

## 2025-26 Full Equalities Analysis Assessment Mid Sussex District Council

## Application for PSPO Saint Hill Road and West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead

Proposal Summary Information	
EAA Title	Saint Hill Public Spaces Protection Order Request
Please describe your proposal	Study to assess the impact on equalities in the event of the Mid-Sussex District Council (MSDC) decision to implement (or decline to implement) a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in relation to behaviours outside the Church of Scientology Religious Education College Inc of Saint Hill Manor, Saint Hill Road, East Grinstead.
Is it Human Resources Related?	No
Corporate Purpose	<p>To respond to a request raised on the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024, by Hodkin and Company Solicitors on behalf of their clients Church of Scientology Religious Education College Inc of Saint Hill Manor, Saint Hill Road, East Grinstead (“the Church”). It was requested that this Council implement a PSPO surrounding the Church.</p> <p>The purpose outlined was to prevent demonstrations, protests, vigils or similar activity and the request was premised on the basis that demonstrations and protests have a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, presenting both a risk to public safety and risks of causing harassment, disturbance and alarm to those attending the Church</p>
<b>1. What is the action looking to achieve? Who will be affected?</b>	
<p>1.1. A Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) would seek to address ongoing concerns about protests taking place outside the Church of Scientology on Saint Hill Road, East Grinstead. The Church has expressed a desire to prevent demonstrators from gathering directly outside its premises, citing disruption to its religious activities, concerns for the well-being of members and guests, and perceived harassment.</p> <p>1.2. The PSPO would enable the local authority to place restrictions on certain behaviours or activities in a defined public space. In this case, the order may prohibit or limit protests or demonstrations within a specified area around the Church. While this action is intended to reduce public nuisance and potential disorder, particularly during high-profile events, it would also have broader implications throughout the year.</p> <p>1.3. Although most protest activity currently centres around the Church’s International Association of Scientology (IAS) event weekend —typically</p>	

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held once annually in October/November—the introduction of a PSPO would apply all year-round for a period of three years. This could significantly affect individuals or groups who wish to exercise their right to peaceful assembly or protest at other times during the year.

1.4. Groups affected by the proposed PSPO include:

- **Local residents** living on or near Saint Hill Road, who may be impacted positively through reduced noise, disruption, and congestion—but who may also have concerns about civil liberties and freedom of expression within their community.
- **Protest groups** and individuals attending or organising demonstrations, whose ability to protest outside the Church would be restricted or prohibited altogether under the order.
- **Members and guests** of the Church of Scientology, who would be affected through a reduced protest presence and potentially feel safer or less harassed when entering or exiting the site.
- **Council staff and police**, who are currently involved in managing the protests and ensuring community safety—resources which may be reduced or redirected if a PSPO is introduced.
- **Partner organisations** working and located in the area, such as local sports clubs, who may be indirectly affected by restrictions and any shifts in community dynamics or complaints.
- **The general public** using the public highway, who may experience fewer delays or obstructions during event periods but may also be affected by the visibility and enforcement of the PSPO itself.
- **Traffic and transport flow**, particularly on Saint Hill Road during the annual international event, which may benefit from fewer obstructions if protest numbers are reduced or relocated.

1.5. Any decision taken must strike a balance between protecting residents, religious communities, and the public from ongoing nuisance, and preserving lawful freedoms of expression and assembly. It must therefore be proportionate, evidence-based, and subject to appropriate consultation and scrutiny.

## 2. What will the impact of your proposal be?

- 2.1. This Equalities Analysis Assessment aims to learn of any differential impacts a PSPO may have on people with protected characteristics who reside, work in, or visit the area — or who may wish to access or use the area in future.
- 2.2. A PSPO will place restrictions on behaviours within the designated area. Specifically, it may prohibit protests, vigils, or similar activities within the defined

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boundary surrounding the Church of Scientology on Saint Hill Road. This may include prohibitions on the use of amplified sound, placards, or the act of protesting itself. It could also authorise designated officers to issue dispersal instructions or require named individuals to leave the area where anti-social behaviour or breaches of the PSPO are suspected. Persons who are found to have breached the requirements or prohibitions of a PSPO without reasonable excuse commit a criminal offence.

