



LEAD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND INCLUSION, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY

DECISIONS to be made by the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability,
Councillor Bob Standley

MONDAY, 2 JUNE 2025 AT 10.00 AM

COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, LEWES

AGENDA

1. Decisions made by the Lead Cabinet Member on 29 April 2025 (*Pages 3 - 4*)
2. Disclosures of interests
Disclosure by all Members present of personal interests in matters on the Agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Member regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct
3. Urgent items
Notification of items which the Lead Member considers to be urgent and propose to take at the end of the appropriate part of the Agenda
4. Response to petition regarding Home to School Transport provision (*Pages 5 - 8*)
Report by Director of Children's Services
5. Grove Park School (*Pages 9 - 34*)
Report by the Director of Children's Services
6. Any urgent items previously notified under agenda item 3

PHILIP BAKER
Deputy Chief Executive
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22 May 2025

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NOTE: *As part of the County Council's drive to increase accessibility to its public meetings, this meeting will be broadcast live on its website. The live broadcast is accessible at:*
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LEAD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND INCLUSION, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability, Councillor Bob Standley, on 29 April 2025 at Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Councillors Cross and Field spoke on item 6 (see minute 58)

54. DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 25 MARCH 2025

54.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2025.

55. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

55.1 There were none.

56. URGENT ITEMS

56.1 There were none.

57. REPORTS

57.1 Reports referred to in the minutes below are contained in the minute book.

58. POST-16 TRANSPORT POLICY STATEMENT 2025-2026

58.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services.

DECISIONS

58.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to approve the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement ("the Statement") for the 2025-26 academic year as set out in Appendix 3 of the report.

REASONS

58.3 The County Council has carried out its legal duty to consult on the Statement.

58.4 After publication, the County Council may amend the Statement to update prices or other information as considered necessary.

Report to:	Lead Member for Education, Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
Date of meeting:	2 June 2025
By:	Director of Children's Services
Title:	Response to petition regarding Home to School Transport provision
Purpose:	To consider a petition regarding the Home to School Transport provision of bus passes for children within the 3-mile radius of Chailey School

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to advise petitioners that:

- (1) The home to school transport policy (HTST policy) has not changed, and is being consistently applied to families across the county; and**
- (2) Parents of children who are not entitled to transport assistance can appeal via a two-stage process; and**
- (3) The possibility of combining current services into a supported bus service available to fare-paying passengers is being explored. Should this be successful, children who do not qualify for transport assistance would be able to travel by bus on payment of the appropriate fare.**

1 Background

1.1 At the County Council meeting on 20 March 2025, a petition was presented to the Chairman by Councillor Milligan calling on the County Council 'for a bigger school bus to transport the rural children Barcombe safely to and from Chailey Secondary School'.

1.2 Standing Orders provide that where the Chair considers it appropriate, petitions are considered by the relevant Committee or Lead Member and a spokesperson for the petitioners is invited to address the Committee. The Chairman has referred this petition to the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability. A copy of the petition is available in the Members' Room.

1.3 East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) [home to school transport \(HTST\) policy](#) ('the policy') follows statutory requirements and the guidance set out in the Department of Education (DfE) statutory guidance entitled 'Travel to school for children of compulsory school age', which was published in January 2024.

1.4 The HTST policy sets out the eligibility criteria for assistance with transport for children of compulsory school age. Children only qualify for assistance if they are attending the nearest suitable or 'designated' school.

1.5 Children qualify for transport where the only available (or all available) walking routes to school are in excess of 3 miles (2 miles for children aged under 8). These distances are set out in Section 508B of the Education Act 1996. and are referred to as the 'statutory walking distance'.

1.6 A route is considered 'available' if it can be walked in reasonable safety by a child accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult.

1.7 The HTST policy sets out that eligibility for assistance may change as a result of improvements in Geographic Information System (GIS) accuracy and/or re-assessment of route availability. It also sets out a two stage appeal process which can be accessed here: [SEND transport appeals | East Sussex County Council](#)

2 Supporting information

2.1 The HTST policy aligns with the Education Act 1996 and has remained substantially unchanged. ESCC policy has been to provide transport only to children whose available walking routes to their local school are further than the statutory walking distance of three miles, unless they are medically unfit to walk to school or qualify under extended rights for low-income families.

2.2 Where walking routes have been assessed as unavailable, transport assistance is supplied. Transport assistance is withdrawn if alternative routes are found to be available and within the statutory walking distance. In this case a route safety report was requested following an application for transport from a family living on the route, as the previous assessment was out of date.

2.3 Road routes are assessed by the ESCC Road Safety team in accordance with the '[Assessment of Walked Routes to Schools Guidelines](#)', published by Road Safety GB.

2.4 Off-road Public Rights of Way (PROWs) have been included in the route assessment since 2017. In this case there is a PROW available, which avoids the use of a road (Markstakes Lane) which has been assessed as unavailable.

Villages listed in the petition

2.5 The petition lists a number of villages as potentially affected by the policy. A high level overview for children living in these villages and attending Chailey School is set out below, applying the criteria set out in the HTST policy.

- Chailey: some children are entitled to transport, and others are not, depending on the route in question;
- Spithurst: currently no children are entitled to transport. Should any apply, they may be entitled depending on the route in question;
- Barcombe: some children are entitled to transport, and others are not, depending on the route in question;
- East Chiltington: children have no statutory entitlement to transport as the route is available and shorter than three miles;
- Streat: children typically have no statutory entitlement to transport to Chailey as it is not the nearest available school. Any children who are not able to secure a place at the local school would be assessed on a case-by-case basis;
- Plumpton Green; most children have no statutory entitlement to transport as the route is available and shorter than three miles. A few homes are outside this limit;
- Wivelsfield Green: all children have an entitlement to transport as the route is unsafe and is in any case longer than three miles in most cases.

2.6 Routes may be re-assessed at any time and it is possible that the above situation may change, should routes become available as a result of improvements to infrastructure and/or measuring systems.

Expectation that children be accompanied

2.7 The HTST policy mirrors the DfE guidance, which sets out that 'Where the local authority determines that a child would be able to walk if they were accompanied, the general expectation is that the parent will accompany them or make other suitable arrangements for their journey to and from school'.

