# Diversity Impact Assessment

Title: Leaseholder Service Charge Calculation Policy

Date: Review completed in November 2024

Lead Officer: Katherine Bishop – Customer Insight and Data Manager

1. **Summary description of the proposed change**

*What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed?*

*How does it compare with the current situation?*

The purpose of this policy is to set out how Medway Council Housing Services will bill for services provided;

• How often bills will be sent out

• What will be charged for

• How to pay

• Allowed payment periods

• How disputes will be handled

This policy has been updated with minor amendments; there has been no change to legislation.

1. **Summary of evidence used to support this**

As of 01/11/2024 there are 215 leaseholders.

1. **What is the likely impact of the proposed change?**

*Is it likely to :*

* *Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups?*
* *Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups?*

*Foster good relations between people who share share a protected characteristic and those who don’t?*

Age: no impact

Disability: no impact

Gender reassignment: no impact

Marriage/civil partnership: no impact

Pregnancy/maternity: no impact

Race: no impact

Religion/belief: no impact

Sex: policy: no impact

Sexual orientation: no impact

Other (e.g. low income groups): will advance equality

1. **Summary of the likely impacts**
* *Who will be affected?*
* *How will they be affected?*

It has not been identified that this policy will have a negative impact on any protected characteristic, as the policy will be applied universally to all leaseholders.

The policy may advance equality for low income groups by providing details of the loans scheme and variable payment options.

1. **What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?**
* *Are there alternative providers?*
* *What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?*
* *Can demand for services be managed differently*

**Consultation**

In the event that a leaseholder does not agree with the level of service charges that they have been asked to pay, they will be able to query these. In the first instance, they should address their questions, in writing, to Medway Council’s Leaseholder and Right to Buy Officer who will try to resolve any issues they may have with their bill.

The leaseholder may also approach the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal (LVT) to ask for a ruling. Leaseholders are also free to use the Medway Council’s Complaints Procedure, details of this are available on the website and in the complaints leaflet available from council offices.

**Low Income Groups**

Loans Scheme

Leaseholders may be eligible for a loan to pay for service charges for repairs that have been carried out to their block. For more information please refer to the Service Charge Loans Policy

Variety of payment methods available

For the convenience of the leaseholder Medway Council currently accepts payments for service charges by the following methods;

•Online Payment via website - [Webpay](https://www.civicaepay.co.uk/medway/Webpay_Public/WebPay/default.aspx)

•Telephone -Debit / Credit card

•Cheque

1. **Action plan**

Monitor Complaints to identify any negative trends with regards to the Leaseholder Service Charge Calculation policy.

1. **Recommendation**

*The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be:*

* *to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate*
* *consider alternatives*
* *gather further evidence*

*If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.*

Proceed with the reviewed policy.

1. **Authorisation**

*The authorising officer is consenting that:*

* *the recommendation can be implemented*
* *sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned*
* *the Action Plan will be incorporated into the relevant Service Plan and monitored*

Authorising Officer: Rebecca Wilcox – Chief Housing Officer

Date: November 2024