

# Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) 2025-2026 Summary

## **Learning and Development Project**

The learning and development offer is being redesigned to include staff-driven content and four key pillars: Statutory and Mandatory Training, Personal and Professional Development, Council Essentials, and Management and Leadership Essentials. The anticipated outcomes are improved service quality for residents and better staff retention.

The impact of Learning and Development project on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded that this project is generally positive for all protected characteristics as this approach promotes fairness, transparency, and access to development opportunities for all staff. In addition, a key part of this offer will be EDI training which will raise awareness about discrimination.

However, potential negative impacts have been identified for certain groups, including people with a disability/ neurodiverse, older adults and people on maternity leave and people who work part time hours as aspects of the training offer may not be fully accessible or flexible for their needs.

## **HVAC / VRF system refurbishment**

The heating and cooling system in the Deanes building is outdated and inefficient, prompting upgrade works. The project required floor-by-floor closures over approximately 20 weeks, starting with the second floor. To maintain business continuity, staff will work in a hybrid pattern, using remaining office space and working from home. Desks will be prioritised for frontline services and staff with specific needs, such as mental health support.

The impact of HVAC / VRF on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. The assessment identified minor negative impacts on staff with disabilities (including physical, mental health, and neurodivergent conditions). The impacts are linked to reduced office capacity, temporary inaccessibility of certain floors, and changes to routine and environment, which may present challenges for individuals who require consistency for wellbeing or experience anxiety with unfamiliar settings. Additionally, sensory-sensitive staff may be affected by alterations in layout, noise levels, or lighting, while those with faith-related requirements may experience disruption to daily observance practices.

## **Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy**

An update to the Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy in 2025. This is being updated due to the revising of the borough wide emissions reduction target, and to reflect the achievement of reaching net zero in operational emissions.

The outcomes of the strategy are set out in its targets to become a net-zero borough by 2045 and to continue to keep emissions from its operations at net zero. The updated strategy sets out the approach of the council to meet this outcome and will be accompanied by an updated action plan.

The impact of Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded that the impacts of climate change that there are several groups at higher risk and face disproportionate exposure to

climate-related harms including older adults, young children, people living with a disability, pregnant people, Black and minoritised communities, and those in low-income households. The updated strategy would be to enhance the borough's ability to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, alongside reducing carbon emissions, will deliver benefits for all residents and those disproportionately impacted. Therefore, the assessment concluded that the strategy would have positive impacts on all groups.

### **Call Secure Plus**

Following supplier notification changes are required to the Income Management system to comply with new PCI version 4 standards for taking card payments over the phone. This includes removing the "Keyed" payment option in Paye. Net by August. The council will implement Call Secure Plus for telephone card payments to meet PCI DSS v4 requirements and protect customer data. The solution prevents advisors from hearing card numbers, reduces risk, and supports accessible, efficient transactions.

The impact of the introduction of the Call Secure Plus changes on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded the assessment concluded that implementation of Call Secure Plus is expected to have a positive impact to most groups as it improves payment security while supporting equality and avoiding unlawful discrimination. However minor negative impacts for older adults and some disabled users have been identified as they may struggle to enter their card details, but these are mitigated through advisor assistance and alternative payment options such as card payments at reception, bank transfer, they can pay on our website or by a cheque.

### **Land Letting Council Investment Properties to Voluntary and Community Organisations Policy**

This new policy introduces a clear framework for occasionally letting council investment properties at discounted rents to voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. It aims to improve transparency, consistency, and fairness in decision-making, define eligibility, standardise applications, and implement annual reviews. Anticipated outcomes include stronger support for VCS groups, improved community benefits, and a more structured approach to managing discounted leases

The impact of the Letting Council Investment Properties to Voluntary and Community Organisations Policy on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded that the policy would have a positive impact on protected characteristics groups because it will improve consistency, increase transparency for VCS tenants and enable clearer, and broader, communication and promotion of suitable opportunities. As the policy sets out the principles and processes to be applied by the council when renting council-owned buildings held within its commercial investment portfolio to voluntary and community sector organisations.