2.8 The HTST policy sets out that parental work commitments will not normally be considered to be a good reason for being unable to accompany their child on the home to school journey. This applies to many parents and in most cases, it is reasonable to expect parents to make suitable arrangements to fulfil both working and childcare responsibilities.

2.9 The petition sets out that there are four families with six children affected in this case. ESCC considers it reasonable to expect these families to work together to ensure that the children are able to make the home to school journey in reasonable safety.

Provision of a bigger bus

2.10 The possibility of combining current services into a supported bus service available to fare-paying passengers is being explored. Should this be successful, children who do not qualify for transport assistance would be able to travel by bus on payment of the appropriate fare and petitioners will be notified.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The HTST policy has not changed and is being consistently applied to families across the county. Parents whose children are not entitled to transport assistance are able to appeal via a two-stage process. Whilst it is not recommended that any changes to the policy are made, the possibility of combining current services into a supported bus service available to fare-paying passengers is being explored.

CAROLYN FAIR Director of Children's Services

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Matthew Milligan

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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Report to: Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability

Date: 2 June 2025

By: Director of Children's Services

Title of report: Grove Park School

Purpose of report: To determine the statutory proposal to change the designation of Grove Park School.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Lead Member is recommended to approve a proposal to change the type of need catered for by Grove Park School with effect from 1 September 2025 to include Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Severe Learning Difficulties in addition to its current designation of Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties.

1. Background

1.1 Grove Park School in Crowborough is a Local Authority maintained special school for pupils aged 4-19. The school currently has a formal designation of Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD).

1.2 The overall numbers of children and young people aged 4 to 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has been rising steeply. In 2023/24, the number of school aged children (aged 4-18) in East Sussex with an EHCP stood at 3,989. Over the next 4 years, the Local Authority forecasts that overall numbers of school aged children with EHCPs will grow, by around 34%, to stand at approximately 5,400.

1.3 The number of children identified as autistic is growing year on year and is translating into rapidly increasing numbers of EHCPs issued with a primary need classification of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). There are no signs of this trend reducing, and autism diagnoses will likely be the biggest driver of rising EHCP numbers in the coming years. Linked to the rise in pupils with EHCPs, pupil numbers have increased significantly at Grove Park School. At the request of the Local Authority, the school has taken pupils with a broader range of need than PMLD, including pupils with a classification of ASD and pupils with a classification of Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD).

1.4 To more accurately reflect the needs of the school's cohort of pupils, the Interim Executive Board (IEB) of Grove Park School is proposing to change the type of need catered for by the school to include ASD and SLD in addition to its current designation of PMLD from 1 September 2025. This means that any new admissions to the school will be considered against this designation, and the school will be able to plan its curriculum and support to ensure it meets the needs of these pupils. There will be no impact on the placement of current pupils at the school, regardless of their need they will continue at the school.

2. Supporting Information

Consultation

2.1 The IEB consulted between 17 January 2025 and 14 February 2025 on a proposal to change the type of need catered for by the school with effect from 1 September 2025. The IEB consulted with the school community, school staff, other local special schools, trade unions, the local authority, local county councillors and neighbouring local authorities that commission places at the school.

2.2 By the close of the consultation period 1 response had been received. The respondent was unsure if they supported the proposal. Their main concern related to addressing existing issues within the school before pursuing change or welcoming additional students; that the current environment may not appeal to prospective families and that the focus should remain on ensuring a positive experience for the students who are already part of the school community.

Proposal

2.3 In accordance with section 19(3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006), as amended by the Education Act 2011 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, the IEB published a statutory proposal on Grove Park School's website on Friday 28 March 2025. A brief notice containing details of where interested parties could find the full proposal and how they could comment on, or object to, the proposal, was published in the Sussex Express and posted on the gates to the school's premises.

2.4 Publication of the notice was followed by a four-week period of representation, when comments or objections could be made to the Local Authority. By the end of the representation period on 24 April 2025, no comments or objections had been received.

Equality Impact Assessment

2.5 The Lead Member is required to have due regard to the duties set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty) in determining the proposal. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken to identify any equality implications of the proposal and to address any concerns through appropriate mitigations. No potential equality barriers were identified by stakeholders during either the initial consultation or the subsequent representation period following the publication of the statutory proposal. The EqIA can be found in Appendix 1 to this report.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

3.1 Over a number of years Grove Park School has accepted pupils with a broader range of need than PMLD, including pupils with ASD and SLD. The IEB's proposal to change the type of need catered for by Grove Park School to include ASD and SLD in addition to its current designation of PMLD with effect from 1 September 2025 will more accurately reflect the needs of the school's cohort of pupils. This means that any new admissions to the school would be considered against this new designation, and the school would be able to plan its curriculum and support to ensure it meets the needs of these pupils. There would be no impact on the placement of current pupils at the school, regardless of their need they would continue at the school.

3.2 In accordance with the EIA 2006 and the 2013 Regulations, the Local Authority, as the responsible body, is required to determine the statutory proposal within 2 months of the end of the representation period. The Regulations set out the options the decision-maker must consider when making a decision, or the proposal must be referred to the Schools Adjudicator. The decision-maker can:

- reject the proposal
- approve the proposal without modification
- approve the proposal with modifications, or
- approve the proposal, with or without modification, subject to certain conditions being met.

3.3 In this instance, the Lead Member is recommended to approve without modification the change to Grove Park School's designation with effect from 1 September 2025.

CAROLYN FAIR Director of Children's Services

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LOCAL MEMBERS
Councillor Johanna Howell
Councillor Philip Lunn

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013
[Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

Equality Impact Analysis (EqIA) (or Equality Impact Assessment) aims to make services and public policy better for all service-users and staff and supports value for money by getting council services right first time.

We use EqIAs to enable us to consider all relevant information from an Equality requirements perspective when procuring or restructuring a service or introducing a new policy or strategy. This analysis of impacts is then reflected in the relevant action plan to get the best outcomes for the Council, its staff and service-users¹.

EqIAs are used to analyse and assess how the Council’s work might impact differently on different groups of people². EqIAs help the Council to make good decisions for its service-users, staff and residents and provide evidence that those decision conform with the Council’s obligations under the Equality Act 2010³.

