

FINANCIAL SECURITY: 2020/21 Appendix F

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: 2020/21 Appendix F

Overall Equality Impact Assessment of proposals

Savings Proposals 2020/21

Prior to their consideration at Executive in November 2019, 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 22 January and 12 February 2020. Action to further analyse or mitigate the impact on equality groups is identified where appropriate.

The following activity will take place:

November 2019 – February 2020	EqIAs finalised considering further evidence as necessary
January and February 2020	Consideration of all completed EqIAs at Council meetings



Summary Of Equality Impact Assessments APPENDIX F

Saving Ref	Saving/Income proposed	Summary of potential impact	Action	Contact Officer
FS9	Undertake Star Survey every 3 years rather than the current 2 year arrangement	<p><u>No Significant Impact</u></p> <p>The views of tenants and leaseholders, including those with protected characteristics, will continue to be canvassed and compared through the STAR survey, but on a less regular basis than previously planned. In the meantime, other consultation will take place in line with the Community Engagement Framework, which will complement the survey results. Some of this engagement activity has the potential to be more targeted towards specific groups than STAR.</p>	None	Richard Protheroe
FS6	Introduction of car parking charges for council employees	<p><u>Unequal/Negative Impact</u></p> <p>Age Proposals may adversely impact on older workers who may find it more difficult to walk or cycle to work.</p> <p>Disability Proposals may adversely impact on staff with physical disabilities as they may find it more difficult to walk to work or commute by other means.</p> <p>Socio-economic Whilst no data is held on the socio-economic background of our workforce, the proposal could have an impact on those on lower incomes compared to those on higher incomes.</p>	<p>Develop a car parking charges policy.</p> <p>Complete a full EqIA and consider the approach to addressing some of the potential unequal impacts within the design of the policy</p> <p>Consult with staff and trade unions in the development of the policy</p>	Clare Davies/ Kirsten Frew



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Saving Ref	Saving/Income proposed	Summary of potential impact	Action	Contact Officer
SD8	Paperless committees - progressive plan to achieve committees which are digital by default	<p><u>Positive Impact</u></p> <p>Disability For persons with visual impairment accessibility functions allow access for text to audio capability.</p> <p><u>Negative Impact</u></p> <p>Age Depends on ICT literacy – although this isn't necessarily linked to age.</p> <p>Disability Physical disability could hinder the ability to carry a laptop.</p> <p>Pregnancy/Maternity Pregnancy could hinder the ability to carry a laptop.</p>	<p>Digital Skills Self-Assessment for Members to help identify level of ICT literacy and to tailor support for Members.</p> <p>Assisted Digital Support to be offered to Members to improve their digital literacy and to be able to use Mod.gov software.</p> <p>Pool laptops to be available that Members who have physical disabilities can use.</p>	Richard Protheroe
FS16	Cease Locata contract (choice based lettings system) - to be integrated into Northgate housing system	<p><u>Positive/Neutral Impact</u></p> <p>Overall The proposal is to cease the contract with Locata and provide the equivalent service using our existing Northgate system, thus keeping all data in one system.</p> <p>Customers will still be able to place bids in the same way they have done previously so in this respect the outcomes for customers are unchanged. All applicants will have equal</p>	None	Jaine Cresser



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Saving Ref	Saving/Income proposed	Summary of potential impact	Action	Contact Officer
		<p>access to enable them to place bids on suitable accommodation. Those who are unable to do so will have access to our assisted bids service so they have an equal opportunity to bid.</p> <p>With the development of a future online offer, customers will be able to access their information and make their own updates in real time, resulting in an improved service.</p> <p>Age A support service is offered for those who are unable to place bids themselves, which is more often (but not exclusively) those who are older.</p> <p>Disability Properties are allocated in accordance with the allocation policy which may give preference to those who have a disability based on an independent medical assessment.</p> <p>Pregnancy/Maternity Properties are allocated in accordance with the allocation policy which may give preference to those who are pregnant based on an independent medical assessment.</p> <p>Socio Economic Properties are allocated in accordance with the allocation policy which may give preference to those who are homeless based on their individual circumstances.</p>		



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Saving Ref	Saving/Income proposed	Summary of potential impact	Action	Contact Officer
FS22	Selling Careline services to private sector tenants/ residents	<p><u>Positive Impact</u></p> <p>Overall The cost for the service is cheaper than other providers and people receive a response service by a staff member to all calls which is unique in Stevenage. The monitoring only service is cheaper than its main competitor Herts Careline.</p> <p>Age This service is available to people of all ages that feel at risk due to a vulnerability.</p> <p>Disability This service is accessible to all as it links to other telecare equipment to support people to live independently at home with different types of disabilities. On very rare occasions we will not be able to offer it to those who are bed bound and lack capacity but this would be discussed with other professionals and family for them to move on to more appropriate support.</p> <p><u>Negative Impact</u></p> <p>Socio Economic People have to pay for this service and there are no concessions. Generally people who own their own homes have more disposable income but also if they apply for attendance allowance, it would pay for the weekly charge. The attendance allowance is not financially assessed.</p>	Actively promote customers to apply for attendance allowance where applicable.	Jaine Cresser



