

Shropshire Council
Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)
Stage One Screening Record 2024

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
Introducing a charge for garden waste, closing or changing opening times to household recycling centres (HRC) and implementing a booking service for HRCs.

Name of the officer carrying out the screening
James Alderson

Decision, review, and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Initial (Stage One) ESHIA Only?	X	
Proceed to Stage Two Full ESHIA or HIA (part two) Report?		X

If completion of a Stage One screening assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes above, and complete both part A and part B of this template. If a Full or Stage Two report is required, please move on to full report stage once you have completed this initial screening assessment as a record of the considerations which you have given to this matter.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations

The consultation into garden waste and Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) has been designed to understand the impact of proposed service changes on residents. There are also questions within the consultation survey to understand individual and Protected Characteristics and how people may/may not be impacted differently by the proposed service changes. The consultation will help to identify other negative/positive impacts in addition to those outlined below.

There is a potential negative impact for the Protected Characteristic groupings of Age (older people), and Disability, and our further grouping of social inclusion (low-income households) because the proposed budget reductions may reduce access to services (requiring travel to a less local HRC), move more services online (including booking) and lead to service charges/ increased costs. It is not anticipated that other Protected Characteristics groupings will be impacted more or less than any other local resident. The full list is further on in this screening assessment in table format.

Equally, it may be that the impacts of moving more services online are positive rather than negative, particularly for people with sensory impairments for whom there will be

digital inclusion opportunities. It also needs to be noted at this stage that, whilst the Council seeks to consider impacts for individuals and households in relation to their circumstances, such as low income or rurality, these are not Protected Characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010. The Council is observing good practice in making these wider considerations but is not bound by them under equality legislation.

The Council is also required to give due regard to the needs of serving members of the armed forces and their families and veteran, under separate legislation, and views will therefore need to be sought from this grouping through the consultation, with help from Armed Forces Covenant officers.

In regard to **charging for garden waste**, actions are envisaged to mitigate against potential negative impacts for households regarding low income and in regard to accessibility needs, physical access and online access, as follows:

Affordability of the service: the proposed cost has been identified at £1 per week however this will be consulted on as if residents would prefer to pay more and retain all recycling centres or reduce the opening times.

Payment methods: we will consider options to make cash payments at Pay Point and Post Office to ensure residents can access the service however they choose to pay

Ability to opt in: We are also aware that residents may not be able to complete this online so consideration of other options such as telephone and as a last resort through Shropshire local hubs. Accessibility of websites and phone systems will need to be factored into considerations to ensure these meet requirements for communities and individuals in the local authority area, e.g. ability to support those without digital skills e.g. ability to support those with a range of sensory or emotional needs, impairments or disabilities

In relation to proposed **closure of two recycling centres or changes to opening times**, actions are envisaged to mitigate likely negative impacts and enhance potential positive impacts as follows:

As closure of any sites will reduce access to people with Protected Characteristics, of all groupings, in the area(s) impacted by any service loss, further work will seek to identify which HRCs would be at risk and the impact of each site closing and considering opening times as an alternative. Given that people may have to travel further to another site, pay for bulky waste collections, add more to general waste or find other methods of disposal, this will be assessed within the consultation survey.

In relation to **implementation of a booking system for recycling centres**, there are potential positive impacts:

Better resident experience – residents will be able to access HRCs with no queuing and easier access to help from site staff as through flow will be managed better. This will be beneficial for residents that may have additional needs.

Online service provision – For some people with Protected Characteristics online booking may be a preferred option. Choosing the day and time for a visit may help people select days and times that suit their individual needs and circumstances.

Against this, there is a potential negative impact: ability to apply

As this will be a new service the council will prefer this to be completed online through self-service. We are also aware that residents may not be able to complete this online so consideration of other options such as telephone and as a last resort through Shropshire local hubs. Accessibility of websites and phone systems will need to be factored into considerations to ensure these meet requirements for communities and individuals in the local authority area, e.g., ability to support those without digital skills e.g., ability to support those with a range of sensory or emotional needs, impairments or disabilities.

