

Equality Analysis Form / EqIA

By completing this form you will provide evidence of how your service is meeting Stroud District Council's General Equality duty:

The Equality Act 2010 states that:

*A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have **due regard** to the need to –*

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;*
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

The protected characteristics are listed in Question 9

Stroud District Equality data can be found at:

<https://inform.glos.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/>

Please see Appendix 1 for a good example of a completed EIA.

Guidance available on the HUB

1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

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Service: Democratic Services & Elections	Date of Assessment: 08/10/25

2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function:

Member Leave Policy

Is this new or an existing one? Existing (updated)

3. Briefly describe its aims and objectives

To update the Constitution by expanding the Member Leave Policy to include a broader range of leave types (e.g. neonatal, adoption, carers, compassionate, sickness), to support councillor wellbeing. The policy aims to make the councillor role more accessible to people with protected characteristics from a variety of different backgrounds, individuals at different life stages, or with certain personal circumstances, helping to attract and retain councillors who are representative of the Stroud District.

4. Are there external considerations? (Legislation / government directive, etc)

There is no statutory requirement to implement a leave policy for Councillors. However, doing so supports the Council to advance equality of opportunity and demonstrate commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to create a positive impact on protected groups.

While councillors are not legally classified as employees, and therefore not covered by employment legislation such as the Employment Rights Act 1996 or the Carer's Leave Act 2023, many of these entitlements are mirrored in the recommended changes to the Member Leave Policy to promote fairness, inclusion, and wellbeing.

The policy also reflects the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 (Section 85), which states that any councillor who fails to attend a meeting for six consecutive months ceases to be a Member unless the absence is formally approved by Council before the end of that period. The policy provides guidance on how Members can request extended leave and seek a dispensation to ensure compliance with this legal requirement.

Members who take leave will benefit from being able to retain their elected office and allowances during their absence. This supports them in balancing their public duties with parental or caring responsibilities, helping to eliminate potential discrimination.

There may be a temporary impact on service users or external stakeholders if they are unable to contact their usual ward representative. However, the policy includes measures to mitigate this by enabling Members to nominate a colleague to cover their ward responsibilities during their absence.

5. Who is intended to benefit from it and in what way?

The updated policy provides clarification and guidance for:

- District Councillors and Political Group Leaders
- Strategic Leadership Team including Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services Officers.
- Underrepresented groups
- Stroud residents and communities

The policy specifically refers to

- Pregnant women (protected characteristic)
- Parents (including parents of adopted/fostered children)
- Carers (both paid and unpaid)
- Disabled people or those with a long-term illness.

These groups benefit from clearer entitlements, improved accessibility for elected roles, and enhanced wellbeing support, which helps foster a more inclusive and representative council.

6. What outcomes are expected?

The updated Member Leave Policy is expected to increase confidence among elected Members in taking leave by providing clear and consistent guidance on entitlements. It covers a range of leave types including, maternity, paternity, adoption, neonatal, carers, compassionate, and sickness leave. The policy will directly support individuals with protected characteristics such as pregnancy and maternity, disability, and sex, particularly where caring responsibilities are more prevalent. By recognising and accommodating these needs, the policy helps remove barriers that

may prevent individuals from standing for election, especially those who might otherwise feel excluded due to health conditions, family responsibilities, or life stage. This contributes to a more inclusive and diverse candidate pool and encourages broader participation in local democracy. The policy also promotes transparency and fairness in how leave is managed, ensuring Members feel supported in balancing their public duties with personal circumstances. Additionally, it provides Officers and Members with a reliable framework for navigating leave arrangements, improving consistency and operational clarity across the Council.

7. What evidence has been used for this assessment?: (eg Research, previous consultations, Inform (MAIDEN); Google assessments carried out by other Authorities)

This policy has been reviewed alongside [guidance](#) from the Local Government Association (LGA) on Member parental leave, as well as a review of leave policies adopted by Gloucestershire's Tier 1 and Tier 2 councils. Importantly, the revised Member Leave Policy has also been aligned with Stroud District Council's internal staff leave policies to ensure consistency and fairness. A light-touch consultation with Democratic Services, the Monitoring Officer, and the Constitution Working Group was carried out to gather views on the updated draft policy and to ensure it is legally sound, operationally practical, and reflective of the needs of elected Members. The combination of national guidance, local benchmarking, helped shape a practical and inclusive approach to the policy update.

8. Has any consultation been carried out? See list of possible consultees

A light-touch consultation was undertaken with Officers to gather feedback about the draft policy. This included Democratic Services and the Monitoring Officer. The Constitution Working Group reviewed the updated policy in full and made further changes to reflect the needs of Members. Feedback focused on the clarity of leave types, the practical process for requesting and managing leave, and how well the policy aligned with existing staff policies.

9. Could a particular group be affected differently in either a negative or positive way? (Negative – it could disadvantage and therefore potentially not meet the General Equality duty; Positive – it could benefit and help meet the General Equality duty; Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact / Not sure)

Protected Group	Type of impact, reason and any evidence (from Q7 & 8)
Age	Positive - Leave provisions such as parental, carers, and sickness leave support both younger and older Members. These provisions help remove barriers to participation in Council roles by recognising the different life stages and responsibilities Members may have, thereby promoting inclusivity and retention.
Disability	Positive – The updated leave provisions support disabled Members and those who care for someone with a long-term disability. These provisions encourage individuals with disabilities to stand for election and enable current Members to take necessary absences without disadvantage.

Gender Re-assignment	Neutral – No direct impact identified, but inclusive practices may indirectly support diverse representation.
Pregnancy & Maternity	Positive – Expanded maternity and neonatal leave provisions directly support this group. While the number of people impacted may be small, it will ensure that the provisions for taking leave are clear and transparent for all.
Race	Neutral – No direct impact identified, but inclusive practices may indirectly support diverse representation and support the council to fulfil its Public Sector Equality Duties.
Religion – Belief	Neutral – No direct impact identified.
Sex	Positive – Gendered impacts of caring and parental responsibilities are addressed through the provision of clear and supportive leave options.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral – No direct impact identified.
Marriage & Civil Partnerships (part (a) of duty only)	Neutral – No direct impact identified.
Rural considerations: ie Access to services; transport; education; employment; broadband;	Neutral – No direct impact identified.

10. If you have identified a negative impact in question 9, what actions have you undertaken or do you plan to undertake to lessen or negate this impact?

Please transfer any actions to your Service Action plan on Excelsis.

Action(s):	Lead officer	Resource	Timescale

Declaration

We are satisfied that an Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy and where a negative impact has been identified, actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact.

We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the District Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment

Completed by: Jenna Malpass	Date: 08/10/25
Role: Democratic Services & Elections Manager	
Countersigned by Head of Service/Director: 	Date: 14/10/25