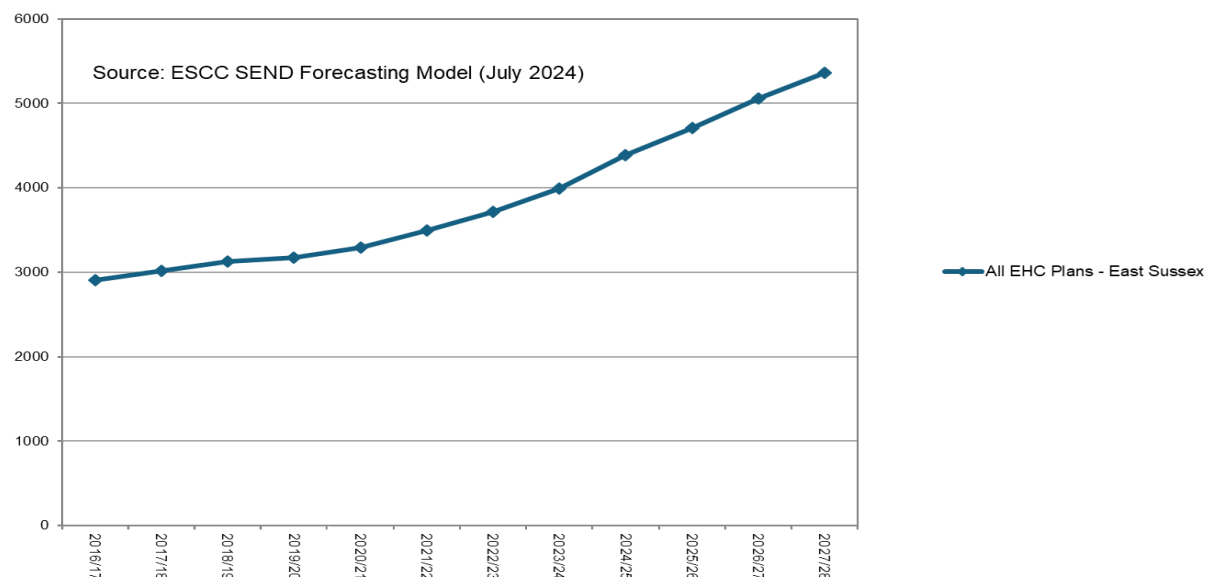
Title of Project/Service/Policy⁴	Proposed change to the designation of Grove Park School
Team/Department⁵	Education Division
Directorate	Children’s Services
Provide a comprehensive description of your Project (Service/Policy, etc.) including its Purpose and Scope⁶	Background Grove Park School in Crowborough, is a Local Authority maintained special school for pupils aged 4-19. The school is in the process of converting to an academy. Grove Park School currently comprises three phases: primary, secondary and sixth form, located on separate sites in Crowborough. The primary phase (4-11) is based at Church Road, the secondary phase (11-16) is co-located on the Beacon Academy secondary site in Beeches Road and the sixth form (post-16) is co-located with Beacon Academy’s sixth form at Green Lane. The school’s provision meets the needs of learners with complex needs including those with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). At the January 2025 School Census, the school had 143 pupils on roll. The local authority has a statutory duty to identify, assess and provide for children and young people with special educational needs. An assessment may lead to the issuing of an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) for a child. An EHCP sets out the additional support a child or young person needs and the type of school (mainstream or special) or other provision they will attend in order to meet their needs. The overall numbers of children and young people aged 4 to 25 with an EHCP in East Sussex has been rising steeply. In 2023/24, the number of school aged children (aged 4-18) in East Sussex with an EHCP stood at

3,989. Over the next four years, the local authority forecasts that overall numbers of school aged children with EHCPs will grow, by around 34%, to stand at approximately 5,400.

Table 1: Overall numbers of school aged children with EHCPs

Academic year	EHCPs
2016/17	2909
2017/18	3022
2018/19	3126
2019/20	3170
2020/21	3297
2021/22	3494
2022/23	3713
2023/24	3989
2024/25	4385
2025/26	4713
2026/27	5059
2027/28	5360

Source: ESCC SEND Forecasting Model (July 2024)



The number of children and young people identified as autistic is growing year on year and is translating into rapidly increasing numbers of EHCPs issued with a primary need classification of 'Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)'. There are no signs of this trend reducing, and autism diagnoses look like being the biggest driver of rising EHCP numbers in the coming years.

Linked to the rise in pupils with EHCPs, pupil numbers have increased significantly at Grove Park School. At the request of the local authority, the school has taken pupils with a broader range of need than PMLD, including pupils with ASD and SLD. As a result, pupil numbers at the school have grown from 100 in 2012/13 to 133 in 2022/23 and 143 in 2024/25, an overall increase of 43%. As the only special school in the north of the county, there will continue to be significant pressure on places at the school for PMLD places as well as the other needs the school caters for, including ASD and SLD.

Grove Park School currently has a formal designation of PMLD. Over a number of years, the school has accepted pupils with a broader range of need including pupils with ASD and SLD. To more accurately reflect the needs of the school's cohort of pupils, the Interim Executive Board (IEB) is proposing to change the type of need catered for by the school to include ASD and SLD in addition to its current designation of PMLD with effect from 1 September 2025. This means that any new admissions to the school will be considered against this designation, and the school will be able to plan its curriculum and support to ensure it meets the needs of these pupils.

Who is affected by the Proposal?

Children and their families

Table 2 shows the number of pupils on roll at Grove Park School at the January 2025 school census compared to special schools in Wealden and East Sussex as a whole.

There will be no impact on the placement of current pupils at the school as a result of the proposal. Regardless of their need, current pupils will continue at the school.

Table 2: Pupils on roll in special schools, January 2025

School	Primary							Secondary								Total
	Year							Year								
	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Grove Park School	10	11	7	11	9	6	5	8	16	12	14	14	9	6	5	143
Special schools in Wealden	10	11	7	14	23	19	19	32	37	33	54	59	9	6	5	338
Special schools in East Sussex (exc. PRU)	78	83	76	75	97	92	91	163	176	177	165	163	40	30	22	1,528

Source: January 2025 school census

At the January 2025 school census there were 50 female and 93 male children on roll at Grove Park School as set out in Table 3.