Ineligible properties

Some people with Protected Characteristics may live within ineligible properties. If a property is ineligible for garden waste collections this is often because of one of the following reasons:

- They are in a flat that is not currently registered as having a garden bin or being able to fit one in at the property without causing a hazard to others.
- They are in a narrow street where typically residents don't have gardens.
- They have 'sack' collection, and we don't provide this service for garden waste.
- The property may have a planning or legal restriction on being able to present a wheeled garden bin.

In the first instance due to operational and charging reasons, Shropshire Council will be unable to add HMOs and flats onto the scheme, so 11,464 of these properties will have their service removed. However, there are ways of overcoming this including:

- Housing providers or letting agents can arrange the garden waste subscription.
- Individual residents may work together with their neighbours to share the costs of a subscription.
- Home composting may be a preferred option (advice will be provided online).

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of health and wellbeing considerations

The consultation into garden waste and Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) has been designed to understand the impact of proposed service changes on residents. There are also questions within the consultation survey to understand individual and protected characteristics and how people may/may not be impacted differently by the proposed service changes. The consultation will help to identify other negative/positive impacts in addition to those outlined above.

It is anticipated that there are few impacts related to health and wellbeing other than the impact on environmental/public health should residents fail to dispose of waste (including food waste) effectively. Food waste collections will be in place weekly from April 2026 so any potential impact of failure to dispose of food waste is temporary in nature (the general waste bin remains an option until separate collections begin). Feedback from other local authorities has suggested that this risk is low.

There is no evidence to suggest that we will see any increase in fly-tipping because of a subscription service being introduced. We have spoken to other councils that have introduced similar schemes and they have not seen an increase. Importantly, fly-tipping is a crime, and anyone caught doing it could be prosecuted and face a large fine, although this is organic material and will naturally breakdown, posing no risk to the environment. Nevertheless, this can be monitored closely following implementation of agreed service changes.

There is the potential for some people to work to reduce the green/garden waste they produce rather than pay for collection. Some members of the community may choose to dispose of their waste through methods that are less positive for health (such as through burning) or minimise time spent gardening i.e. being active outdoors. This potential impact seems less likely when garden waste can be disposed of through visits to a household recycling centre.

Arrangements are in place for anyone not able to respond online to request alternative versions of the consultation materials. People may also reply via email, letter, paper survey available at local libraries and through tailored formats on request.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations

Following public consultation, the ESHIA will be updated using feedback from the community.

Veolia is engaged in the process of service change and is committed to sharing feedback from the community and from members of staff. Feedback processes include regular contract meetings, team meetings and public feedback such as comments and service requests. It will be possible to monitor any change in formal feedback recording including MO enquiries, complaints and comments for action.

Local councillors, including the portfolio holder, will be encouraged to report back on any issues reported by communities following service change implementation.

The Council will continue to seek out and share practice on this service change with other local authorities, particularly those which are large and sparsely populated rural unitary authorities, like Shropshire.

Benchmarking analysis has been undertaken and summary data is included within the consultation survey, illustrating the green waste collection charges in place within other local authority areas. Learning from other local authorities is that anticipated negative impacts have not always occurred and that transition to charging for services has not been as challenging as anticipated in many communities.

Associated ESHIAs

Provision of wheeled bins for kerbside collection ESHIA (2021)
Bring Banks ESIIA (2018)

A second follow up Stage One ESHIA will be carried out following the consultation.

Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of climate change considerations and any other impacts with regard to economic and societal implications

Climate change and environmental

The Climate Change Appraisal to be completed for the committee report associated with this ESHIA will appear here, or internal record of appraisal at this stage.

Environmental health – As set out within the Environmental Act 2021, there is now a statutory requirement for all Local Authorities in England to provide a weekly food waste collection to all households from the 1 April 2026. Food waste collections (currently food waste can be added to the garden waste bin) will be suspended until April 2026. There is a potential negative impact in the interim if members of the public don't dispose of their food waste well. However, most people are likely to dispose of food waste well and may compost, use the general waste bin or take to their household recycling centre. This will be assessed within the consultation survey.