Saving Ref	Saving/Income proposed	Summary of potential impact	Action	Contact Officer
<p>SE6 (approved in 16/17)</p>	<p>Increase contribution to support costs to £6 per week as part of phased support charge agreed in 2016/17</p>	<p><u>Overall</u> The increase in the charge will affect residents living in independent living/flexicare housing that are in receipt of housing benefit, fairer charging, universal credit (UC) or are '2003 protected' (i.e. those in the service prior to the government supporting people grant funding starting in 2003). As at 30 October 2019 this affects 609 people. The remaining residents in independent living/flexicare already pay the full charge.</p> <p><u>Positive Impact</u></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><u>Negative Impact:</u></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>Review whether any elements of the independent living service should be eligible for housing benefit.</p>	<p>Jaine Cresser</p>



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Saving Ref	Saving/Income proposed	Summary of potential impact	Action	Contact Officer
		<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 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) charges affecting the overall amount that older and disabled people can afford to pay.</p> <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. The total cost of the support/alarm service will be £19 per week so Stevenage Borough Council will still be subsidising the £13 per week.</p> <p>In addition, HCC have confirmed that they will be continuing</p>		



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		<p>with our flexicare support contract until end March 2022, which will mean that this will help offset some of the costs that we would have had to pass on to this group of residents.</p> <p>Of the 103 residents who had to be chased for payment following 2018's introduction of the £2 weekly contribution, only one resident said they could not afford it and was referred to the debt and advice support worker. As at 30 October there are 86 people who are in arrears over £20 totalling £10,823.68.</p>		
HRA	Rent and service charge setting for 2020/21	<p><u>Overall</u></p> <p>The aim of the rent and service charge policy is to provide a fair method of calculating rents and service charges for all the Council's tenants. It also aligns with the Council's Concessions for Fees and Charges Policy and the principle of recovering the cost of providing services.</p> <p>Tenants have benefited from four years of rent reduction so the impact of the rent increase is mitigated partially by having to use a lower base than it would have been had there not been a mandatory rent reduction (cumulative) of 1 % per annum for the last four years.</p> <p><u>Unequal/Negative Impact</u></p> <p>Age</p>	<p>Rent increase information will be placed on the website as early as possible to start to prepare tenants.</p> <p>The rent notification letter will offer tenants the opportunity to discuss any queries with staff.</p> <p>Prepare staff to enable them to respond effectively and empathetically with tenants.</p>	Jaine Cresser



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Saving Ref	Saving/Income proposed	Summary of potential impact	Action	Contact Officer
		<p>A proportion of tenants may see an increase in service charges in any given year. The majority of tenants who are charged for services live in flats and/or sheltered accommodation. Tenants living in sheltered housing do so because they have additional needs that require support relating to age, disability or both. The minimum age for entry into sheltered housing is 55 years and data from Northgate indicates that the proportion of tenants aged 60+ in sheltered housing, is almost three times the proportion for all tenant housing. In relation to flat blocks, the data indicates that there is a higher proportion of people aged 18-29 years in flat blocks compared with all SBC housing.</p> <p>For people living in independent living/flexicare schemes, in addition to basic rent and service charges, those who pay for the support/emergency response services that are not eligible for Housing benefit may see an increase in overall payment due each week (please refer to separate EqIA).</p> <p>Disability Northgate data on tenants in relation to disability was collected a number of years ago and is not up to date. This information was also disclosed at the tenants' discretion so some tenants may not have provided it. However, to give some context, the data indicates that the proportion of tenants in sheltered housing declaring that they had a disability was almost double the proportion for the whole SBC tenant population. The proportion of tenants living in flat blocks</p>	<p>Consult with residents throughout 2020/21 to establish the impact and put in place systems to mitigate this.</p> <p>A further EqIA will be carried out on the impact of the service and support charge increases. This will consider the impact on individual tenants to ensure that individual customers are not affected disproportionately.</p>	



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		<p>declaring a disability was very similar to the proportion living in all properties; therefore a disproportionate impact on these tenants is not anticipated.</p> <p>Socio Economic The rent increase will be applied across all tenancies prescribed by the Work and Welfare Reform Act and in line with the current Rent Standard Direction, regardless of socio-economic circumstances. Those who receive services for which a service charge is made will be charged the actual cost of those services.</p> <p>Those reliant on Housing Benefit (HB) and Universal Credit (UC) housing costs to cover their full rent and eligible service charges will not be affected by the increase in rent and service charges as their benefit award will be recalculated.</p> <p>However, heating charges are exempt from HB and tenants are expected to pay this. Water charges are also exempt from HB and are set by the Water Authority.</p> <p>The policy allows for capping of service charges, subject to any legal constraints. As a means of mitigating the impact of an increase that would cause hardship, the Council may subsidise the costs.</p> <p>The number of bids on the new build properties let at affordable rents are similar to the number received for new</p>		



