

Estimated time taken to complete: 2 hours*

*Please note that this should be a working document and should be actively reviewed throughout the lifetime of the project/policy/service change



Tree & Woodland Strategy 2025 - 2035 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Form

Date created	May 2025
Approved by	Cabinet
Owner	Assistant Director
Version	1
Author	Julia Hill (Environmental Policy & Development Manager)
Business Unit and Team	Stevenage Direct Services Environmental Policy & Development

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

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

First things first:

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

Title:	Tree & Woodland Strategy 2025 - 2035	
Please answer Yes or No to the following questions:		
Does it affect staff, service users or the wider community?	Yes/ No	
Has it been identified as being important to particular groups of people?	Yes/ No	
Does it or could it potentially affect different groups of people differently (unequal)?	Yes /No	
Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities or exclusion issues?	Yes /No	
Will it have an impact on how other organisations operate?	Yes /No	
Is there potential for it to cause controversy or affect the council's reputation as a public service provider?	Yes /No	

Where a positive impact is likely, will this help to:	
Remove discrimination and harassment?	Yes/ No
Promote equal opportunities?	Yes/ No
Encourage good relations?	Yes/No

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

Or if you answered 'No' to all of the questions and decide that your activity doesn't need an EqlA you must explain below why it has no relevance to equality and diversity.

You should reference the information you used to support your decision below and seek approval from your Assistant Director before confirming this by sending this page to equalities@stevenage.gov.uk.

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Name of assessor: Julia Hill

Role: Environmental Policy & Development Manager

Date: 10 March 2025

Decision approved by: Steve Dupoy

Role: Assistant Director

Date:

Equality Impact Assessment Form

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

What is being assessed?		Tree & Woodland Strategy			
Lead Assessor	Julia Hill			Assessment team	Cristian Pinta
Start date	March 2025	End date			
When will the EqlA be reviewed? (Typically every 2 years)		March 2027			

Who may be affected by the proposed project?	<p>All residents</p> <p>Visitors to the town who are impacted by trees – amenity trees, woodlands or ancient hedgerows</p>
What are the key aims of the proposed project?	<p>The strategy sets out objectives for the way in which the town's tree stock, including amenity trees, woodlands and ancient hedgerows, are managed and developed to ensure that they continue to contribute to an attractive and healthy environment for people and wildlife now and in the future.</p>

What positive measures are in place (if any) to help fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	Residents and visitors are able to freely access trees and woodlands in Stevenage 24/7.	Promote equal opportunities	<p>100% of residents live within 4km of a 20ha+ woodland.</p> <p>Actions to prioritise future tree planting in areas with local tree canopy cover.</p>	Encourage good relations	Consulting local residents / stakeholders on any significant developments and changes to the treescape in their street

<p>What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment?</p>	<p>Public consultation was carried out in two phases:</p> <p>(1) Winter 2023/24: To understand residents views on trees and woodland, why they are important, how they rate the tree service currently, where new tree planting should take place etc This was an online consultation, with one version for adults and a similar version for young people. The consultation was promoted via social media, posters in neighbourhood centres, parks and the town centre. It was also sent to around 150 community and voluntary organisations in the town. The young person's consultation was sent out to all schools via Stevenage Education Trust. Around 490 responses were received.</p> <p>(2) Jan – Feb 2025: To seek feedback on the draft strategy to ensure that it was easy to understand, fair and equitable, and that the actions broadly met public needs identified in earlier consultation.</p> <p>This consultation was delivered on-line with the draft strategy made available on the Council's web pages. 18 responses were received.</p>
<p>In assessing the potential impact on people, are there any overall comments that you would like to make?</p>	<p>The aim of the strategy is to ensure that through partnership with local residents and other stakeholders we will create a bigger, well managed, more sustainable treescape; connecting trees, woodlands and hedgerows to benefit the environment, people, and wildlife now and in the future.</p> <p>78% of respondents to the draft strategy felt that it was easy to understand, and 22% were uncertain.</p> <p>55% of respondents felt that the strategy was fair and inclusive, while 33% were uncertain.</p>

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	Trees and woodlands are free to access for the whole community Access to nature alleviates stress, stabilises blood pressure and eases anxiety and depression for people of all ages. People exercise more, and feel better around trees, so promoting healthy, active lifestyles.	Negative impact		Unequal impact																			
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Of those that chose to provide demographic data for Phase 1 of the consultation:																						
	<table><tr><th>Age Range</th><th>No. of Responses</th></tr><tr><td>13-15</td><td>299</td></tr><tr><td>25-34</td><td>17</td></tr><tr><td>35-44</td><td>40</td></tr><tr><td>45-54</td><td>23</td></tr><tr><td>55-64</td><td>30</td></tr><tr><td>65-74</td><td>37</td></tr><tr><td>75-84</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>85+</td><td>3</td></tr></table>					Age Range	No. of Responses	13-15	299	25-34	17	35-44	40	45-54	23	55-64	30	65-74	37	75-84	6	85+	3
	Age Range	No. of Responses																					
	13-15	299																					
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85+	3																						