It is possible that there will be a negative impact on climate change because of charging for green waste and the reduction of Household Recycling Centre services (if necessary, such as the closure of sites, reduction of service opening at sites or increase in charges). The introduction of a chargeable service will result in several properties no longer participating and whilst we will encourage home composting and use of the HRC it is inevitable that garden waste will end up in the general waste bin and go to the ERF.

If residents choose not to subscribe to the scheme, Shropshire Council will continue to encourage them to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste as much as possible, and this includes trying home composting. If home composting is not an option, it remains free for residents to dispose of garden waste at the HRCs.

Potential positive impacts: increase in home composting

Garden waste collections are not the best use of council resources to deal with garden waste. The carbon impact of collecting and composting the waste on this scale would be reduced by introducing the volume of waste collected. If implemented the council could promote home composting further through its waste minimisation strategy. This would ensure that any impact on the environment is reduced through reduction in vehicle movements and bulking of waste.

Potential negative impacts: possible increase in fly tipping

There is no evidence to suggest that we will see any increase in fly-tipping because of a subscription service being introduced. We have spoken to other councils that have introduced similar schemes and they have not seen an increase. Importantly, fly-tipping is a crime, and anyone caught doing it could be prosecuted and face a large fine, although this is organic material and will naturally breakdown, posing no risk to the environment. The council also provides a subsidised composting bin service which could be promoted further if the proposal is implemented to encourage greater uptake of home composting. [How to home compost | Shropshire Council](#)

It is, however, possible that there may be an increase in fly tipping if residents are unable to access household recycling centres (HRCs) when needed, due to any closures of HRCs or to changes in opening times.

If up to two HRCs were to close it could mean that residents result to fly tipping as the alternatives involve additional costs. If implemented the council should consider access to alternative provisions such as bulky waste collection service and use of commercial arrangements. Currently there is no online booking service for bulky waste, and this could mean that it is not as easily accessible to residents. The council would need to consider further promotion of the alternatives and residents' duty of care under the Environmental Protection Act.

Increase in use of unregistered waste carriers: This could create a market for unregulated waste carriers to capitalise on lack of service. This could mean that commercial waste comes into recycling. Disposal of commercial waste at household waste facilities is illegal and would result in an additional cost to the council. Implementation of a booking system would assist with this but communication around residents' duty of care under the Environmental Protection Act would need to be considered.

Economic and societal/wider community

Local authority service charges are likely to have widespread economic and societal consequences, but the loss of services would be less palatable and have greater environmental impact. This is a problem that local authorities across the UK are struggling with. Since austerity measures were introduced a range of other national and global events including Brexit, Covid-19, the war in Ukraine and other factors have led to a longer-term decline in the British economy.

Population increases have also played a significant role and the national Government has not had the available funds to increase funding into local government. Rural areas seem to have faced even greater challenges as a result of the additional costs of service delivery. Government have called on local authorities to try to balance budgets through more sustainable means of funding and this means charging for some services and taking difficult decisions to end some services. Careful consideration has been given to charging for green waste and the future of Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) in Shropshire in a way that tries to minimise the local economic impact.

Feedback from the consultation may further inform the evidence used to aid decision making. The individual economic impact of the proposals is £52 a year for households choosing to make use of the service. This is in line with charges introduced by similar local authorities and will assist in moving the service towards a more sustainable funding model. There are a wider range of anticipated positive economic impacts of local authorities with more sustainable financial arrangements, across all areas of service.

In terms of covering service costs, for example, the council is covering the cost of services that it is not obligated to provide free of charge covering costs of services that are not used universally like refuse disposal.

Charging for Garden Waste

Potential negative impact: service could be unaffordable

The introduction of a charge for garden waste will mean that the council is charging for an additional service that it is not obligated to provide free of charge. The proposed cost has been identified at £1 per week however this will be consulted on as if residents would prefer to pay more and retain all recycling centres or reduce the opening times.

Potential negative impact: payment methods

The council will consider payment methods with a preference for direct debits or debit card mandates. The council is seeking cashless process wherever possible. However, we will consider options to make cash payments at Pay Point and Post Office to ensure residents can access the service however they chose to pay.