### **Sale of council-owned amenity open space/land**

It is proposed to review and update the council's approach to land sales and introduce a more robust and transparent application process, with clearer criteria as to what can and cannot be sold. It is also proposed to implement a charge for the process, with costs based on benchmarking and

officer time [amount to be determined]. This would be supported by an online application process, which will need to be developed.

It is anticipated that the changes will be minor. However, these should help to streamline the service, provide greater structure and transparency and better meets the needs of applicants/residents. They should also reduce the number of speculative applications, make the process more efficient, save officer time and ensure that costs are appropriately recharged.

The impact of Sale of council-owned amenity open space/land changes on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded that that the revised approach would have positive impacts for most groups as this will ensure the process is more transparent for potential applicants who could fall within any of the protected characteristics of groups. However, the assessment highlights there will be a low negative impact for people on a low socio-economic background due to the introduction of application fee.

### **Appraisal System**

The Council is reviewing and redesigning the appraisal process to embed new council values and improve its effectiveness. This includes updating the system, paperwork, and review cycle. The anticipated outcomes are enhanced staff development, improved service quality for residents, and better staff retention.

The impact of changes to the appraisal system on the protected characteristics of groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded that there the project is generally positive for all protected characteristics, as its structured appraisal process aims to identify and address disparities in development opportunities and performance barriers. However, minor risks remain as managers may unintentionally allow unconscious bias or stereotypes to influence judgements or support; accessibility issues in the system could disadvantage individuals with disabilities or neurodiverse conditions.

### **Declaration of Local Nature Reserve at Little Pen Wood**

The proposal is to formally declare the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council-owned site at Little Pen Wood as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended). This designation recognises the site's ecological value and secures its long-term protection and management for nature conservation and public enjoyment. The declaration will establish a 25-year management plan to restore habitats, improve accessibility, encourage community involvement, and support the Council's biodiversity strategy.

The impact of Declaration of Local Nature Reserve at Little Pen Wood on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded that the proposal is likely to have a positive impact on several groups, particularly people with disabilities, older adults, carers, and those from low socio-economic backgrounds. As the site will be accessible to all residents and visitors, it offers equitable access to nature, which is particularly important for communities who may face barriers to accessing with the countryside. Inclusive signage, outreach, and community engagement can help ensure that people from feel welcome and represented in how the site is promoted and used.

### **North Wessex Downs National Landscape Management Plan 2025-30**

The original North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) management plan was adopted in 2004 and has been updated every five years since. The 2019 to 2024 Plan was extended for one year, to 2025, to incorporate relevant guidance in advance of a fuller review. A full review has now been completed by the management team under the guidance of the Council of Partners, and the proposed updated plan will cover the period 2025–2030.

The impact of North Wessex Downs National Landscape Management Plan 2025-30 on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded that the Management Plan has no direct negative impacts on protected characteristic groups and strongly promotes inclusion. It prioritises enabling people of all backgrounds and abilities to access and enjoy the North Wessex Downs while respecting its valued qualities. Positive impacts include improving inclusive access to nature, engaging underrepresented communities such as ethnic minorities, removing barriers for people with physical, sensory, and hidden disabilities, and supporting rural communities, families, and people of all ages.

### **The General Enforcement Policy**

The General Enforcement Policy (2025–2030) is being refreshed to modernise enforcement practices and comply with national guidance. and strengthen principles of fairness, proportionality, and transparency. The policy also emphasises community and business involvement, accessible communication, and controlled use of body-worn video for officer safety.

The impact of General Enforcement Policy 2025 on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded that the proposed policy has no impact upon any protected groups and the council's public sector equality duty, as the policy aims to ensure all enforcement is fair, accountable, consistent, proportionate and be transparent.

### **Overton Neighbourhood Development Plan (ONP)**

Overton Parish's existing neighbourhood plan, adopted in 2016, is being updated through a new draft Overton Neighbourhood Development Plan (ONP), which introduces fresh policies on housing, design, the natural environment, transport, the village centre, and community facilities. The plan aims to deliver a mix of housing, high-quality design, environmental enhancements, active travel, sustainability, and protection of community assets, benefiting the wider community, including protected groups, though further opportunities for inclusivity remain.