Table 3: Gender of children attending special schools, January 2025

School type	Gender	Primary	Secondary	Total	%
Grove Park School	Female	14	36	50	35.0%
	Male	45	48	93	65.0%
Special schools in Wealden	Female	25	57	82	24.3%
	Male	78	178	256	75.7%
Special schools in East Sussex (exc. PRU)	Female	151	245	396	26.0%
	Male	441	692	1,132	74.0%

Source: January 2025 school census

The data above shows that in January 2025 females attending Grove Park School were significantly under-represented compared to males who are over-represented. This is in line with the picture in special schools in Wealden and in East Sussex as a whole.

The local authority does not believe that any one gender would be more affected by the proposal than the other as Grove Park School is co-educational.

At the January 2025 school census, the number of minority ethnic children on roll in special schools was as follows:

Table 3: Minority ethnic children in special schools

School type	Primary	Secondary	Total	%
Grove Park School	13	16	29	20.3%
Special schools in Wealden	18	24	42	12.4%
Special schools in East Sussex (exc. PRU)	96	125	221	14.5%

Source: January 2024 school census

The data above shows that minority ethnic children at Grove Park School are over-represented in comparison to the Wealden and East Sussex averages. The local authority does not believe that minority ethnic children would be more affected by the proposal than those in the general population who do not share that protected characteristic as the proposal would benefit all children attending the school.

SEN Pupils including those with an EHCP

As Grove Park School is a special school, all pupils on roll (100%) have an EHCP.

In 2023/24, there were 1,873 East Sussex resident children and young people on roll in special schools. 1,645 were in schools in East Sussex and 228 were in schools in other authorities. 1,453 were in maintained and academy provision and 420 were in non-maintained independent special schools. A further 233 East Sussex resident children and young people were in specialist facilities in mainstream schools.

The table below shows that since 2020/21, the biggest need has been for places in maintained special schools and academies followed by funded places in mainstream schools.

Key to table:

Band A: Mainstream School and Further Education Colleges (with a Non-Funded Plan)

Band B: Mainstream School and Further Education Colleges (with a Funded Plan)

Band C: Mainstream School Units and Special Facilities

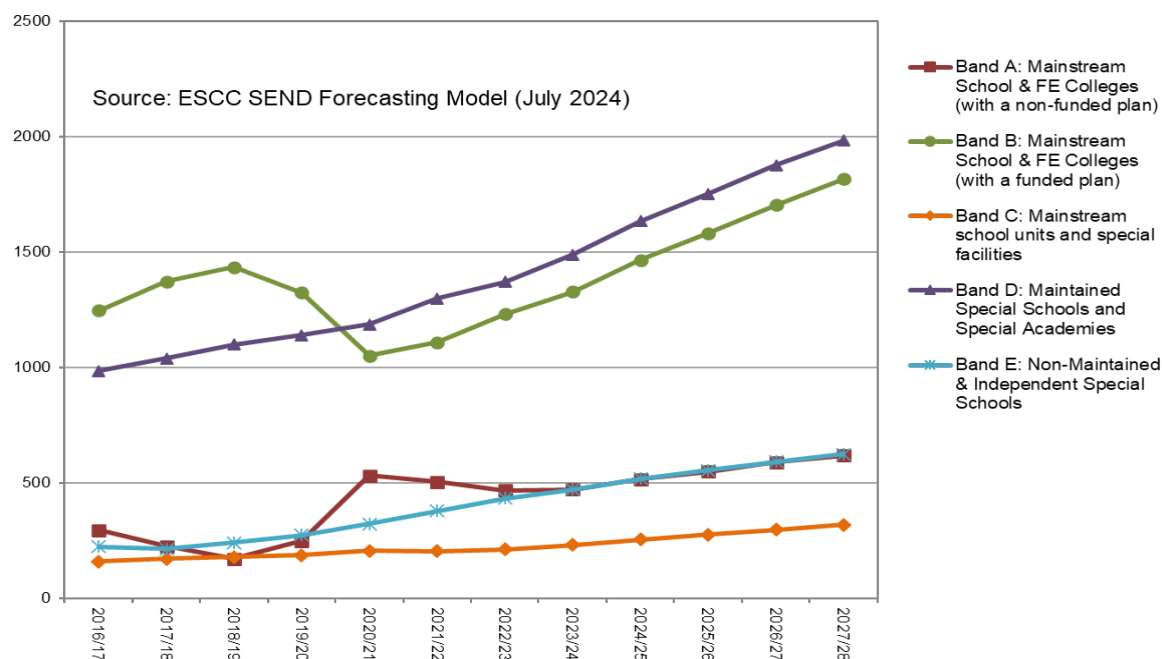
Band D: Maintained Special Schools and Special Academies

Band E: Non-Maintained and Independent Special Schools

EHCPs by Type of Provision Needed

Need	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23	2023/ 24	2024/ 25	2025/ 26	2026/ 27	2027/ 28
Band A	294	226	171	248	532	505	468	472	515	550	589	619
Band B	1246	1373	1435	1323	1051	1108	1230	1327	1465	1581	1704	1816
Band C	160	170	179	187	206	204	211	230	254	276	297	318
Band D	985	1039	1100	1139	1186	1298	1371	1488	1633	1753	1877	1983
Band E	224	214	241	273	322	379	433	472	517	554	591	624
Total	2909	3022	3126	3170	3297	3494	3713	3989	4385	4713	5059	5360

Source: ESCC SEND Forecasting Model (July 2024)



The numbers assessed as requiring a special school place have risen by approximately 550 (39%) over the past four years. The number assessed as requiring maintained/academy special school places has risen by

approximately 350 (31%). The number of pupils requiring non-maintained independent special school places has risen by approximately 200, a 73% increase.