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Saving Ref	Saving/Income proposed	Summary of potential impact	Action	Contact Officer
		<p>build let at social rents. There is a mixture of employed and unemployed applicants. Applicants in receipt of benefits are not excluded or unfairly treated. The rent and service charge policy states that the Council will have regard to the Local Housing Allowance when setting affordable rents. If affordable rents are set at this level, HB/ UC housing cost will cover the rent in full for those tenants who are entitled to the maximum amount of housing benefit. Setting at the Local Housing Allowance will also benefit tenants who are, for example on a low wage or zero hour contracts and where partial housing benefit can be paid.</p>		

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

What is being assessed?	Undertake the Tenant and Leaseholder ('Star') Survey every 3 years rather than the current 2 year arrangement	What are the key aims of it?	The 'STAR' survey is used across the housing sector and enables the Council to assess levels of customer satisfaction, to identify customer priorities and to shape its services accordingly. The last survey was undertaken in 2018. The proposal is to reduce the frequency of the survey so it is carried out every 3 years rather than every 2 years, thereby making a cost saving.		
Who may be affected by it?	Council tenants and leaseholders				
Date of full EqIA on service area (planned or completed)	N/A				
Form completed by:	Katrina Shirley	Start date	7.11.19	End date	
		Review date		N/A	

What data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	<p><u>STAR Survey 2018 Report.</u> The survey was sent to approximately 2,300 general needs tenants, all sheltered housing tenants and all leaseholders. For tenants, the returned sample was corrected for differential selection and response rates between the general needs and sheltered tenants and was then weighted by gender, age and ward. For leaseholders, results were weighted by leaseholder type (resident/non-resident). The results are therefore broadly representative of the Council's tenants and leaseholders.</p> <p>Anonymised information on the protected characteristics of respondents is collected through the survey in respect of sex, age, ethnic origin, disability, working status and marital status. This enables some analysis of the profile of tenants and leaseholders to be undertaken and enables significant differences in responses to be identified. It should be noted that all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not</p>	Have any information gaps been identified along the way? If so, please specify	N/A
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	<p>all differences are statistically significant.</p> <p><u>SBC Community Engagement Framework</u> The STAR Survey is just one part of a broader approach to community engagement in Stevenage, which involves a range ways in which the Council consults with and involves residents, tenants and leaseholders. The Community Engagement Framework (approved February 2019) includes the following aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing and developing creative ways to engage with our communities, ensuring equality of opportunity in having a voice, which will be achieved by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting and supporting processes that engage and provide representation for communities in decision making - Developing more creative approaches that encourage engagement from all sections of our community, using digital and neighbourhood networks - Providing opportunities for our protected characteristic communities to come together in exploring the needs of minority communities, groups and organisations. 		
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Explain the potential positive, negative or unequal impact on the following characteristics and how likely this is:			
Age	<p>Insignificant impact: The views of tenants and leaseholders of differing ages will continue to be canvassed and compared through the STAR survey, but on a less regular basis. In the meantime, other consultation will take place in line with the Community Engagement Framework, which will complement the survey</p>	Race	<p>Insignificant impact: The views of tenants and leaseholders will continue to be canvassed and compared through the STAR survey, but on a less regular basis. Other consultation will complement the survey results. Some of this engagement activity has the potential to be more targeted at specific groups than STAR.</p>

	results. Some of this engagement activity has the potential to be more targeted at specific groups than STAR.		
Disability	Insignificant impact: The views of tenants and leaseholders will continue to be canvassed and compared through the STAR survey, but on a less regular basis. Other consultation will complement the survey results. Some of this engagement activity has the potential to be more targeted at specific groups than STAR.	Religion or belief	Insignificant impact: The views of tenants and leaseholders will continue to be canvassed and compared through the STAR survey, but on a less regular basis. Other consultation will complement the survey results. Some of this engagement activity has the potential to be more targeted at specific groups than STAR.
Gender reassignment	Insignificant impact: The views of tenants and leaseholders will continue to be canvassed and compared through the STAR survey, but on a less regular basis. Other consultation will complement the survey results. Some of this engagement activity has the potential to be more targeted at specific groups than STAR.	Sex	Insignificant impact: The views of tenants and leaseholders will continue to be canvassed and compared through the STAR survey, but on a less regular basis. Other consultation will complement the survey results. Some of this engagement activity has the potential to be more targeted at specific groups than STAR.
Marriage or civil partnership	Insignificant impact: The views of tenants and leaseholders will continue to be canvassed and compared through the STAR survey, but on a less regular basis. Other	Sexual orientation	Insignificant impact: The views of tenants and leaseholders will continue to be canvassed and compared through the STAR survey, but on a less regular basis. Other

	consultation will complement the survey results. Some of this engagement activity has the potential to be more targeted at specific groups than STAR.		consultation will complement the survey results. Some of this engagement activity has the potential to be more targeted at specific groups than STAR.
Pregnancy & maternity	Insignificant impact: The views of tenants and leaseholders will continue to be canvassed and compared through the STAR survey, but on a less regular basis. Other consultation will complement the survey results. Some of this engagement activity has the potential to be more targeted at specific groups than STAR.	Socio-economic ¹	Insignificant impact: The views of tenants and leaseholders will continue to be canvassed and compared through the STAR survey, but on a less regular basis. Other consultation will complement the survey results. Some of this engagement activity has the potential to be more targeted at specific groups than STAR.
Other			

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

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.