Potential negative impact: ability to opt in

As this will be an opt in service residents will be required to confirm that they want to continue with the service and pay the service fee. The council will prefer this to be completed online through self-service. We are also aware that residents may not be able to complete this online so consideration of other options such as telephone and as a last resort through Shropshire local hubs. Consideration for accessibility of websites and phone systems will be considered to ensure these meet requirements for the local authority.

Closure of two recycling centres or changes to opening times

Potential negative impacts: restricting access to services

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy proposes to close two of the five Household Recycling Centres as part of necessary cost saving measures. The council has a statutory duty to provide sites at which residents can deposit their household waste free of charge and that are reasonably accessible to residents. The legislation does not specify how many sites an authority should provide and therefore the responsible authority is able to determine what is reasonably accessible based on local circumstances. Closure of any sites will reduce access to people with protected characteristics, of all groupings, in the area(s) impacted by any service loss.

Residents may not be able to access a recycling centre in their locality if their current nearest HRC is closed. This will then mean that further additional burden of additional travel cost and time. Further work to identify which HRCs would be at risk and the impact of each site closing and considering opening times as an alternative. People may have to travel further to another site, pay for bulky waste collections, add more to general waste or find other methods of disposal. This will be assessed within the consultation survey.

Potential positive impacts: optimise service spending:

The council can balance its budget based on its affordability. However, this is a potential positive impact for the council to then be translated into positive impacts for the communities that it serves, in terms of impacts across a range of services and service areas.

Further consideration on impacts to residents would need to be completed following consultation to identify which HRCs could close.




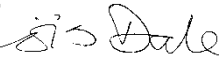
A mitigating option for communities is that, when considering closure, it has also been identified considering closing HRCs for part of the week instead of full closure to save costs. Further investigation to be completed following consultation.

Implementation of a booking system for recycling centres

Potential negative impact: current reciprocal arrangements with Telford and Wrekin Council (TWC) would end:

Residents living in the Sheriffhales, Shifnal, Albrighton, Broseley and Much Wenlock areas are likely to use TWC HRCs rather than Bridgnorth due to the locality. Introducing this booking system service is likely to lead to TWC either implementing similar arrangements, stop accepting Shropshire permits at their sites or even charge for Shropshire residents using TWC sites.

Scrutiny at Stage One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
Lead officer for the proposed service change Gavin Waite	 <small>Gavin Waite (Apr 9, 2024 09:21 GMT+1)</small>	09/04/2024
Officer carrying out the screening James Alderson Programme Manager		09/04/24
Any other internal service area support* Sarah Dodds, Feedback and Insight Team Leader		27/03/2024
Any external support** Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist		08/04/2024

*This refers to other officers within the service area

**This refers to support external to the service but within the Council, e.g., the Performance and Research Specialist for Rurality and Equalities, Public Health colleagues, the Feedback and Insight Team, performance data specialists, Climate Change specialists, etc.

Sign off at Stage One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
Lead officer's name Gavin Waite	 <small>Gavin Waite (Apr 9, 2024 09:21 GMT+1)</small>	09/04/2024
Service manager's name Tim Smith		10/04/2024

*This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description

Like councils all over the country Shropshire is facing an unprecedented financial pressure. We must make £62m of savings in 2024/25 to keep a balanced budget and our plans include difficult decisions, and some that we have never wanted to make. We must look at other ways of creating income and making savings so that we can protect essential frontline services for those residents most in need.

The proposal is to introduce an annual subscription fee for the collection of green (garden) waste from properties in the Shropshire Council area. We are also considering reducing the number of household recycling centres in the county or reducing the opening times. It is a statutory duty to provide household recycling centres, but legislation doesn't specify how many this must be. The authority can decide what is reasonable for local circumstances.

There is presently no statutory duty to collect garden waste and whilst some councils collect free of charge the majority 67% (221) charge for the service. There is no specific legislation that dictates what a council can charge, the fees for garden waste can vary from between £30-£75 and are set on each councils' individual circumstances such as, cost of providing the service, local budget constraints and demand. We're proposing an annual subscription charge of £52, or £1 a week. The revenue generated can be used to offset other budget pressure and support the delivery of existing services.

