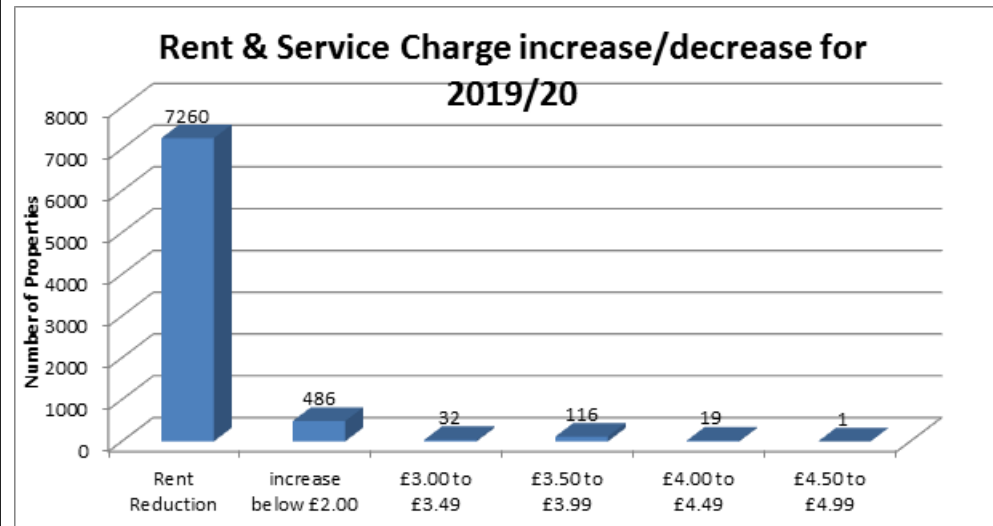
Independent/Flexicare living schemes – combined rent, service charge & support charge:

Actual 2019/20 Increases	
Total Change Year on Year Groupings Table A (Including £2 Support Charge Increase)	
Row Labels – weekly amount	Count of Property Ref
£2.00 to £2.49	79
£2.50 to £2.99	127
£3.00 to £3.49	9
increase below £2.00	
Over £5.50	542
Rent Reduction	51
	37
Grand Total	845

If CPI +1% had been applied this year (see table below)

Total Change Year on Year Groupings Table A (if CPI +1% had been applicable)	
Row Labels	Count of Property Ref
£2.00 to £2.49	5
£2.50 to £2.99	196
£3.00 to £3.49	293
£3.50 to £3.99	124
£4.00 to £4.49	125
£4.50 to £4.99	7
Rent Reduction	2
increase below £2.00	35
Over £5.50	51
£5.00 to £5.50	7
Grand Total	845

All Properties (rent and service charge only):



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

SC18: 542 properties in independent living/flexicare will have an increase of less than £2 per week (this includes rent, service charges and support charge) However, it should be noted that those residents who are on full Housing Benefit, will still have to pay the additional £2 per week support charge because their Housing Benefit will be adjusted to reflect any rent/service charge reduction.

51 properties are due an increase of over £5.50 per week – this is due to their block charges increasing from last year. 42 of those properties are in receipt of full housing benefit or partial housing benefit which will be adjusted to take account of some of this increase.

HRA: 7260 properties will have an overall decrease in rent and service charges. 654 tenants will get a rent and service charge increase (including 87 LSSOs), of which 74% is below £2 per week.

The requirement to decrease rents by 1% for 4 years, including next year, required the HRA business plan to be reviewed which resulted in reprioritising services delivered and investment in

	<p>the housing stock.</p> <p>The 1% per annum decrease from 2016/17 to 2019/20 has led to a £12 million shortfall in the original Business Plan (Nov 14) in the first 4 years, escalating to £225 Million over the 30 year plan.</p> <p>Those who receive services for which there is a service charge payable may have an increase on their weekly charge. This relates to those that live in flats predominantly. We recognise that this may cause financial difficulty and we will provide assistance and support to help those who may have difficulty in making these payments.</p> <p>It is unknown how many tenants are likely to migrate to UC in 2019/20 in line with the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. Migration is phased until the scheduled completion date of March 2023.</p>
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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	
Negative impact	<p>SC18: The residents that are charged a support charge are predominantly older and disabled people as this accommodation is for people over 55 years old or for people with a disability.</p> <p>Conversely however, the costs are currently subsidised by the wider tenant population, who have a younger age profile and do not benefit from the service.</p>
Please evidence the data and	Age profile of independent/flexicare housing residents

information you used to support this assessment	
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)