Approved by Assistant Director/ Strategic Director: Richard Protheroe
Date: 7/11/19

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

What is being assessed?	Introduction of car parking charges for Council employees	What are the key aims of it?	To consider the potential impact of the introduction of staff parking charges on all staff and particularly those under the protected characteristics		
Who may be affected by it?	All employees				
Date of full EqIA on service area (planned or completed)	April 2020				
Form completed by:	Clare Davies, Senior HR&OD Manager	Start date	December 2019	End date	TBC
		Review date	April 2020		

What data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	Workforce Information (as at October 2019)	Have any information gaps been identified along the way? If so, please specify	N/A
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Explain the potential positive, negative or unequal impact on the following characteristics and how likely this is:			
Age	Proposals around charges for car parking may adversely impact on older workers who may find it more difficult to walk or cycle to work	Race	Nothing disproportionate identified currently
Disability	Proposals around charges for car parking may adversely impact on staff with physical disabilities as they may find it more difficult to walk to work or commute by other means.	Religion or belief	Nothing disproportionate identified currently
Gender reassignment	There was insufficient information about gender	Sex	Nothing disproportionate identified currently

	reassignment for analysis		
Marriage or civil partnership	Nothing disproportionate identified currently	Sexual orientation	Nothing disproportionate identified currently
Pregnancy & maternity	Data numbers too small for EQiA data to be meaningful.	Socio-economic ²	Whilst no data is held on the socio-economic background of our workforce, the proposal could be seen to have an impact on those on lower incomes compared to those on higher incomes.
Other	Nothing identified		

Where there is a likely positive impact , please explain how it will help to fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	Consider approach to address some of the unequal impacts in the design of the car parking charges policy	Promote equal opportunities		Encourage good relations	Consult with staff and trade unions in the development of the policy

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

Action	Responsible officer	How will this be delivered and monitored?	Deadline
If a negative or unequal (high or low) impact has been identified, you should assess this further in a Full EqIA	Clare Davies	In the consultation and development of the car parking charges policy	June 2020

Approved by Strategic Director: Richard Protheroe

Date: 31.12.19

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.

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

What is being assessed?	Paperless Committees	What are the key aims of it?	Reduce use of papers for committees by supplying access to papers via laptops or tablets		
Who may be affected by it?	Members (councillors), Member services staff				
Date of full EqIA on service area (planned or completed)					
Form completed by:	Simon Russell	Start date	29/10/2019	End date	
		Review date			

What data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	Professional experience having implemented similar solution at two previous authorities.	Have any information gaps been identified along the way? If so, please specify	
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Explain the potential positive, negative or unequal impact on the following characteristics and how likely this is:			
Age	Potentially negative depending on ICT literacy – although this isn't necessarily linked to age	Race	No impact
Disability	<p>Potential negative impact for persons with a physical disability, which hinders their ability to carry a laptop.</p> <p>Positive for persons with visual impairment as accessibility functions allows access for text to audio capability.</p>	Religion or belief	No impact

Gender reassignment	No impact	Sex	No impact
Marriage or civil partnership	No impact	Sexual orientation	No impact
Pregnancy & maternity	Negative during period of pregnancy which may hinder the ability to carry a laptop	Socio-economic ³	No impact
Other			

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	For persons with visual impairment accessibility functions grants greater access to documents. Grants access to equipment to increase ICT literacy and improve current skills.	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
Digital Skills Self- Assessment for Members to help identify level of ICT literacy and to tailor support for Members	Simon Russell	Self- Assessment Questionnaire	March 2020
Assisted Digital Support to be offered to Members to improve their digital literacy and to be able to use Mod.gov software.	Simon Russell	Through 1-2-1 or dedicated sessions	May 2020

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.



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Pool laptops to be available that Members that have physical disabilities can use.	Simon Russell	Part of 2020/21 Hardware Replacement Programme	June 2020
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Approved by Strategic Director: Richard Protheroe
Date: 29 October 2019

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

Full Equality Impact Assessment

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

What is being assessed?		Cessation of using Locata to deliver CBL			
Lead Assessor	Jaine Cresser			Assessment team	
Start date	1 Nov 19	End date	5 Nov 19		
When will the EqIA be reviewed?	5 Nov 2020				

Who may be affected by it?	Customers bidding for properties currently use the Locata system to place their bids. This includes existing tenants, and those on the Housing Register. We also offer this service on behalf of Housing Associations with stock in Stevenage.
What are the key aims of it?	We are proposing to cease the contract with Locata and provide the service using our existing Northgate system, thus keeping all our data in one system. Customers will still be able to place bids in the same way they have done previously so the outcomes for customers are unchanged. With the development of a future online offer, customers will be able to access their information and make their own updates in real time, so an improved offer.