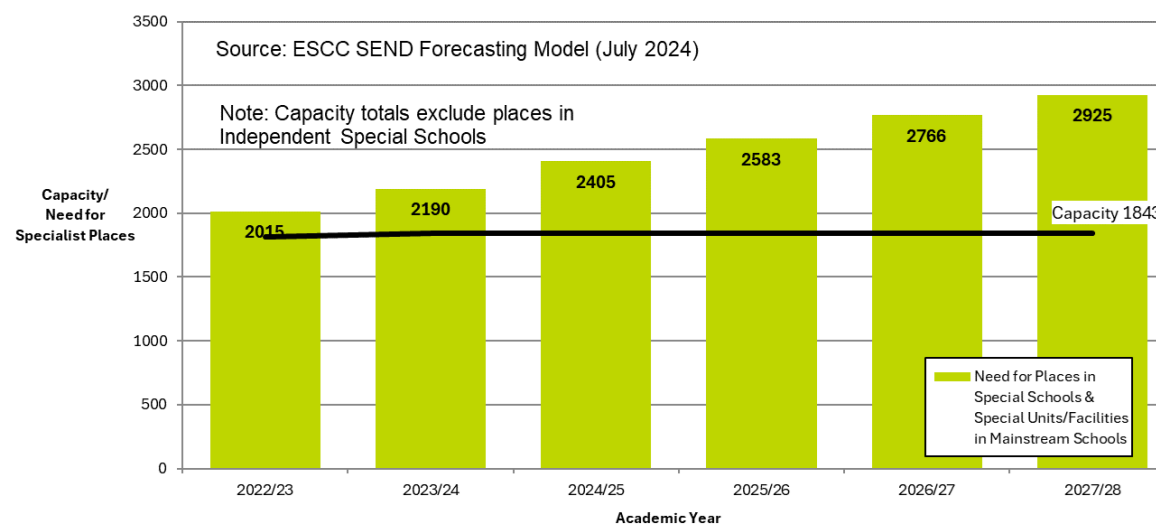
The following table compares the combined capacity of places in special schools and specialist facilities in mainstream schools with the current and forecast need for such places. The local authority does not have data on places in independent special schools. In reality, most of the current shortfall in places shown in the table is being met by independent special school placements.

Need for Special School Places from 2022/23 to 2027/28

	Capacity of places 2023/24*	Need 2022/23	Need 2023/24	Need 2024/25	Need 2025/26	Need 2026/27	Need 2027/28
Number of EHCPs	1843	2015	2190	2405	2583	2766	2925

Source: ESCC SEND Forecasting Model (July 2024)

*Capacity totals exclude places in Independent Special Schools



The local authority has to use high cost independent and non-maintained special school provision to meet need for specialist placements. This is because there is insufficient capacity in state run provision. If current placement trends continue over the period to 2027/28, the effective shortfall in state run specialist provision is forecast to increase by over 700 places.

Figures for 2023/24 show that 2.2% of all pupils in state-funded schools in East Sussex are in special schools. This compares to the national average for England of 1.9%. (Schools, Pupils and Their Characteristics, Department for Education, 2024).

Benefits of the proposal

The IEB believes that changing the designation of the school to include ASD and SLD in addition to its current designation of PMLD with effect from 1 September 2025 will more accurately reflect the needs of the school's cohort of pupils. This will mean that the school will be able to plan its curriculum and support to ensure it meets the needs of these pupils.

Consultation

The IEB undertook a consultation on the proposal between 17 January 2025 and 14 February 2025. By the end of the consultation period, 1 response had been received. The respondent was unsure if they supported the proposal. Their main concern related to addressing existing issues within the school before pursuing expansion or welcoming additional students; that the current environment may not appeal to prospective families and that the focus should remain on ensuring a positive experience for the students who are already part of the school community.

In accordance with section 19(3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006), as amended by the Education Act 2011 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, the IEB published a statutory proposal on Grove Park School's website on Friday 28 March 2025. A brief notice containing details of where interested parties could find the full proposal and how they could comment on, or object to, the proposal, was published in the Sussex Express and posted on the gates to the school's premises.

Publication of the notice was followed by a four-week period of representation, when comments or objections could be made to the Local Authority. By the end of the representation period on 24 April 2025, no comments or objections had been received.

Initial assessment of whether your project requires an EqlA

When answering these questions, please keep in mind all legally protected equality characteristics (sex/gender, gender reassignment, religion or belief, age, disability, ethnicity/race, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity) of the people actually or potentially receiving and benefiting from the services or the policy.

In particular consider whether there are any potential equality related barriers that people may experience when getting to know about, accessing or receiving the service or the policy to be introduced or changed.

Discuss the results of your Equality assessment with the Equality Lead for your department and agree whether improvements or changes need to be made to any aspect of your Project.

	Question	Yes	No	Don't Know
1	Is there evidence of different needs, experiences, issues or priorities on the basis of the equality characteristics (listed below) in relation to the service or policy/strategy area?	X		
2	Are there any proposed changes in the service/policy that may affect how services are run and/or used or the ways the policy will impact different groups?	X		
3	Are there any proposed changes in the service/policy that may affect service-users/staff/residents directly?	X		
4	Is there potential for, or evidence that, the service/policy may adversely affect inclusiveness or harm good relations between different groups of people?		X	
5	Is there any potential for, or evidence that any part of the service/aspects of the policy could have a direct or indirect discriminatory effect on service-users/staff/residents ?		X	
6	Is there any stakeholder (Council staff, residents, trade unions, service-users, VCSE organisations) concerned about actual, potential, or perceived discrimination/unequal treatment in the service or the Policy on the basis of the equality characteristics set out above that may lead to taking legal action against the Council?		X	
7	Is there any evidence or indication of higher or lower uptake of the service by, or the impact of the policy on, people who share the equality characteristics set out above?	X		

If you have answered “YES” or “DON’T KNOW” to any of the questions above, then the completion of an EqlA is necessary.

The need for an EqlA will depend on:

- How many questions you have answered “yes”, or “don’t know” to;
- The likelihood of the Council facing legal action in relation to the effects of service or the policy may have on groups sharing protected characteristics; and
- The likelihood of adverse publicity and reputational damage for the Council.

Low risk YES	Medium risk	High risk
The proposal will more accurately reflect the needs of the school’s cohort of pupils. No group will be disadvantaged by the proposal. The proposal will allow children and young people to be educated at a school that meets their needs within a reasonable distance from their homes and the school will be able to plan its curriculum and support to ensure it meets the needs of these pupils.		

1. Update on previous EqlAs and outcomes of previous actions (if applicable)⁷

What actions did you plan last time? (List them from the previous EqlA)	What improved as a result? What outcomes have these actions achieved?	What <u>further</u> actions do you need to take? (add these to the Action Plan below)
Not applicable		

2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions

Consider the actual or potential impact of your project (service, or policy) against each of the equality characteristics.