What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Residents and visitors are able to freely access trees and woodlands in Stevenage 24/7.	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					
Positive impact	Trees and woodlands are free to access for the whole community Access to nature alleviates stress, stabilises blood pressure and eases anxiety and depression. People exercise more, and feel better around trees, so promoting healthy, active lifestyles	Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Of those that chose to provide demographic data for Phase 1 of the consultation:				
	Disability or long-term health condition		No. of Responses		
	No		63		
	Prefer not to say		29		
	Yes – learning disability		6		
	Yes – long standing illness		17		
	Yes – mental health condition		17		

	Yes – physical / mobility impairment	15		
	Yes – sensory impairment	9		
	Something else	2		
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Residents and visitors can freely access trees and woodlands in Stevenage 24/7.	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Opportunities to improve access in woodlands	

Gender Reassignment					
Positive impact	Trees and woodlands are free to access for the whole community	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Not applicable				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Residents and visitors can freely access trees and woodlands in Stevenage 24/7.	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Marriage or Civil Partnership					
Positive impact	Trees and woodlands are free to access for the whole community	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Not applicable				

What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Residents and visitors can freely access trees and woodlands in Stevenage 24/7.	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	
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Pregnancy & Maternity					
Positive impact	Trees and woodlands are free to access for the whole community	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Not applicable				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Residents and visitors can freely access trees and woodlands in Stevenage 24/7.	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Religion or Belief					
Positive impact	Trees and woodlands are free to access for the whole community	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Not applicable				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Residents and visitors can freely access trees and woodlands in Stevenage 24/7.	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Race					
Positive impact	Trees and woodlands are free to access for the whole community	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Of those that chose to provide demographic data for Phase 1 of the consultation:				
	Race		No. of Responses		
	Asian / Asian British - Indian		4		
	Asian / Asian British - other		5		
	Asian / Asian British – Pakistani		4		
	White – British		175		
	White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller		4		
	White - Irish		1		
	White - Other		18		
	Other		36		
	Prefer not to say		11		
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Residents and visitors can freely access trees and woodlands in Stevenage 24/7.		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Religion or Belief					
Positive impact	Trees and woodlands are free to access for the whole community	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Not applicable				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Residents and visitors can freely access trees and woodlands in Stevenage 24/7.		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Sex																	
Positive impact	Trees and woodlands are free to access for the whole community	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None												
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	<p>Of those that chose to provide demographic data for Phase 1 of the consultation:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>No. of Responses</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>82</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non-binary</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>144</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prefer not to say</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Something else</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Gender	No. of Responses	Male	82	Non-binary	5	Female	144	Prefer not to say	11	Something else	3
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What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Residents and visitors can freely access trees and woodlands in Stevenage 24/7.		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)														

Sexual Orientation e.g., straight, lesbian / gay, bisexual					
Positive impact	Trees and woodlands are free to access for the whole community	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Not applicable				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Residents and visitors can freely access trees and woodlands in Stevenage 24/7.		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Socio-economic¹ e.g., low income, unemployed, homelessness, caring responsibilities, access to internet, public transport users, social value in procurement					
Positive impact	Trees and woodlands are free to access for the whole community	Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Of those that chose to provide demographic data for Phase 1 of the consultation:				
	Employment Status		No. of Responses		
	Apprenticeship / training		2		
	Carer		8		
	Retired		48		
	Self-employed		14		
	Stay at home parent		5		
	Student		89		
	Unemployed		16		
	Volunteer		7		
	Working full-time		56		
	Working part-time		28		
	Zero-hour contract		4		

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.

	Something else	5	
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Residents and visitors can freely access trees and woodlands in Stevenage 24/7.	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	Not applicable				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Consultation Findings

Document any feedback gained from the following groups of people:

Staff?	See colleague responses attached.	Residents?	See summary of the two consultation phases attached
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		78% of respondents to the draft strategy felt that the document was easy to understand, and 22% were uncertain. Customer service support is available to assist with any enquiries that residents may have in future. 55% of respondents felt that the strategy was fair and inclusive.
Negative / unequal impact, barriers to inclusion or improvement opportunities identified	2a. Adjustments made	
	2b. 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?

Approved by Assistant Director:

Date:

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