Residents will only pay for the service if they opt-in to the scheme and it remains free for residents to dispose of their garden waste at our Household Recycling Centres (HRC).

If people do not opt in, we are not planning to remove bins during the first 12 months of operation; this is because people may change their minds and want to subscribe later. Removing bins and delivering them would be a waste of resources. If resident insists, they do not want their bin anymore and want to get rid of it they can take it to their nearest recycling centre where it can be recycled if they are unable to take the bin to a recycling centre, they will have to wait for the planned removal programme in 2025-26.

The proposal being consulted on includes the introduction of a booking system at the HRC. Following the covid outbreak of 2020, several councils introduced an online booking system for using HRCs. They have seen significant benefits of making this change and have continued with these systems subsequently. This only allow users to access the sites, once they have booked a time specific slot and confirmed various details about themselves and the waste that they want to dispose of.

A booking system would;

- Only allow a booking slot to those declaring a Shropshire postcode as a home address, thereby removing any waste from outside the County.
- Include a declaration that any waste is not trade or commercial waste.
- Allow the number of slots to be managed, to avoid queuing at busy times and to allow operatives to better engage with users to encourage recycling and lower contamination.
- Limit the number of vans/trailers per hour and per day, which would mean more scrutiny of these loads.
- Produce good quality data to assess the frequency of visits, time patterns, busier days of the week.
- Reduce the incidents of abuse that site operatives currently endure by making it more difficult for traders to access the sites. Evidence from where booking systems have been introduced suggests that there is an immediate drop in trade inputs as a result of a more regulated system resulting in significant cost savings.

We remain committed to protecting and enhancing our environment and delivering on the aims and priorities as set out in our corporate plan. This includes continuing to encourage people to think about the impact of their actions on the environment and to 'reduce, reuse and recycle' their waste.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

All Shropshire Council area residents will be the focus for this consultation although it is anticipated that some protected characteristic groupings will not feel impacted by the proposed changes (e.g., age – children and young people, people who are not responsible for managing garden waste such as those without gardens and those in residential care etc).

All Shropshire Councillors will be informed of the public consultation and proposed changes.

Partnership work with other local authorities and national bodies such as DEFRA is in place.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

Evidence used to develop the service change proposals includes:

- Population and household type/composition data for Shropshire Council area.
- Shropshire Council and Veolia data on the provision of waste services in the county (including Veolia's in cab system 'Echo' for waste volume data).
- Shropshire Council's financial modelling data.
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- Information from DEFRA's Food Waste programme and other national sources of good practice in waste collection services.
- Benchmarking data available for the CIPFA family Group.
- Public consultations and reports produced by other local authorities.

The public consultation will result in more data and an update will be provided when results of the feedback are available.

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

All those living in Shropshire will be invited to participate in the public consultation. We especially encourage those who currently use the garden waste collection service regularly to let us know their thoughts, as well as those who will be especially impacted by the proposed changes to collections and household recycling centres. We will be contacting a range of people to ensure they are aware of the consultation and can respond, including:

- Members of the public (general communications and notices to those signed up to receive updates)
- Town and Parish Councils
- Elected Councillors
- Officers of Shropshire Council working in other departments
- Local businesses
- Voluntary and community sector groups and organisations
- Other public sector organisations
- Anyone else with an interest in this issue.

Arrangements are in place for anyone not able to respond online to request alternative versions of the consultation materials. People may also reply via email, letter, paper survey available at local libraries and through tailored formats on request.

Initial equality impact assessment by grouping (Initial health impact assessment is included below this table)

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Stage Two</i> <i>ESHIA required</i>	High positive impact <i>Stage One</i> <i>ESHIA required</i>	Medium positive or negative impact <i>Stage One</i> <i>ESHIA required</i>	Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify) <i>Stage One</i> <i>ESHIA required</i>
<u>Age</u> (please include children, young people, young people leaving care, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group e.g., a child or young person for whom there are safeguarding concerns e.g., an older person with a disability)			X Booking system/charging for garden waste accessibility to be considered for web and phone applications. To enable everyone equal opportunity to apply access	
<u>Disability</u> (please include cancer; HIV/AIDS; learning disabilities; mental health conditions and syndromes; multiple sclerosis; neurodiverse conditions such as autism; hidden disabilities such as Crohn's disease; physical and/or sensory disabilities or impairments)			X Booking system/charging for garden waste accessibility to be considered for web and phone applications. To enable everyone equal opportunity to apply access	
<u>Gender re-assignment</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				X no/minimal impact as changes affect all residents.