Disability e.g. physical impairment, mental ill health, learning difficulties, long-standing illness	
Unequal impact	
SC18: The residents that are charged a support charge are predominantly older and disabled people as this accommodation is for people over 55 years old or for people with a disability.	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Northgate report on disability profile for independent/flexicare residents and also whole population living in SBC properties.
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)
	Northgate data on tenants relating to tenants with disability was collected a number of years ago and is not up to date. This information was also disclosed at the tenant's discretion so some tenants may not have provided it. We have introduced a support services module on Northgate whereby we are able to collate more data on disability and this will inform future EQIAs.

Gender reassignment N/A	
Positive impact	Negative impact
Please evidence the data and	Unequal impact

information you used to support this assessment			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Marriage or civil partnership N/A			
Positive impact	Negative impact	Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Pregnancy & maternity – N/A			
Positive impact	Negative impact	Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Race – N/A			
Positive impact	Negative impact	Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment			

What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	
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Religion or belief – N/A			
Positive impact		Negative impact	Unequal impact
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Sex – N/A			
Positive impact		Negative impact	Unequal impact
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Sexual orientation – N/A e.g. straight, lesbian / gay, bisexual			
Positive impact		Negative impact	Unequal impact
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment			
What opportunities are		What do you still need	

there to promote equality and inclusion?		to find out? Include in actions (last page)	
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Socio-economic⁴ e.g. low income, unemployed, homelessness, caring responsibilities, access to internet, public transport users, social value in procurement
<p>Positive Impact:</p> <p>SC18: Results from the STAR survey in 2018 have shown that residents identified the emergency alarm service and the supported housing officer as the 2nd and 3rd most important priority associated with living in their property. The application of the support charge will help to ensure that the Council can continue to deliver this service.</p> <p>In January 2018 we held drop in sessions at each scheme for residents to come and discuss the charge and for us to explain what it is for. We had a lot of positive comments with the majority understanding the need to pay towards the service. Some residents recognised that housing associations had withdrawn the emergency service and scheme manager and didn't want this to happen to them. One person wanted to pay more.</p> <p>HRA: The rent decrease will be applied across all tenancies prescribed by the Welfare and Work Act 2016 regardless of circumstances. Those in receipt of Housing Benefit will have their award recalculated.</p> <p>Those who receive services for which a service charge is made will be charged the actual cost of these services. Some of these service charges will be eligible for UC Housing Cost element and HB.</p> <p>Negative Impact:</p> <p>SC18: The support charge is not eligible for housing benefit and could have a negative impact for those on lower incomes in terms of</p>

⁴Although 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.

affordability. However, of 103 residents where we had to chase payment following last year's introduction of the £2 weekly contribution only one resident said they couldn't afford it and was referred to the debt and advice support worker.

This group of residents may also be affected by increases in Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) affecting the overall amount that older and disabled people can afford to pay:

- HCC now charge for some of their community based adult social care services that they used to provide for free. This has impacted on many people over 60 in the independent living/flexicare schemes as they are in receipt of some care due to their age/medical conditions. The low care band in flexicare doubled and this has had an impact on residents being able to afford care and HCC have received a number of complaints.
- HCC funding for Flexicare housing related support is due to end on 31st March 2019 which would mean more cost to Stevenage Borough Council, which we may need to pass on to residents.

However, the introduction of the charge is considered to be fairer than under current arrangements, whereby support charge costs are subsidised by the wider tenant population who do not benefit from the service.

Furthermore, the charge has been introduced on an incremental basis, to mitigate the impact, rather than applying the full amount of £18.30 per week in one 'hit'.

For those tenants who are not eligible for Housing Benefit (HB) or who are on partial HB, the rent reduction will to some extent offset the impact of the charge.