What positive measures are in place (if any) to help fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	All applicants will have equal access to enable them to place bids on suitable accommodation - those that can't will	Promote equal opportunities	All applicants will have equal access to enable them to place bids on suitable accommodation - those that can't will	Encourage good relations	All applicants will have equal access to enable them to place bids on suitable accommodation - those that can't will

	have access to our assisted bids service so they have an equal opportunity to bid.		have access to our assisted bids service so they have an equal opportunity to bid.		have access to our assisted bids service so they have an equal opportunity to bid.
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What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	The Housing Register
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In assessing the potential impact on people, are there any overall comments that you would like to make?	The customer experience should be no different. In the medium term, customers will also be able to complete their application online providing a seamless approach through one system. All the information will be held on one system which customers will be able to access through an online customer account by the end of the financial year. Long term a holistic online offer will be of benefit to customers.
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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	
	n/a – we are able to provide a support service for those who are unable to place bids themselves which will assist in them being able to place bids on suitable accommodation, which is more often (but not exclusively) those who are older.
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Age profile of those on the Housing Register

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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Disability e.g. physical impairment, mental ill health, learning difficulties, long-standing illness			
Properties are allocated in accordance with the allocation policy which may give preference to those who have a disability based on an independent medical assessment.			
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Independent medical advisor assessments supported by Dr's medical reports.		
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	Unequal impact

Marriage or civil partnership N/A			
Positive impact		Negative impact	Unequal impact

Pregnancy & maternity – N/A			
Positive impact		Negative impact	Unequal impact
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Properties are allocated in accordance with the allocation policy which may give preference to those who are pregnant based on an independent medical 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

Religion or belief – N/A				
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact

Sex – N/A				
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact

Sexual orientation – N/A e.g. straight, lesbian / gay, bisexual				
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact

Socio-economic⁴ e.g. low income, unemployed, homelessness, caring responsibilities, access to internet, public transport users, social value in procurement				
Properties are allocated in accordance with the allocation policy which may give preference to those who are homeless based on their individual circumstances				
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)		

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.

Other – N/A				
please feel free to consider the potential impact on people in any other contexts				
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact

What are the findings of any consultation with:

Staff?	None	Residents?	None – no impact
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	Cease the Locata contract and move the service to be part of the integrated Northgate database
	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?

Approved by Assistant Director / Strategic Director: **Jaine Cresser Assistant Director (Housing and Investment)**
 Date: 8/11/19

Full Equality Impact Assessment

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

What is being assessed?		Careline services in the Private Sector			
Lead Assessor	Karen Long			Assessment team	
Start date	1 Nov 19	End date	3 Nov 19		
When will the EqIA be reviewed?	Dec 2020				

Who may be affected by it?	Owner occupiers or people living in the private sector.
What are the key aims of it?	To provide and extend the Careline service to those who are living in the private sector

What positive measures are in place (if any) to help fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	The service will be provided to both council and private residents in Stevenage	Promote equal opportunities	The service will be provided to both council and private residents in Stevenage	Encourage good relations	

What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of owner occupiers and private rented over the age of 65 in Stevenage – POPPI 2011 • People aged 65 and over who need help with at least one self-care activity - POPPI 2011 • Population aged 65 and over - POPPI
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<p>In assessing the potential impact on people, are there any overall comments that you would like to make?</p>	<p>The cost for the service is cheaper than other providers and people receive a response service by a staff member to all calls which is unique in Stevenage. The monitoring only service is cheaper than its main competitor Herts Careline.</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			
<p>Negative impact</p> <p>There is no negative impact. This service is available to people of all ages that feel at risk due to a vulnerability.</p>			
<p>Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment</p>			
<p>What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?</p>		<p>What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)</p>	

<p>Disability e.g. physical impairment, mental ill health, learning difficulties, long-standing illness</p>	
<p>Positive impact</p> <p>This service is accessible to all as it links to other telecare equipment to support people to live independently at home with all</p>	

different types of disabilities. On very rare occasions we will not be able to offer it to those who are bed bound and lack capacity but this would be discussed with other professionals and family for them to move on to more appropriate support.			
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	
		Unequal impact	

Marriage or civil partnership N/A			
Positive impact		Negative impact	
		Unequal impact	

Pregnancy & maternity – N/A			
Positive impact		Negative impact	
		Unequal impact	

Race – N/A			
Positive impact		Negative impact	
		Unequal impact	

Religion or belief – N/A			
Positive impact		Negative impact	
		Unequal impact	



Sex – N/A				
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact

Sexual orientation – N/A e.g. straight, lesbian / gay, bisexual				
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact

Socio-economic⁵ e.g. low income, unemployed, homelessness, caring responsibilities, access to internet, public transport users, social value in procurement				
Negative Impact:				
People have to pay for this service and there are no concessions. Generally people who own their own homes have more disposable income but also if they apply for attendance allowance which is to support them with things like this, it would pay for the weekly charge. The attendance allowance is not financially assessed.				
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

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.