Protected characteristics groups under the Equality Act 2010	What do you know ⁸ ? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you ⁹ ? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean ¹⁰ ? Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	What can you do ¹¹ ? All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
Age ¹²	Across Grove Park School education provision is currently provided for pupils aged 4-19.	No specific feedback was given.	No age-related barriers were identified by respondents.	The proposal will more accurately reflect the needs of the school's cohort of pupils and enable the school to plan its curriculum and support to ensure it meets the needs of these pupils.
Disability ¹³	Grove Park School is a special school. All pupils attending the school (100%) have an EHCP.	No specific feedback was given.	Not applicable	The proposal will more accurately reflect the needs of the school's cohort of pupils and enable the school to plan its curriculum and support to ensure it meets the needs of these pupils.
Gender reassignment ¹⁴	The local authority does not believe that children and young people sharing this characteristic would be more affected by the	Not applicable	Not applicable	No specific action identified at this stage.

Protected characteristics groups under the Equality Act 2010	What do you know⁸? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you⁹? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean¹⁰? Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	What can you do¹¹? All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
	proposal than children and young people who do not share this characteristic			
Pregnancy and maternity¹⁵	The local authority does not believe that people sharing this characteristic would be more affected by the proposal than people who do not share this characteristic.	Not applicable	Not applicable	No specific action identified at this stage.
Race (ethnicity)¹⁶ Including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers	Data on the number of ethnic minority children attending Grove Park School is noted above.	No specific feedback was given.	No impacts relating to race was identified by respondents	The local authority does not believe that people sharing this characteristic would be more affected by the proposal than people who do not share this characteristic.
Religion or belief¹⁷	Grove Park School is a community school. There would be no change to the school's category as a result of the proposal.	No specific feedback was given.	No impacts relating to religion or belief were identified by respondents	The local authority does not believe that people sharing this characteristic would be more affected by the proposal than people

Protected characteristics groups under the Equality Act 2010	What do you know⁸? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you⁹? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean¹⁰? Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	What can you do¹¹? All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
				who do not share this characteristic.
Sex¹⁸	Data on the prevalence of male to female pupils at Grove Park School is noted above.	No specific feedback was given.	No barriers relating to sex were identified by respondents.	The local authority does not believe that people sharing this characteristic would be more affected by the proposal than people who do not share this characteristic.
Sexual orientation¹⁹	The local authority does not believe that people sharing this characteristic would be more affected by the proposal than people who do not share this characteristic.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	No specific action identified at this stage.
Marriage and civil partnership²⁰	Not applicable to this proposal.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Armed Forces²¹	Not applicable to this proposal.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Impacts on community cohesion²²	The local authority is responsible for promoting a good supply of school places that	No specific feedback was given relating to the wider community.	Not applicable.	The proposal would bring a number of benefits to the school community, including the school

Protected characteristics groups under the Equality Act 2010	What do you know⁸? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you⁹? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean¹⁰? Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	What can you do¹¹? All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
	offer high quality education through planning, organising, and commissioning places in a way that raises attainment, increases diversity, encourages collaboration between schools and promotes community cohesion.			being able to plan its curriculum and support to ensure it meets the needs of the pupils it serves.

Additional categories

(identified locally as potentially causing / worsening inequality)

Characteristic	What do you know²³?	What do people tell you²⁴?	What does this mean²⁵?	What can you do²⁶?
Rurality²⁷	Not applicable to this proposal.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Carers	Not applicable to this proposal.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Other groups that may be differently affected (including but not only: homeless people, substance users, care leavers - see end note)²⁸	Not applicable to this proposal.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations²⁹ - include assessment of cumulative impacts (where a change in one service/policy/project may have an impact on another)

The IEB's proposal to change the designation of Grove Park School from its current designation will more accurately reflect the needs of pupils at the school and is supported by the local authority. This means that any new admissions to the school would be considered against this new designation, and the school would be able to plan its curriculum and support to ensure it meets the needs of these pupils.

There will be no impact on the placement of current pupils at the school as a result of the proposal. Regardless of their need, current pupils will continue at the school.

3. List detailed data and/or community feedback that informed your EqIA

Source and type of data (e.g. research, or direct engagement (interviews), responses to questionnaires, etc.)	Date	Gaps in data	Actions to fill these gaps: who else do you need to engage with? (add these to the Action Plan below, with a timeframe)
The IEB consulted with key stakeholders and interested parties on the proposals.	17 January to 14 February 2025	Not applicable	Not applicable
The IEB published a statutory proposal providing key stakeholders and interested parties with the opportunity to make further representation on the proposals.	28 March to 24 April 2025	Not applicable	Not applicable

4. Prioritised Action Plan³⁰

NB: These actions must now be transferred to service or business plans and monitored to ensure they achieve the outcomes identified.

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Timeframe
In the event that the decision is taken to change the designation of Grove Park School the proposal would be implemented by 1 September 2025.				

(Add more rows as needed)

EqlA sign-off: (for the EqlA to be final an email must be sent from the relevant people agreeing it, or this section must be signed)

Staff member competing Equality Impact Analysis: Catherine Denyer Date: 08/05/2025

Directorate Management Team rep or Head of Service: Jessica Stubbings Date: 15/05/2025

Equality lead: Atiya Gourlay Date: 14/05/2025

Guidance end-notes

¹ The following principles, drawn from case law, explain what we must do to fulfil our duties under the Equality Act:

- **Knowledge:** everyone working for the Council must be aware of the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and ensure they comply with them appropriately in their daily work.
- **Timeliness:** the duty applies at the time of considering policy options and/or before a final decision is taken - not afterwards.
- **Real Consideration:** the duty must be an integral, rigorous part of your decision-making process and influence the process.
- **Sufficient Information:** you must assess what information you have and what is further needed to give proper consideration.
- **No delegation:** the Council is responsible for ensuring that any contracted services, which are provided on its behalf need also to comply with the same legal obligations under the Equality Act of 2010. You need, therefore, to ensure that the relevant contracts make these obligations clear to the supplier. It is a duty that cannot be delegated.
- **Review:** the equality duty is a continuing duty. It applies when a policy or service is developed/agreed, and when it is implemented and reviewed.
- **Proper Record Keeping:** to prove that the Council has fulfilled its legal obligations under the Equality Act you must keep records of the process you follow and the impacts identified.