The impact of Overton Neighbourhood Development Plan on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. The assessment concluded that the Overton Parish Neighbourhood Plan will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics groups as it includes a range of policies that will result in positive benefits for the local community in general e.g. securing a mix of sizes/types of new dwellings, enhancing the design quality through the parish, and the protection and enhancement of environmental assets alongside other policies.

### **Budget proposal - Recruitment of New Staff Members**

The recruitment of an AI Specialist and Data Engineer is part of an invest-to-save strategy to enhance the council's digital capabilities. These roles are designed to:

- Accelerate ethical and effective use of AI.
- Improve data infrastructure and decision-making.
- Support service transformation and efficiency.

The impact of the Recruitment of New Staff members on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded that there was no negative impact of these proposals for each of the protected characteristics groups identified above. As they will be subjected to the council's standard recruitment process which allows equal opportunity for all protected characteristics groups. In addition, as a council we will be undergoing a project on recruitment within under-represented groups

### **Budget saving proposal - Review of town centre events programme**

The town centre events programme offers free activities year-round to engage residents and boost Top of the Town footfall. Festive Friday and Let's Glow are the most popular and benefit businesses most. Smaller family events like August Adventures and October half-term run in school holidays. A new sports and wellbeing event, Limitless, launches this year for teens and young adults. A recent review identified savings by stopping either August Adventures and October half-term or Limitless.

The impact of the Review of town centre events programme on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded there may be a minor impact on families with young children and young people, due to the removal of age-targeted events and residents from lower socio-economic backgrounds, who may rely on free, accessible events for leisure and wellbeing. While no major adverse impacts were identified, the reduction in event diversity could limit opportunities for inclusive participation and community cohesion.

### **Budget saving proposal – Community Grants**

The Council regularly reviews its budgets to ensure funding is being used effectively and reflects actual demand. Within Community Services, we are proposing a reduction to two grant schemes that support community and voluntary organisations. These groups provide vital services to residents, and we remain committed to supporting them.

The impact of the Budget saving proposal – Community Grants on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded found no evidence of disproportionate impact on any specific group, although there may be a low-level negative impact across several protected characteristics due to the reduced overall budget. This is because some organisations delivering targeted services (for example, to disabled people, minority ethnic communities, or families) may face increased competition for a smaller funding pot but it is still in line with previous funding provided through the grant scheme.

The schemes themselves remain in place, continue to be open to all community and voluntary organisations, and retain an inclusive approach. Funding levels have been aligned with actual demand observed in recent years, which helps ensure resources are used responsibly while still supporting a broad range of groups.

### **Budget saving proposal - removal of apprentice role**

The proposal is to remove the 1 FTE HR apprentice role from the structure. Also to remove the 2 FTE apprentices, namely the Arts and Events Apprentice and the Digital Marketing Apprentice, roles from the structure and replace with one FTE Place Marketing Assistant. Whilst the apprentice role is an important one within the as part of our commitment to providing routes into local government through apprenticeships- it is the role in the structure least directly connected with the delivery of the service's leading council improvement plan which contains a number of organisational-wide improvement initiatives which are therefore vital to be delivered to support the organisation moving forward.

This assessment concluded that there was a potential negative impact related to age. However no differential impacts were identified for other protected characteristic groups, and the HR role is currently vacant, and the Economy and Culture apprenticeships will no longer be in the role, meaning no immediate impact on an individual postholder.

To mitigate the identified age-related impact, the council will continue to work with services to identify and promote other apprenticeship opportunities across the organisation

### **Reprovision of golf facilities at the Leisure Park**

If the proposed redevelopment of Basingstoke Golf Centre goes ahead, the current golf facilities including the pitch and putt course, driving range, and adventure golf will close.