During 2019/20, officers will also review whether any elements of the independent living service should in fact be eligible for housing benefit.

Unequal Impact:

HRA:

The rent reduction applies to all tenants subject to Clause 21 of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.

Properties exempt from this clause will have the rent increased by CPI + 1%.

(Currently this is circa 87 LSSO properties and one shared ownership property – it may also include emergency and temporary accommodation).

52% (as at the end of 2017/18) of tenants are reliant on HB to cover the rent and HB eligible service charges..

Service charges will be recovered in full and only some service charges are eligible for Universal Credit (UC) Housing Cost element and HB. For example heating charges are exempt and tenants and leaseholders are expected to pay this.

Water charges are also exempt from the decrease and UC Housing Cost element and HB. The rate is set by the Water Authority. SBC collects the water charges on behalf of the Water Authority.

Communication

The rent notification letter (which is a statutory requirement) sent out at the end of February will offer an explanation of why the rent has decreased and also explain that in most instances there has been an increase in service charges. This notification will also give the opportunity for residents to end their tenancy if they feel they no longer want to pay the charges.

To ensure this is clear, those properties where there is only rent and water charges to pay, may overall see a slight decrease in the weekly amount due i.e. the decrease in the rent element will offset the increase of the water charge.

Where a property has a number of service charges the service charges will be explained, with an overall summary of how the weekly charge has increased overall.

Where support charges are also included (mainly but not exclusively for independent and flexi care schemes) separate notifications will be sent out to these residents to ensure there is clarity of how each element of the weekly charge is made up.

To ensure that this is explained as clearly as possible there will be a FAQ sheet and details on the website.

HMAB will agree and /or make recommendations for the content of the letters on the 17 January 2019, with the portfolio holder signing off the final letters.

Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment

- Comments from drop in sessions held in January 2018.
- A copy of charges for community based care from HCC
- Spreadsheet detailing those who hadn't paid £2 weekly contribution and their comments.
- Rent and service charge tables

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HB figures: 394 of the 604 affected (as at 1 January 2019) are in receipt of full HB, 203 on partial HB and 1 on UC. Of the 51 where their rent, service charge and support charge increases to over £5.50 per week, 42 are either on full or partial HB and their benefits will be adjusted for the new rent and service charges. 	
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	<p>SC18: We have clearly explained what the support charge covers and the reasons for charging. A notification letter will be sent in January 2019 to explain the increase to contribution of £4 per week.</p> <p>HRA: The rent notification letters will offer customers the opportunity to discuss their concerns with staff and get support in applying for any relevant benefits.</p>	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Other – N/A					
please feel free to consider the potential impact on people in any other contexts					
Positive impact	Negative impact		Unequal impact	Yes	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	<p>HRA: Those in properties exempt from the 1% decrease will have their rent increased by CPI +1%. Service charges will also reflect actual charges and the overall impact will be an increase in rent and service charges. Where these tenants are in receipt of UC Housing Cost element and HB, the award will be recalculated and the correct amount of benefit awarded.</p>				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Rent notification letters, FAQ's and the website	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

What are the findings of any consultation with:

Staff?	None	Residents?	<p>SC18: Results from the STAR survey in 2018 have shown that residents identified the emergency alarm service and the support housing officer as the 2nd and 3rd most important priority associated with living in their property.</p> <p>In January 2018 we held drop in sessions at each scheme for residents to come and discuss the charge and for us to explain what it is for. We had a lot of positive comments with the majority understanding the need to pay towards the service. Some residents recognised that housing associations had withdrawn the emergency service and scheme manager and didn't want it to happen to them. One person wanted to pay more.</p> <p>HRA: Letters and FAQ due for HMAB consultation 17 Jan 2019.</p>
Voluntary & community sector?		Partners?	
Other stakeholders?			