- 2.3. A PSPO may have a positive impact on members and guests of the Church (some of whom are also local residents) by reducing the potential for harassment, distress, or disruption, particularly during high-profile gatherings. It may also reduce the burden on police and council officers currently managing protest activity, allowing resources to be used more efficiently.
- 2.4. The PSPO may also benefit residents by reducing noise, traffic disruption, and perceived public nuisance, especially during the Church's international event weekend. However, it is important to acknowledge that some residents may be concerned about the restriction of lawful protest and the implications this may have on freedom of speech. The PSPO would restrict the activities of residents within their local area if they wished to participate in protests.
- 2.5. The PSPO is likely to have a partly negative impact on individuals or groups who currently protest or may wish to protest outside the Church. These activities may be considered lawful expressions of opinion, and a PSPO would limit the location and visibility of such demonstrations.
- 2.6. As the PSPO proposed by the Church would apply throughout the year and to all forms of protest (including those which are not addressed towards the Church specifically), it may have an ongoing effect on protest groups even outside of the annual event period, restricting their ability to engage in protest regardless of timing, scale, or behaviour unless they relocate elsewhere.
- 2.7. For other affected groups — such as road users, local schools, sports clubs, and the public — the impact is expected to be neutral to mildly positive, in terms of reduced congestion or disruption during peak periods.

### 3. Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Legal Duties Checklist

- 3.1 This decision has to be considered using the three aims of the PSED:
  - **Eliminate unlawful discrimination** – The decision seeks to manage behaviours, not beliefs or identity, and will be applied neutrally to all parties.
  - **Advance equality of opportunity** – Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure all stakeholders can participate in consultation.
  - **Foster good relations** – Engagement work aims to balance competing rights and reduce tensions between groups.

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**3.2** This Equalities Impact Assessment has been considered against the three statutory aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010. The purpose of this assessment is to ensure the Council's role in gathering and presenting evidence is conducted lawfully, transparently, and equitably. Final decisions on the implementation of a PSPO will be taken by elected councillors.

### **3.3 Eliminate unlawful discrimination**

The Council has taken a neutral, evidence-based approach in assessing concerns raised around anti-social behaviour linked to protests. The proposal does not seek to prevent or favour any particular belief, religious group, or viewpoint, but instead aims to address behaviours that may be having a detrimental impact on residents, visitors, and those using public spaces. All parties — including the Church of Scientology, protest groups, residents, and the general public — are being treated equally in this process.

### **3.4 Advance equality of opportunity**

The Council has proactively taken steps to ensure that all individuals and groups, including those with protected characteristics, have an opportunity to contribute to the evidence base and provide feedback. Actions taken include:

- Issuing a resident letter encouraging submission of statements about the impact of protest activity.
- Publishing an online questionnaire accessible to any member of the public, residents, protesters, or Church attendees.
- Providing A5 flyers to signpost individuals at the scene to the online portal.
- Inviting all parties to submit formal evidence or statements in writing.
- Holding formal evidence-gathering meetings with both the Church and protest representatives to understand their views and potential options for mitigating impact.

These steps were designed to reduce barriers to participation and ensure diverse input from affected communities.

The Council has also considered the need to advance equality of opportunity amongst groups sharing protected characteristics within its overall decision whether or not to make a PSPO.

### **3.5 Foster good relations**

The Council's approach has focused on supporting lawful expression while reducing tensions and conflict. Council officers have acted solely as independent observers — not enforcers or adjudicators during the events, and all evidence has been gathered impartially. By encouraging open engagement and clear communication with all stakeholders, the Council has aimed to promote respectful understanding between groups, helping to inform any future decisions in a balanced and proportionate way.

## **4. Human Rights Considerations**

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4.1 The proposed Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) may engage the following rights under the Human Rights Act 1998:

- Article 9 – Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Article 10 – Freedom of Expression
- Article 11 – Freedom of Assembly and Association

4.2 These are qualified rights, meaning they can be lawfully restricted in certain circumstances — for example, where necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others, preserve public order, or (in the case of Articles 10 and 11) prevent crime and disorder. Any such restriction must be lawful, necessary, and proportionate.

4.3 In considering these rights, the Council has undertaken a range of evidence-gathering activities to inform its understanding of the situation. These have included:

- On-site observations by council officers during the Church’s annual international event in October 2024
- Resident engagement, including letters inviting feedback on the impact of events and protest activity
- An online questionnaire made available to residents, protesters, Church members, and the general public
- Formal engagement meetings with representatives from the Church and from protest groups
- Coordination with police and community partners on event-related planning and safety

4.4 This process has been conducted impartially and is intended to inform whether the use of a PSPO may be appropriate and, if so, how it could be shaped to balance competing rights fairly.

4.5 It is acknowledged that there are other tools and options available to councils to manage behaviours in public spaces. The PSPO is one of several mechanisms that may be considered where there is evidence of ongoing or repeated detrimental impact linked to specific behaviours.

4.6 Any potential restriction introduced by a PSPO would need to be narrowly defined, based on evidence, and proportionate to its stated aims. Human rights implications will remain central to any further development or review of proposals.

## **5. Legal Oversight and Advice**

5.1 throughout this process, the Council has sought ongoing specialist legal advice. Legal oversight has supported the Council’s efforts to ensure that its approach to evidence gathering, engagement, and assessment of potential options has remained lawful, proportionate, and compliant with both the public sector equality duty and the Human Rights Act 1998.