<p><u>Marriage and Civil Partnership</u> (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)</p>				<p>X no/minimal impact as changes affect all residents.</p>
<p><u>Pregnancy and Maternity</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)</p>				<p>X no/minimal impact as changes affect all residents.</p>
<p><u>Race</u> (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller)</p>				<p>X no/minimal impact as changes affect all residents.</p>
<p><u>Religion or belief</u> (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Veganism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)</p>				<p>X no/minimal impact as changes affect all residents.</p>
<p><u>Sex</u> (this can also be viewed as relating to gender. Please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)</p>				<p>X no/minimal impact as changes affect all residents.</p>
<p><u>Sexual Orientation</u> (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)</p>				<p>X no/minimal impact as changes affect all residents.</p>
<p><u>Other: Social Inclusion</u> (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; households in poverty; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable; people with health inequalities; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; and veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families)</p>			<p>X Booking system/charging for garden waste accessibility to be considered for web and phone applications. To enable everyone equal opportunity to apply access also consider payment methods based</p>	

			on current policy.	
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Initial health and wellbeing impact assessment by category

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have regarding health and wellbeing, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Health and wellbeing: individuals and communities in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two HIA required</i>	High positive impact	Medium positive or negative impact	Low positive negative or neutral impact (please specify)
<p>Will the proposal have a <i>direct impact</i> on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing?</p> <p>For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?</p>			<p>X</p> <p>Possible impact on additional demand on residents to book a HRC visit. Closing HRCs would reduce the ability for people to declutter to improve their mental health</p>	
<p>Will the proposal <i>indirectly impact</i> an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?</p> <p>For example, will it affect their ability to be physically active, choose healthy food, reduce drinking and smoking?</p>				<p>X</p> <p>Indirectly this could overwhelm people who already have mental health problems.</p>
<p>Will the policy have a <i>direct impact</i> on the community - social, economic and environmental living conditions that would impact health?</p> <p>For example, would it affect housing, transport, child development, education, employment opportunities, availability of green space or climate change mitigation?</p>			<p>X</p> <p>Charging for garden waste would mean that only people that use the service would cover the cost of providing it. Changing HRC opening times would have a negative impact as this would</p>	

			mean that residents would have to travel further. Booking system would allow residents to have a better experience as there would be not peaks or queues at sites.	
<p>Will there be a likely change in <i>demand</i> for or access to health and social care services?</p> <p>For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health, Local Authority services including Social Services?</p>				X

Guidance Notes

1. Legal Context

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take. By way of illustration, some local authorities focus more overtly upon human rights; some include safeguarding. It is about what is considered to be needed in a local authority's area, in line with local factors such as demography and strategic objectives as well as with the national legislative imperatives.

Carrying out these impact assessments helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three equality aims are integral to our decision making processes.

These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

These screening assessments for any proposed service change go to Cabinet as part of the committee report, or occasionally direct to Full Council, unless they are ones to do with Licensing, in which case they go to Strategic Licensing Committee.

Service areas would ordinarily carry out a screening assessment, or Stage One equality impact assessment. This enables energies to be focussed on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection about the positive or negative impacts of a service change upon groupings in the community, and for any adjustments to be considered and made accordingly.

These screening assessments are recommended to be undertaken at timely points in the development and implementation of the proposed service change.

For example, a Stage One ESHIA would be a recommended course of action before a consultation. This would draw upon the evidence available at that time, and identify the target audiences, and assess at that initial stage what the likely impact of the service change could be across the Protected Characteristic groupings and our tenth category of Social Inclusion. This ESHIA would set out intended actions to engage with the groupings, particularly those who are historically less likely to engage in public consultation e.g., young people, as otherwise we would not know their specific needs.