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	
Negative / unequal impact, barriers to inclusion or improvement opportunities identified	2a. Adjustments made
	2b. Continue as planned SC18: The future viability of the support and alarm service in independent/flexicare living is reliant upon us being able to recover the cost of service provision where it is possible to do so. Results from the STAR survey support the value of the service from residents by them rating the emergency alarm and supported housing officer as their 2 nd and 3 rd priority (behind the repairs to their property). HRA: The HRA business plan relies on an income to be viable.
	2c. Stop and remove

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?
Review whether any elements of the independent living service should be eligible for housing benefit	This is to ensure fair charging of service.	Karen Long	Jan 2020	

Approved by Assistant Director / Strategic Director: Jaine Cresser Assistant Director (Housing and Investment)
Date: 8th January 2019

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

Brief Equality Impact Assessment

For a minor operational change / review / simple analysis

What is being assessed?	Proposal to apply a £2 per week charge for the administration of supplying a garage 'rent free' to Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations.	What are the key aims of it?	The Council has reviewed its policy regarding the provision of non-charged garages to Voluntary & Community Sector Organisations (VCOs) as part of the annual fees and charges setting process.		
Who may be affected by it?	72 Voluntary and Community Sector Groups and Organisations that currently benefit from a 'rent free' garage(s). A total of 87 garages are provided under this arrangement.		The Council recognises that the current economic climate presents challenges for the operational viability of VCOs. However, the management and administration of providing non-charged garages to VCOs accounts for a significant amount of time, liaising with the organisations to get up to date details, organising repairs and undertaking inspections, which has a cost to the service.		
Date of full EqIA on service area (planned or completed)	A full EqIA was carried out in the following report on the 10/07/12: New Arrangements for Letting Garages to Voluntary and Community Sector Groups and Organisations		This approach is broadly in line with the principles detailed in the "New Arrangements for letting garages to Voluntary and Community Sector Groups and Organisations" report approved by Executive on the 10 July 2012, but proposes that an administration charge is applied as opposed to charging a subsidised rent. This charge will be applied consistently to all Voluntary and Community Organisations that have a garage.		
Form completed by:	Carlo Perricone	Start date	26/10/18	End date	31/10/18
		Review date	01/11/2019		

What data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	There are 87 Voluntary and Community Sector Groups and Organisations' information held on a spreadsheet and we are using this information to carry out the Brief EqIA.	Have any information gaps been identified along the way? If so, please specify	None
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Explain the potential positive, negative or unequal impact on the following characteristics and how likely this is:			
Age	<p>37 VCO garages are provided to organisations that work with younger persons.</p> <p>Possible negative impact – Financial implication associated with £104 annual charge per garage. Cost is considered to be proportionate and reasonable within the context of overall operating costs of VCO's.</p> <p>Possible positive impact – Will stimulate review of the organisations' actual need for a garage and may provide an opportunity to rationalise liabilities associated with use of a third party resource/asset.</p>	Race	<p>One VCO garage is provided to an organisation whose work involves race related matters.</p> <p>Possible negative impact – Financial implication associated with £104 annual charge per garage. Cost is considered to be proportionate and reasonable within the context of overall operating costs of VCO's.</p> <p>Possible positive impact – Will stimulate review of the organisations' actual need for a garage and may provide an opportunity to rationalise liabilities associated with use of a third party resource/asset.</p>
Disability	Four VCO garages are provided to organisations	Religion or belief	Eight VCO garages are provided to organisations

	whose work involves or supports persons with disability. Potential impacts as for “Race” cell above.		whose work involves or supports religious or belief matters. Potential impacts as for “Race” cell above.
Gender reassignment	No VCO garages are provided in this category.	Sex	No VCO garages are provided in this category.
Marriage or civil partnership	No VCO garages are provided in this category.	Sexual orientation	No VCO garages are provided in this category.
Pregnancy & maternity	No VCO garages are provided in this category.	Socio-economic ⁵	Seven VCO garages are provided to organisations whose work involve or supports socio-economic matters. Potential impacts as for “Race” cell above.
Other	30 VCO garages are provided to organisations that provide services to all. Potential impacts as for “Race” cell above.		

Where there is a likely positive impact , please explain how it will help to fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	No	Promote equal opportunities	No	Encourage good relations	No

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

Action	Responsible officer	How will this be delivered and monitored?	Deadline
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⁵Although 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.