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		No inequality issues have been highlighted due to the private sector being able to access attendance allowance that is not financially assessed and the service is designed to support people with disabilities.
Negative / unequal impact, barriers to inclusion or improvement opportunities identified	2a. Adjustments made	
	2b. Continue as planned	There is nothing from the outcome of the EQIA to prevent us continuing with the service.
	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?
To actively promote customers to apply for attendance allowance where applicable.	This will help customers access the service that they need.	Kelly Potts	Ongoing	It will be part of the promotion and assessment process.

Approved by Assistant Director / Strategic Director: Jaine Cresser

Date: 7/11/19

Full Equality Impact Assessment

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

What is being assessed?		Support Charge increase by £2 to £6			
Lead Assessor	Karen Long			Assessment team	
Start date	1 Nov 19	End date	5 Nov 19		
When will the EqIA be reviewed?	5 Nov 2020				

Who may be affected by it?	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 30 October 2019 this affects 609 people. The remaining residents in independent living/flexicare already pay the full charge.
What are the key aims of it?	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, £4 in 2019/20 and propose to increase this to £6.00 in 2020/21. The total cost of the support/alarm service will be £19 per week so Stevenage Borough Council will still be subsidising the £13 per week. This option has the support of the housing portfolio holder.

What positive measures are in place (if any) to help fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	This will remove discrimination against other residents that pay	Promote equal opportunities	This also aligns to the Council's aim to be financially sufficient and	Encourage good relations	

	the full cost for not being in receipt of housing benefit or fairer charging.		recover costs of services where possible.		
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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
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In assessing the potential impact on people, are there any overall comments that you would like to make?	We currently have 8 people that are refusing to pay any of the support charge. The majority of people do not pay through direct debit and pay through a payment card. This is not always a regular payment and it took a lot of effort by the Support Services team to get people to pay £4 and they are constantly monitoring this. As at 30 October we have 86 people who are in arrears over £20 totalling £10,823.68. This is likely to increase especially when the new charge starts in April 2020.
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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
<p>Negative impact</p> <p>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 information you used to support this assessment	Age profile of independent/flexicare housing residents		
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

<p align="center">Disability e.g. physical impairment, mental ill health, learning difficulties, long-standing illness</p>			
<p>Unequal impact</p> <p>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>			
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 will be able to collate more data on disability and this will inform future EQIAs.

<p align="center">Gender reassignment N/A</p>			
Positive impact		Negative impact	Unequal impact



Marriage or civil partnership N/A				
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact

Pregnancy & maternity – N/A				
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact

Race – N/A				
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact

Religion or belief – N/A				
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact

Sex – N/A				
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact

Sexual orientation – N/A e.g. straight, lesbian / gay, bisexual				
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact

Socio-economic⁶

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

Positive Impact:

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.

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.

HCC have confirmed that they will be continuing with our flexicare support contract until end March 2022 which will mean that this will help offset some of the costs that we would have had to pass on to this group of residents.

Negative Impact:

The support charge is not eligible for housing benefit and could have a negative impact for those on lower incomes in terms of affordability. However, of 103 residents where we had to chase payment following 2018'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 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 had an impact on residents being able to afford care and HCC had received a number of complaints.

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.

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 £19 per week in one 'hit'.

During 2020/21, officers will also review whether any elements of the independent living service should in fact be eligible for housing benefit.

Communication

The support charge notification letter will go out in February 2020 to all residents living in independent living and flexicare properties.

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 in January 2020, 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.

What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?

We have clearly explained what the support charge covers and the reasons for charging
The notification letters will offer customers the opportunity to discuss their concerns with staff and get support in applying for any relevant benefits.

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)	

What are the findings of any consultation with:

Staff?	None	Residents?	<p>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>
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	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).
	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 2021	

Approved by Assistant Director / Strategic Director: Jaine Cresser Assistant Director (Housing and Investment)

Date: 7/11/19

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

Full Equality Impact Assessment

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

What is being assessed?		HRA: Revised Rent and Service Charge Policy	
Lead Assessor	Jaine Cresser		Assessment team
Start date	November 2019	End date	July 2020
When will the EqIA be reviewed?	Jan 2021		Elizabeth Ddamulira