A second Stage One ESHIA would then be carried out after the consultation, to say what the feedback was, to set out changes proposed as a result of the feedback, and to say where responses were low and what the plans are to engage with groupings who did not really respond. This ESHIA would also draw more upon actions to review impacts in order to mitigate the negative and accentuate the positive.

Meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty through carrying out these ESHIAs is very much about using them as an opportunity to demonstrate ongoing engagement across groupings and to show we thus visibly are taking what is called due regard of the needs of people in protected characteristic groupings

If the screening indicates that there are likely to be significant negative impacts for groupings within the community, the service area would need to carry out a full report, or Stage Two assessment. This will enable more evidence to be collected that will help the service area to reach an informed opinion.

In practice, Stage Two or Full Screening Assessments have only been recommended twice since 2014, as the ongoing mitigation of negative equality impacts should serve to keep them below the threshold for triggering a Full Screening Assessment. The expectation is that Full Screening Assessments in regard to Health Impacts may occasionally need to be undertaken, but this would be very much the exception rather than the rule.

2. Council Wide and Service Area Policy and Practice on Equality, Social Inclusion and Health

This involves taking an equality and social inclusion approach in planning changes to services, policies, or procedures, including those that may be required by Government. The decisions that you make when you are planning a service change need to be recorded, to demonstrate that you have thought about the possible equality impacts on communities and to show openness and transparency in your decision-making processes.

This is where Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessments (ESHIA) come in. Where you carry out an ESHIA in your service area, this provides an opportunity to show:

- What evidence you have drawn upon to help you to recommend a strategy or policy or a course of action to Cabinet.
- What target groups and audiences you have worked with to date.
- What actions you will take in order to mitigate any likely negative impact upon a group or groupings, and enhance any positive effects for a group or groupings; and
- What actions you are planning to monitor and review the impact of your planned service change.

The formal template is there not only to help the service area but also to act as a stand-alone for a member of the public to read. The approach helps to identify whether or not any new or significant changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions, or projects, may have an adverse impact on a particular group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected.

There are nine Protected Characteristic groupings defined in the Equality Act 2010. The full list of groupings is: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or Belief; Sex; and Sexual Orientation.

There is also intersectionality between these. E.g., a young person with a disability would be in the groupings of Age and Disability, and if they described themselves as having a faith they would then also be in the grouping of Religion or Belief.

We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging, or delivering services.

For the individuals and groupings who may be affected, ask yourself what impact do you think is likely and what actions will you currently anticipate taking, to mitigate or enhance likely impact of the service change? If you are reducing a service, for example, there may be further use you could make of awareness raising through social media and other channels to reach more people who may be affected.

Social inclusion is then the wider additional category we use in Shropshire, in order to help us to go beyond the equality legislation in also considering impacts for individuals and households with regard to the circumstances in which they may find themselves across their life stages. This could be households on low incomes, or households facing challenges in accessing services, such as households in rural areas, and veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families, or people that we might consider to be vulnerable, such as young people leaving care or refugee families.

Please note that the armed forces are now a grouping to whom we are required to give due regard under new Armed Forces legislation, although in practice we have been doing so for several years now.

When you are not carrying out an ESHIA, you still need to demonstrate and record that you have considered equality in your decision-making processes. It is up to you

what format you choose.-You could use a checklist, an explanatory note, or a document setting out our expectations of standards of behavior, for contractors to read and sign. It may well not be something that is in the public domain like an ESHIA, but you should still be ready for it to be made available.

Both the approaches sit with a manager, and the manager must make the call, and record the decision made on behalf of the Council.

Carry out an ESHIA:

- If you are building or reconfiguring a building.
- If you are planning to reduce or remove a service.
- If you are consulting on a policy or a strategy.
- If you are bringing in a change to a process or procedure that involves other stakeholders and the wider community as well as particular groupings

Carry out an equality and social inclusion approach:

- If you are setting out how you expect a contractor to behave with regard to equality, where you are commissioning a service or product from them.
- If you are setting out the standards of behavior that we expect from people who work with vulnerable groupings, such as taxi drivers that we license.
- If you are planning consultation and engagement activity, where we need to collect equality data in ways that will be proportionate and non-intrusive as well as meaningful for the purposes of the consultation itself.
- If you are looking at services provided by others that help the community, where we need to demonstrate a community leadership approach

3. Council wide and service area policy and practice on health and wellbeing

This is a relatively new area to record within our overall assessments of impacts, for which we are asking service area leads to consider health and wellbeing impacts, much as they have been doing during 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, and to look at these in the context of direct and indirect impacts for individuals and for communities.