The impact of the Reprovision of golf facilities at the Leisure Park on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded that the assessment concluded that the reprovision of golf facilities at the leisure park will not have a negative impact on most groups however, feedback from current golf centre users indicates that losing the pitch and putt course could negatively impact older adults, younger adults, and people with disabilities. This is because the nine-hole course offers a manageable distance, making it more accessible and comfortable for those who cannot walk long distances.

### **Installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on council-owned community centres**

The council is proposing to install solar photovoltaic (PV) systems on several of its community centres. Following feasibility and survey work, 13 buildings have been identified as suitable. External consultants have been secured, and work is underway to install the panels via a rolling programme, to be completed in 2026/27.

It is noted that council-owned community centres work with, and offer support to, a range of disadvantaged and marginalised groups which cover many of the protected characteristics. It is anticipated that the project will support community associations running buildings to reduce operating costs, thereby enhancing their viability and resilience and supporting longer-term delivery of activities and services.

### **Strategic Asset Management Plan 2026/27 - 2028/29**

The council is updating its Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) to set a new vision for how its land and property assets will be managed from 2026/27 to 2029/30. The update is needed to keep assets sustainable, improve efficiency in operational buildings, strengthen the financial performance of investment properties, and support regeneration and community outcomes.

The impact of Strategic Asset Management Plan 2026/27 - 2028/29 on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded that there will be no adverse impact for any protected characteristic groups. However, there may be opportunities for positive outcomes for protected characteristic groups through supporting strategies and workstreams and projects which will be progressed to deliver the identified outcomes. This includes the project to introduce solar panels on council-owned community centres, the new lettings policy for Voluntary and Community organisations in investment properties and the revised approach to community centres leases all of which should positively support voluntary sector organisations, many of which work with and directly benefit key groups.

### **Review of Local Nature Reserve Selection Criteria**

The proposal is to formulate an updated list of council owned sites for prospective declaration as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) under The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended). The proposal assesses the previous criteria for declaring LNRs accepted by the council in 2015 and proposes a new set of criteria for 2026. It then measures a list of the most suitable council owned sites against these criteria and proposes a new list of sites to go forward for LNR declaration in oncoming years.

The assessment indicates that the proposal is likely to have positive impacts for several protected groups, particularly in relation to age, disability, sex, and pregnancy and maternity, due to improved accessibility, safety considerations, and opportunities for engagement with nature as these have been taken into account when viewing the broad scoring criteria for sites stated in Stage 2 of the process. No negative impacts have been identified at this stage.

### **Civil Penalties Policy**

The Council is updating its Civil Penalties Policy to modernise how penalties are calculated and applied for breaches of housing legislation. The revised policy introduces a structured penalty-setting matrix, expands coverage to include new duties under the Renters' Rights Act 2025, and strengthens evidence requirements from landlords. It places greater emphasis on the harm caused to tenants, particularly those who are vulnerable, and takes a firmer approach to deterrence, repeat offences, and removing any financial benefit gained through non-compliance.

The impact of Civil Penalties Policy on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded that the policy would have a positive impact for some groups, particularly for younger and older tenants, disabled residents, minority ethnic groups, LGBTQ+ tenants, pregnant people, and low-income households all benefit from clearer enforcement and stronger protections.

The policy is applied consistently, so several characteristics show a neutral impact where no disadvantage is expected.

### **Introduction of a dedicated Housing Standards Enforcement Policy**

The Housing Standards Enforcement Policy introduces a standalone enforcement policy specifically for housing standards, separate from (but consistent with) the Council's General Enforcement Policy. It formalises how the Council will meet new and existing statutory duties. New Housing Standards Enforcement Policy introduced to reflect major legislative updates (including Renters' Rights Act 2025) and to provide a clear, consistent approach to enforcement.

The impact of The Housing Standards Enforcement Policy on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded that overall, there will be no negative impact on all protected characteristics groups to be robust, fair and strongly aligned with the Council's statutory duties. The identified actions will ensure ongoing inclusivity, reduce potential inequalities and enhance the policy's positive impact on all residents particularly those at heightened risk from unsafe or poorly managed private rented housing.