Who may be affected by it?	All tenants
What are the key aims of it?	<p>This policy provides a framework for setting our rents and service charges within legislative requirements. The rent and service charge income underpins the delivery of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan's key housing objectives to deliver effective services, to invest in its properties to ensure homes are of a modern standard and to provide new social housing to rent.</p> <p>The proposed revisions aim to ensure that the policy complies with the government's direction on the Rent Standard 2019 for the next five years in respect of social rents and to clarify the Council's position in relation to service charge increases and affordable rents. Key elements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase rents on social rent and affordable rent properties by up to CPI+1% each year from 2020, for a period of at least five years. • Increase the rents for all excluded properties by CPI +1%, e.g. LSSO • Set the rent for a proportion of new build homes at affordable rents. • Set the rent where adaptations or extensions have resulted in the property being increased in size (for example, an additional bedroom), in accordance with the formula rent as detailed in the policy. • Further to the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, charge the rent payable by new tenants of existing social rent housing at the higher of the formula rent (i.e. the 'social rent rate'), or the actual rent (i.e. the 'assumed rent rate') as at 8th July 2015, with the appropriate rent increase applied in line with the current Rent Standard Direction (February 2019). • Charge actual costs for service charges but with the provision to apply a cap, subject to any legal constraints, on affordability grounds where appropriate.

What positive measures are in place (if any) to help fulfil our legislative duties to:				
Remove discrimination & harassment		Promote equal opportunities	The aim of the policy is to provide a fair method of calculating rents and service charges for all of our tenants. It also aligns with the council's Concessions for Fees and Charges Policy, and the principle of recovering the cost of providing services.	Encourage good relations

What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing, February 2019 • Direction on the Rent Standard, 2019 • Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 • Housing and Planning Act 2016 • Rent and service charge policy agreed by Exec December 2019 and recommended to Council in January 2020 • Rent account information • Housing System data • Supported housing service data
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In assessing the potential impact on people, are there any overall comments that you would like to make?	<p>Permission to increase rents by CPI + 1% for the next 5 years has required a revision of HRA Budget plans priorities. The HRA Business Plan was agreed at the December 2019 Executive Meeting. The average rent increase for 2020/2021 across all tenures is £3.50 per week.</p> <p>When calculating rents and service charges accounts, consideration will be taken of the need to balance any increase in the combined rent and service charge with the potential financial impact on customers. This relates to 1,005 or 34% of homes (who get a service charge) those who live in flats predominantly, as well as 844 sheltered accommodation. The Council must recover the actual cost of providing the service and service charge costs will increase with inflationary pressures and changes in</p>
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	<p>usage.</p> <p>We have 6,825 general rented properties, 35 affordable rent properties, 844 Sheltered Accommodation and 85 LSSO as at November 2019. The setting of a proportion of new build lets at affordable rents will contribute positively to increasing the supply of new homes in Stevenage. All target groups will benefit given the need for affordable housing is common across all socio-economic and minority groups. The current low supply of new affordable housing and the high cost of the private rented sector in Stevenage have impacted adversely on those groups whose incomes are average or below average.</p> <p>This also further supports work with people who need help to live independently at home and those at risk of homelessness, through wider housing options, continued provision of support, and financial assistance for adaptations and more homelessness preventative programmes respectively.</p> <p>Any groups that are potentially disadvantaged are still expected to be able to benefit from a council property set at a social rent.</p> <p>Tenants have benefited from four years of rent reduction so the impact of the rent increase is mitigated partially by having to use a lower base than it would have been had there not been a mandatory rent reduction (cumulative) of 1 % for the last four years.</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	The increase is applied to all properties; it is not possible to exempt any particular groups. A proportion of tenants may see an increase in service charges in any given year. The majority of tenants who are charged for services live in flats and/or sheltered accommodation. Tenants living in

					<p>sheltered housing do so because they have additional needs that require support relating to age, disability or both. The minimum age for entry into sheltered housing is 55 years and data from Northgate indicates that the proportion of tenants aged 60+ in sheltered housing, is almost three times the proportion for all tenant housing.</p> <p>In relation to flat blocks, the data indicates that there is a higher proportion of people aged 18-29 years in flat blocks compared with all SBC housing.</p> <p>For people living in independent living/flexicare schemes, in addition to basic rent and service charges, those who pay for the support/emergency response services that are not eligible for Housing benefit may see an increase in overall payment due each week .</p>
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment				See page two and three.	
What opportunities are there to mitigate the impact?	A further EqIA will be carried out on the impact of the service and support charge increases specific to 2020/21. This will consider the impact on individual tenants to ensure that individual customers are not affected disproportionately. The rent and service charge increases and if appropriate caps will be modelled based on this information			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Disability					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	<p>The increase is applied to all properties; it is not possible to exempt any particular groups. Northgate data on tenants in relation to disability was collected a number of years ago and is not up to date. This information was also disclosed at the tenants' discretion so some tenants may not have provided it. To give some context, the data indicates that the proportion of tenants in sheltered housing declaring that they had a disability was almost double the proportion for the whole SBC tenant population. The proportion of tenants living in flat blocks declaring a disability was very similar to the proportion living in all properties; therefore a disproportionate impact on these tenants is not anticipated.</p>

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

Gender reassignment, Marriage or civil partnership, Pregnancy & maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual orientation 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)	

Socio-economic⁷					
e.g. low income, unemployed, homelessness, caring responsibilities, access to internet, public transport users					
Positive impact		Negative impact	The rent increase will be applied across all tenancies prescribed by the Work and Welfare Reform Act and in line with the current Rent Standard Direction (February 2019) regardless of circumstances. This will be applied for at least the next 5 years. Those reliant on Housing Benefit (HB) and Universal Credit (UC) Housing costs to cover their full rent and eligible service charges won't be affected by the increase in rent and service charges as their benefit award will be recalculated.	Unequal impact	
			The number of bids on the new build properties let at affordable rents are similar to the number		

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.