A better understanding across the Council of these impacts will also better enable the Public Health colleagues to prioritise activities to reduce health inequalities in ways that are evidence based and that link effectively with equality impact considerations and climate change mitigation.

Health in All Policies – Health Impact Assessment

Health in All Policies is an upstream approach for health and wellbeing promotion and prevention, and to reduce health inequalities. The Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the supporting mechanism

- Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the technical name for a process that considers the wider effects of local policies, strategies and initiatives and how they, in turn, may affect people's health and wellbeing.
- Health Impact Assessment is a means of assessing both the positive and negative health impacts of a policy. It is also a means of developing good evidence-based policy and strategy using a structured process to review the impact.
- A Health Impact Assessment seeks to determine how to maximise health benefits and reduce health inequalities. It identifies any unintended health consequences. These consequences may support policy and strategy or may lead to suggestions for improvements.
- An agreed framework will set out a clear pathway through which a policy or strategy can be assessed and impacts with outcomes identified. It also sets out the support mechanisms for maximising health benefits.

The embedding of a Health in All Policies approach will support Shropshire Council through evidence-based practice and a whole systems approach, in achieving our corporate and partnership strategic priorities. This will assist the Council and partners in promoting, enabling and sustaining the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities whilst reducing health inequalities.

Individuals

Will the proposal have a *direct impact* on health, mental health and wellbeing?

For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?

Will the proposal directly affect an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?

This could include the following: their ability to be physically active e.g., being able to use a cycle route; to access food more easily; to change lifestyle in ways that are of positive impact for their health.

An example of this could be that you may be involved in proposals for the establishment of safer walking and cycling routes (e.g., green highways), and changes to public transport that could encourage people away from car usage. and increase the number of journeys that they make on public transport, by foot or on bicycle or scooter. This could improve lives.

Will the proposal *indirectly impact* an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?

This could include the following: their ability to access local facilities e.g., to access food more easily, or to access a means of mobility to local services and amenities? (e.g. change to bus route)

Similarly to the above, an example of this could be that you may be involved in proposals for the establishment of safer walking and cycling routes (e.g. pedestrianisation of town centres), and changes to public transport that could encourage people away from car usage, and increase the number of journeys that they make on public transport, by foot or on bicycle or scooter. This could improve their health and well-being.

Communities

Will the proposal directly or indirectly affect the physical health, mental health, and wellbeing of the wider community?

A *direct impact* could include either the causing of ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation, or the promotion of better health.

An example of this could be that safer walking and cycling routes could help the wider community, as more people across groupings may be encouraged to walk more, and as there will be reductions in emission leading to better air quality.

An *indirect impact* could mean that a service change could indirectly affect living and working conditions and therefore the health and well-being of the wider community.

An example of this could be an increase in the availability of warm homes would improve the quality of the housing offer in Shropshire and reduce the costs for households of having a warm home in Shropshire. Often a health promoting approach also supports our agenda to reduce the level of Carbon Dioxide emissions and to reduce the impact of climate change.

Please record whether at this stage you consider the proposed service change to have a direct or an indirect impact upon communities.

Demand

Will there be a change in demand for or access to health, local authority and social care services?

For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health and Social Services?

An example of this could be a new housing development in an area would affect demand for primary care and local authority facilities and services in that location and surrounding areas. If the housing development does not factor in consideration of availability of green space and safety within the public realm, further down the line there could be an increased demand upon health and social care services as a result

of the lack of opportunities for physical recreation, and reluctance of some groupings to venture outside if they do not perceive it to be safe.

***For further advice: please contact
Lois Dale via email lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk***









Charging for Garden Waste and HRC booking system initial ESHIA

Final Audit Report

2024-04-10

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