Review of charge application and EQIA to ensure continued applicability.	Carlo Perricone	Review alongside corporate fees and charges setting process.	February 2019
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Approved by Assistant Director (Stevenage Direct Services)

Date: 2nd November 2018

Brief Equality Impact Assessment

For a minor operational change / review / simple analysis

What is being assessed?	Proposal to broker the Council's commercial skip business through a third party provider.	What are the key aims of it?	To ensure that the Council's skip business is financially viable and provides a sustainable income into the future.		
Who may be affected by it?	Residents & Commercial Customers		The skip provision industry is hugely competitive and the Council has seen demand reduce over a number of years and profitability reduce. The service is currently projecting a loss due to reduced demand and overhead costs.		
Date of full EqIA on service area (planned or completed)	A full EqIA will be carried out as part of the second phase of the Business Unit Review of Stevenage Direct Services that considers the Council's commercial offering.		This proposal seeks to facilitate continued service provision under the Stevenage Borough Council brand. The operational element of the service will however be delivered on the Council's behalf by a third party under a brokering arrangement. Skip charges will be offered at competitive market rates.		
Form completed by:	Lloyd Walker	Start date	31/10/18	End date	01/11/18
		Review date			01/11/2020

What data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	SBC skip accounts and business profiles.	Have any information gaps been identified along the way? If so, please specify	None
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Explain the potential positive, negative or unequal impact on the following characteristics and how likely this is:			
Age	n/a	Race	n/a
Disability	n/a	Religion or belief	n/a
Gender reassignment	n/a	Sex	n/a
Marriage or civil partnership	n/a	Sexual orientation	n/a
Pregnancy & maternity	n/a	Socio-economic ⁶	The Council will continue to ensure that the charges applied for the provision of skips remain proportionate and are reasonable in terms of market conditions at the time of being set. Charges will be reviewed as part of the annual fees and charges setting mechanism as normal.
Other	n/a		

Where there is a likely positive impact , please explain how it will help to fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	No	Promote equal opportunities	No	Encourage good relations	No

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

Action	Responsible officer	How will this be delivered and monitored?	Deadline
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⁶Although 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.

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

What is being assessed?	Proposal to provide Sanctum vaults for ashes interments at the Almonds Lane & Weston Road Cemeteries.	What are the key aims of it?	The Council is seeking to enhance services offered for ashes interment burial at Almonds Lane & Weston Road Cemeteries.		
Who may be affected by it?	All residents, but may provide a more affordable burial solution for low income households.		Sanctums can provide a more affordable and accessible memorial solution for our residents and customers.		
Date of full EqIA on service area (planned or completed)	A full EqIA will be carried out for the Cemetery Service as part of the 2019/20 fees and charges setting process.		Sanctum vaults could be located along pathways at the cemetery site offering capacity that could help provide for future burial demands as the population of the town increases.		
Form completed by:	Claire Skeels	Start date	31/10/18	End date	01/11/19
		Review date	01/11/2019		

What data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	Existing fees and charges for Cemetery services and benchmarking of other Local Authorities offering Sanctums as a burial option.	Have any information gaps been identified along the way? If so, please specify	None
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Explain the potential positive, negative or unequal impact on the following characteristics and how likely this is:			
Age	n/a	Race	n/a
Disability	Positive Impact Sanctums can be located along path edges and access routes within Cemeteries. These memorial types can as a result be a more accessible memorial solution for mourners who are less mobile.	Religion or belief	Sanctums would not be a viable option for faith denominations that only utilise grave burials for their deceased.
Gender reassignment	n/a	Sex	n/a
Marriage or civil partnership	n/a	Sexual orientation	n/a
Pregnancy & maternity	n/a	Socio-economic ⁷	Positive Impact Sanctums may provide a more affordable burial option for low income households when compared to costs associated with standard grave burials.
Other	n/a		

Where there is a likely positive impact , please explain how it will help to fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	No	Promote equal opportunities	No	Encourage good relations	Yes – enhances service offer and potentially accessibility to services for those in low access households and those with disabilities or

⁷Although 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.

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

Action	Responsible officer	How will this be delivered and monitored?	Deadline
n/a			

Approved by Assistant Director Stevenage Direct Services

Date: 2nd November 2018