			<p>received for new build let at social rents. There is a mixture of employed and unemployed applicants. Applicants in receipt of benefits are not excluded or unfairly treated.</p> <p>Those who receive services for which a service charge is made will be charged the actual cost of those services. Heating charges are exempt from HB and tenants are expected to pay this. Water charges are also exempt from HB and are set by the Water Authority. SBC collects the water charges on behalf of the Water Authority.</p>		
<p>Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment</p>		<p>See page two and three</p>			
<p>What opportunities are there to mitigate the impact and promote equality and inclusion?</p>	<p>The policy allows for capping of service charges, subject to any legal constraints. As a means of mitigating the impact of an increase that would cause hardship, the council may subsidise the costs.</p> <p>Rent increase information to be out on our website early January 2020 to start preparing tenants.</p> <p>The rent notification letter (to be sent out at the end of February) will offer tenants the opportunity to discuss any queries they have with staff. It will explain why the rent has increased and also explain any increase in service charges. Where a property has a number of service charges they will be fully explained, with a summary of how the weekly charge has increased overall.</p> <p>Where support charges are also included (mainly but not exclusively for sheltered and flexi care schemes) separate notifications will be sent out to these residents to ensure it is clearly set out how each element of the weekly charge is made up.</p> <p>To ensure that this is explained as clearly as possible there will be a FAQ sheet</p>		<p>What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)</p>		

	<p>and details on the website and hard copies available for those who need them.</p> <p>The policy states that the Council will have regard to the Local Housing Allowance when setting affordable rents. If affordable rents are set at this level, HB/ UC housing cost will cover the rent in full for those tenants who are entitled to the maximum amount of housing benefit. Setting at the Local Housing Allowance will also benefit tenants who are, for example on a low wage or zero hour contracts and where partial housing benefit can be paid.</p> <p>For those moving into Affordable Rent (AR) properties a comprehensive affordability assessment is carried out prior to offer to ensure that the tenancy is sustainable.</p> <p>The implementation of the policy in respect of AR will be kept under review by the Housing Development Executive Committee and should adverse impacts be identified this will inform future decision making in this regard.</p> <p>Prepare staff to enable them to respond effectively and empathetically with tenants.</p>		
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Other				
please feel free to consider the potential impact on people in any other contexts				
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment				
What opportunities are there to mitigate the impact?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

What are the findings of any consultation with:

Residents?	We will be consulting residents throughout 2020/21 as it will be the first year of increase since the rent reduction regime to establish impact and put in place systems to mitigate this accordingly.	Staff?	
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Voluntary & community sector?		Partners?	
Other stakeholders?	<p>HMAB was consulted in November 2019 and was supportive of the policy to charge at actual costs but with the provision in the policy to cap any increases if this would cause hardship.</p> <p>In terms of affordable rents, HMAB broadly supports this policy. There are still some concerns about the affordability of such schemes and the position if tenants lost employment/were on a low wage. The rent would be covered in full for those tenants entitled to full HB/ UC housing costs due to the rent being set at the LHA level. Also those in low paid employment may be entitled to partial HB/ UC housing costs. Thorough affordability assessments will be carried out.</p>		

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	The future viability of the HRA Business Plan will be reliant upon us being able to recover the costs of service provision where it's possible to do so.
	2b. Continue as planned	<p>Only a proportion of new builds will be at affordable rent in line with the revised HRA Budget plan. The proposal to offer a mix of new build rents at affordable rent levels and at social rent levels would result in additional income to the HRA over 30 years which makes a significant contribution to the sustainability of the plan and the Council's ability to build new homes and to deliver other housing priorities.</p> <p>There are plans to build 240 social rented and 270 affordable rented houses over the next 5 years. The policy and the aim is for a 50/50 split, but due to the timing of delivery on schemes the weighting is slightly biased towards affordable, but it evens out over the whole 30 year plan.</p>

		This means that there will be a total of approximately 4% of council homes at affordable rent at the end of the 5 year period. The majority of annual lettings (i.e. of new build and re-let properties) would continue to be at a social rent level and it is estimated that after 30 years the vast majority of council property rents (an estimated 88%) will be set at the social rent rate, subject to any changes in legislation or Government guidance.
	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?

Approved by Assistant Director (Housing and Investment): Jaine Cresser

Date: 31 December 2019