

# Equality Impact Assessment Form Appendix C

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

<b>What is being assessed?</b>		<b>Review of Legal Services Charges</b>			
Lead Assessor	Daud Latif			Assessment team	Nadia Capuano
Start date	16/11/2024	End date	02/12/2024		Barbara Willetts
When will the EqIA be reviewed? (Typically every 2 years)	02/12/26				

Who may be affected by the proposed project?	Businesses, leaseholders, market traders			
What are the key aims of the proposed project?	The review of the legal service fees ensures full cost recovery of Stevenage officer time spent on legal requests.			
	Legal Service	Current Charge	New Charge	Increased by
	Sale of Freehold Reversion – Residential Leases	£400	£837	£437
	Low Start Shared Ownership Surrender/Buy Back	£400	£837	£437
	Various transactions involving preparation of an agreement or Deed e.g. small land sales, Deeds of Release, Easements, garage sales and purchases	£365	£500	£135
	Market Licences Amendments	£50	£175	£125
	New Market Licences	£105	£175	£70
	Copy Transfers	£25	£50	£25
	Applications for consent for additional borrowing and Postponement of Right To Buy Discount Charge	£85	£90	£5
Copy Leases	£45	£50	£5	

	Redemption of Mortgage	£115	£115	£0
	Lease Extensions	£837	£837	£0
	Notice of Transfer/Charge for Right To Buy Flat sales	£50	£50	£0

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

Remove discrimination & harassment		Promote equal opportunities	For each type of legal request, the same fees will apply to all applicants.	Encourage good relations	Applicants will be informed of the legal fees in advance of works being started.
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What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment?

Comparison of legal officer hourly rates against Hertfordshire County Council's Shared Legal Service (SLS) rates.  
Cost to Stevenage Borough Council of each type of legal request, based on average officer time spent on request.

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

Many of the charges for the legal services have not been updated for some years as they currently sit outside the scope of the annual fees and charges process.  
In the case of legal charges, the purpose of the recharge is to recover the Council's costs from the other party to a transaction. The aim of the new pricing is full cost recovery only, to ensure that the service is not subsidised by other tax payers.

## Evidence and Impact Assessment

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

Age					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Impact not expected. Right To Buy (RTB) applicants vary in age and the RTB process itself is not relevant to these charges as the Council does not charge for the preparation of legal documents in respect of RTB sales, unless they are requesting additional funding on their mortgage application for home improvements.				
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	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Gender Reassignment					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Impact not expected.				
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					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Pregnancy & Maternity					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information	Impact not expected.				

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					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Religion or Belief					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

<b>Sex</b>					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

<b>Sexual Orientation e.g., straight, lesbian / gay, bisexual</b>					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

<b>Socio-economic<sup>1</sup></b>
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<sup>1</sup>Although 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.

e.g., low income, unemployed, homelessness, caring responsibilities, access to internet, public transport users, social value in procurement					
Positive impact		Negative impact	X	Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	<p>Applicants that apply for legal works relating to leases, right to buy and traders are usually in a favourable financial position to be able to request these legal works. Applicants with a low income or who are unemployed or facing homelessness do not generally apply for works relating to properties and leaseholds (which constitute the two biggest increases).</p> <p>A breakdown of the charges is included below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 charges not increased</li> <li>• 2 charges increased by £5</li> <li>• 1 charge increased by £25</li> <li>• 1 charge increased by £70</li> <li>• 1 charge increased by £125</li> <li>• 1 charge increased by £135</li> <li>• 2 charges increased by £437, both relating to property and leasehold</li> </ul>				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Applicants will be informed of the legal fees in advance of works being started.	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Additional Considerations					
Please outline any other 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)	
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## Consultation Findings

Document any feedback gained from the following groups of people:

Staff?	Finance Business Partner, Legal Officer	Residents?	Not consulted with
Voluntary & community sector?	Not consulted with	Partners?	Hertfordshire County Council Shared Legal Services
Other stakeholders?	Not consulted with		

## Overall Conclusion & Future Activity

Explain the <b>overall findings</b> of the assessment and <b>reasons for outcome (please choose one)</b> :		
1. No inequality, inclusion issues or opportunities to further improve have been identified	Continue as planned, to ensure Council cost are covered for all legal requests.	
Negative / unequal impact, barriers to inclusion or improvement opportunities identified	2a. Adjustments made	
	2b. Continue as planned	Continue as planned.
	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?
Monitor council cost of providing the service to ensure Council costs are covered and the service is not subsidised	Promote equal opportunities	Daud Latif	September 2025	Monitor every year during the fees and charges process.

**Approved by Assistant Director:** Brian Moldon

**Date:** 04.12.24

Please send this EqIA to [equalities@stevenage.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@stevenage.gov.uk) for critical friend feedback and for final submittance with the associated project.