NB: Filling out this EqlA in itself does not meet the requirements of the Council's equality duty. All the requirements above must be fulfilled, or the EqlA (and any decision based on it) may be open to challenge. An EqlA therefore can provide evidence that the Council has taken practical steps comply with its equality duty and provide a record that to demonstrate that it has done so.

² Our duties in the Equality Act 2010

As a public sector organisation, we have a legal duty (under the Equality Act 2010) to show that we have identified and considered the actual and potential impact of our activities on people who share any of the legally 'protected characteristics' (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership).

This applies to policies, services (including commissioned services), and our employees. The level of detail of this consideration will depend on the nature of your project, who it might affect, those groups' vulnerability, and the seriousness of any potential impacts it might have. We use this EqlA template to gather information and assess the impact of our project in these areas.

The following are the duties in the Act. You must give 'due regard' (pay conscious attention) to the need to:

- **avoid, reduce, minimise or eliminate any negative impact** (if you identify unlawful discrimination, including victimisation and harassment, you must stop the action and take advice immediately).
- **promote equality of opportunity.** This means the need to:

-
- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by equality groups
 - Take steps to meet the needs of equality groups
 - Encourage equality groups to participate in public life or any other activity where participation is disproportionately low
 - Consider if there is a need to treat disabled people differently, including more favourable treatment where necessary
 - **foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.** This means:
 - Tackle prejudice
 - Promote understanding

³ **EqlAs are always proportionate to:**

- The nature of the service, or scope of the policy/strategy
- The resources involved
- The number of people affected
- The size of the likely impact
- The vulnerability of the people affected

The greater the potential adverse impact of the proposed service or policy on a protected group (e.g. disabled people), the more thorough and demanding our process must be so that we comply with the Equality Act of 2010.

⁴ **Title of EqlA:** This should clearly explain what service / policy / strategy / change you are assessing

⁵ **Team/Department:** Main team responsible for the policy, practice, service or function being assessed

⁶ **Focus of EqlA:** A member of the public should have a good understanding of the policy or service and any proposals after reading this section. Please use plain English and write any acronyms in full first time - eg: 'Equality Impact Analysis (EqlA)'

This section should explain what you are assessing:

- What are the main aims or purpose of the service, policy, strategy, practice, or function?
- Who implements, carries out or delivers the service, policy, strategy, practice, or function? Please state where this is more than one person/team/body and where other organisations deliver under procurement or partnership arrangements.
- How does it fit with other services?

-
- Who is affected by the service, policy, strategy, practice, or function, or by how it is delivered? Who are the external and internal service-users, groups, or communities?
 - What outcomes do you want to achieve, why and for whom? Eg: what do you want to provide, what changes, or improvements, are required and what should the benefits be?
 - What do existing or previous reviews of the service, policy, strategy, practice, or function indicate to you?
 - What is the reason for the proposal, or change (financial, service scope, legal requirements, etc)? The Equality Act requires us to make these clear.

⁷ **Previous actions:** If there is no previous EqlA, or this assessment is for a new service, then simply write ‘not applicable’.

⁸ **Data:** Make sure you have enough information to inform your EqlA.

- What data relevant to the impact on protected groups of the policy/decision/service is available?⁸
- What further evidence is needed and how can you get it? (Eg: further research or engagement with the affected groups).
- What do you already know about needs, access and outcomes? Focus on each of the protected characteristics in turn. Eg: who uses the service? Who doesn’t and why? Are there differences in outcomes? Why?
- Have there been any important demographic changes or trends locally? What might they mean for the service or function?
- Does data/monitoring show that any policies or practices create particular problems or difficulties for any groups?
- Do any equality objectives already exist? What is current performance like against them?
- Is the service having a positive or negative effect on particular people in the community, or particular groups / communities?

⁹ **Engagement:** You must engage appropriately with those likely to be affected to fulfil the Council’s duties under the Equality Act.

- What do people tell you about the services, the policy or the strategy?
- Are there patterns or differences in what people from different groups tell you?
- What information or data will you need from communities?
- How should people be consulted? Consider:
 - (a) consult when proposals are still at a formative stage;
 - (b) explain what is proposed and why, to allow intelligent consideration and response;
 - (c) allow enough time for consultation;
 - (d) make sure what people tell you is properly considered in the final decision.
- Try to consult in ways that ensure all different perspectives can be captured and considered.
- Identify any gaps in who has been consulted and identify ways to address this.

¹⁰ Your EqlA must get to grips fully and properly with actual and potential impacts.

- The Council's obligations under the Equality Act of 2010 do not stop you taking decisions, or introducing well needed changes; however, they require that you take decisions and make changes conscientiously and deliberately confront the anticipated impacts on people.
- Be realistic: don't exaggerate speculative risks and negative impacts.
- Be detailed and specific so decision-makers have a concrete sense of potential effects. Instead of "the policy is likely to disadvantage older women", say how many or what percentage are likely to be affected, how, and to what extent.
- Questions to ask when assessing impacts depend on the context. Examples:
 - o Are one or more protected groups affected differently and/or disadvantaged? How, and to what extent?
 - o Is there evidence of higher/lower uptake among different groups? Which, and to what extent?
 - o If there are likely to be different impacts on different groups, is that consistent with the overall objective?
 - o If there is negative differential impact, how can you minimise that while taking into account your overall aims
 - o Do the effects amount to unlawful discrimination? If so, the plan must be modified.
 - o Does the proposal advance equality of opportunity and/or foster good relations? If not, could it?

¹¹ Consider all three aims of the Act: removing barriers, and also identifying positive actions to be taken.

- Where you have identified impacts you must state what actions will be taken to remove, reduce or avoid any negative impacts and maximise any positive impacts or advance equality of opportunity.
- Be specific and detailed and explain how far these actions are expected to address the negative impacts.
- If mitigating measures are contemplated, explain clearly what the measures are, and the extent to which they can be expected to reduce / remove the adverse effects identified.
- An EqlA which has attempted to airbrush the facts is an EqlA that is vulnerable to challenge.

¹² **Age:** People of all ages

¹³ **Disability:** A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The definition includes: sensory impairments, impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects, progressive, organ specific, developmental, learning difficulties, mental health conditions and mental illnesses, produced by injury to the body or brain. Persons with cancer, multiple sclerosis or HIV infection are all now deemed to be disabled persons from the point of diagnosis. Carers of disabled people are protected within the Act by association.

¹⁴ **Gender Reassignment:** In the Act a transgender person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender. A person does not need to be under medical supervision to be protected

¹⁵ **Pregnancy and Maternity:** Protection is during pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which the woman is entitled.

¹⁶ **Race/Ethnicity:** This includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality, and includes refugees and migrants, and Gypsies and Travellers. Refugees and migrants means people whose intention is to stay in the UK for at least twelve months (excluding visitors, short term students or tourists). This definition includes asylum seekers; voluntary and involuntary migrants; people who are undocumented; and the children of migrants, even if they were born in the UK.

¹⁷ **Religion and Belief:** Religion includes any religion with a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief. The Act also covers lack of religion or belief.

¹⁸ **Sex:** Both men and women are covered under the Act.

¹⁹ **Sexual Orientation:** The Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people

²⁰ **Marriage and Civil Partnership:** Only in relation to due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

²¹ **Armed Forces:** The Armed Forces Act 2021 aims to help prevent service personnel, veterans and their families being disadvantaged when accessing public services. The new duty applies to certain housing, education or healthcare functions, but it is good practice to ensure consideration of impacts on current or former members of the armed forces, as well as their families.

²² **Community Cohesion:** potential impacts on how well people from different communities get on together. The council has a legal duty to foster good relations between groups of people who share different protected characteristics. Some actions or policies may have impacts - or perceived impacts - on how groups see one another or in terms of how the council's resources are seen to be allocated. There may also be opportunities to positively impact on good relations between groups.

²³ **Data:** Make sure you have enough information to inform your EqlA.

- What data relevant to the impact on protected groups of the policy/decision/service is available?²³
- What further evidence is needed and how can you get it? (Eg: further research or engagement with the affected groups).

- What do you already know about needs, access and outcomes? Focus on each of the protected characteristics in turn. Eg: who uses the service? Who doesn't and why? Are there differences in outcomes? Why?
- Have there been any important demographic changes or trends locally? What might they mean for the service or function?
- Does data/monitoring show that any policies or practices create particular problems or difficulties for any groups?
- Do any equality objectives already exist? What is current performance like against them?
- Is the service having a positive or negative effect on particular people in the community, or particular groups or communities?

²⁴ **Engagement:** You must engage appropriately with those likely to be affected to fulfil the Council's duties under the Equality Act .

- What do people tell you about the services, the policy or the strategy?
- Are there patterns or differences in what people from different groups tell you?
- What information or data will you need from communities?
- How should people be consulted? Consider:
 - (a) consult when proposals are still at a formative stage;
 - (b) explain what is proposed and why, to allow intelligent consideration and response;
 - (c) allow enough time for consultation;
 - (d) make sure what people tell you is properly considered in the final decision.
- Try to consult in ways that ensure all different perspectives can be captured and considered.
- Identify any gaps in who has been consulted and identify ways to address this.

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- The Council's obligations under the Equality Act of 2010 do not stop you taking decisions, or introducing well needed changes; however, they require that take decisions and make changes conscientiously and deliberately confront the anticipated impacts on people.
- Be realistic: don't exaggerate speculative risks and negative impacts.
- Be detailed and specific so decision-makers have a concrete sense of potential effects. Instead of "the policy is likely to disadvantage older women", say how many or what percentage are likely to be affected, how, and to what extent.
- Questions to ask when assessing impacts depend on the context. Examples:
 - o Are one or more protected groups affected differently and/or disadvantaged? How, and to what extent?
 - o Is there evidence of higher/lower uptake among different groups? Which, and to what extent?
 - o If there are likely to be different impacts on different groups, is that consistent with the overall objective?
 - o If there is negative differential impact, how can you minimise that while taking into account your overall aims

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- o Do the effects amount to unlawful discrimination? If so the plan must be modified.
 - o Does the proposal advance equality of opportunity and/or foster good relations? If not, could it?

²⁶ Consider all three aims of the Act: removing barriers, and also identifying positive actions to be taken.

- Where you have identified impacts you must state what actions will be taken to remove, reduce or avoid any negative impacts and maximise any positive impacts or advance equality of opportunity.
- Be specific and detailed and explain how far these actions are expected to address the negative impacts.
- If mitigating measures are contemplated, explain clearly what the measures are, and the extent to which they can be expected to reduce / remove the adverse effects identified.
- An EqIA which has attempted to airbrush the facts is an EqIA that is vulnerable to challenge.

²⁷ **Rurality:** deprivation is experienced differently between people living in rural and urban areas. In rural areas issues can include isolation, access to services (eg: GPs, pharmacies, libraries, schools), low income / part-time work, infrequent public transport, high transport costs, lack of affordable housing and higher fuel costs. Deprivation can also be more dispersed and less visible.

²⁸ **Other groups that may be differently affected:** this may vary by services, but examples include: homeless people, substance misusers, people experiencing domestic/sexual violence, looked after children or care leavers, current or former armed forces personnel (or their families), people on the Autistic spectrum etc.

²⁹ **Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations**

- Make a frank and realistic assessment of the overall extent to which the negative impacts can be reduced or avoided by the mitigating measures. Explain what positive impacts will result from the actions and how you can make the most of these.
- Countervailing considerations: These may include the reasons behind the formulation of the policy, the benefits it is expected to deliver, budget reductions, the need to avert a graver crisis by introducing a policy now and not later, and so on. The weight of these factors in favour of implementing the policy must then be measured against the weight of any evidence as to the potential negative equality impacts of the policy.
- Are there any further recommendations? Is further engagement needed? Is more research or monitoring needed? Does there need to be a change in the proposal itself?

³⁰ **Action Planning:** The Council's obligation under the Equality Act of 2010 is an ongoing duty: policies must be kept under review, continuing to give 'due regard' to the duty. If an assessment of a broad proposal leads to more specific proposals, then further equality assessment and consultation are needed.

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