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**6. Proportionality and Less Restrictive Options Considered**

6.1 The Council has not yet made any decision to implement a PSPO. It is currently evaluating whether such an Order is legally justified, proportionate, and necessary. This Equality Impact Assessment supports a broader options review that includes numerous alternatives.

6.2 Options considered include:

- Taking no action at all, maintaining the status quo.
- Negotiating a voluntary Code of Conduct with the Church and protest groups.
- Improved traffic management and physical changes to the environment, such as stewarding, lighting, and signage.
- Relying on existing police powers under the Public Order Act 1986 and other legislation.
- Investigating amplified sound or noise nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- Increased local authority or police presence in 2025 or beyond.
- Serving Community Protection Warnings or Notices for specific behaviours.
- Seeking injunctions under civil powers (although legally complex and potentially disproportionate).
- Making byelaws (less flexible and subject to Secretary of State approval).

6.3 Each of these has been discussed with relevant partners including Sussex Police, West Sussex County Council, and representatives of the Church. The Council has recorded that no arrests occurred at the 2023 or 2024 events, and the Police have stated that behaviour at the event has not met thresholds for intervention using public order powers. The Council continues to explore these options in full before any recommendations are made to Cabinet.

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Impact on Groups having a Protected Characteristic
<b>7. AGE: A person of a particular age or being within an age group.</b>
State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral: <b>NEUTRAL</b>
Describe the Impact
<p>7.1. Older residents may be more affected by noise, crowding, or navigating roads. Families with young children may feel disrupted or avoid the area due to perceived conflict. Some members and/or guests of the Church have submitted representations to the effect that they felt uncomfortable taking children to Church premises whilst protesters were present due to the impact of protest activities on the children.</p> <p>7.2. <u>The Council does not hold any data as to the numbers or proportion of attendees at Church events who are older persons or children.</u></p> <p>7.3. There have not been significant complaints about the event/protests made directly to the Council other than by the Church itself. The council notes that the protests have only taken place twice over the last six years.</p>
<b>Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect:</b>
<p>7.4 Future actions should include clear communication and possible presence to reassure and support access. Outreach through networks supporting older adults and families should be considered.</p> <p>7.5 The Church has explained that during the 2024 event it was able to provide alternative routes to access its premises via (i) an overflow carpark at Fonthill and East Grinstead Rugby Club (ii) a one-way drop off route used by coaches. It appears there is no reason why these options cannot be used again at future events. If the Church made pedestrian access available into their grounds near Fonthill and the Rugby Club, these routes would allow guests (including older people and those accompanying children) to avoid the main entrance of the premises where protesters were located if they wish to do so. It also appears it would be possible for arrangements to be made so that older (or other disabled) persons who have difficulty walking can be driven into the premises. The Council acknowledges that these overflow carparks requires a somewhat longer walk and/or driving time for persons affected, but considers (i) as a negative impact this is reasonably limited, given the events only take place approx. 3 days per year and (ii) the availability of alternative access routes could offer important mitigation when balancing the rights of church-goers against the rights of protesters to exercise freedoms of expression and assembly.</p>

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7.6 The Council also considers that the restriction of protesters to a designated space near the entrance to the premises but safely away from the public highway offers further mitigation to the impact of their behaviour insofar as they are kept at some distance from Church members and guests.

**8. DISABILITY: A person has a disability if s/he has 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**

State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral:  
**NEUTRAL**

Describe the Impact

- 8.1. There is no available data relating to disabilities affecting persons engaged in protests / vigils outside the Church or members and guests of the Church attending its events.
- 8.2. People with mobility or sensory impairments, including autism or mental health conditions, may be more affected by disruption, noise, or crowd environments.
- 8.3. As above under AGE, the Church and some members / guests submitted that the use of alternative routes (including overflow parking at Fonhill) to avoid accessing the main entrance of the premises where protesters are located, poses difficulties for persons with mobility issues who will find it challenging or impossible to walk longer distances from their cars.

**Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect:**

- 8.4. Accessibility reviews, clear communication, and signage should support those with disabilities. Adjustments could include sensory-friendly planning or event accessibility features.
- 8.5. As above, the Council acknowledges that the use of alternative routes requires a somewhat longer walk and/or driving time for persons affected. It is accepted that this is a negative impact which would principally be felt by persons with disabilities. However, it appears arrangements can be made for disabled persons to be driven into the premises for drop-off so they are not prevented from attending. The Council considers any extra driving time is essentially a question of inconvenience which is reasonably limited, given (i) the events in question only take place approx. 3 days per year; (ii) this impact is likely to be experienced by a relatively limited number of individuals; and (iii) these arrangements must be balanced against the rights of protesters to exercise freedoms of expression and assembly.



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<b>9. GENDER REASSIGNMENT: This is the process of transitioning from one sex to another. This includes persons who consider themselves to be trans, transgender and transsexual.</b>
State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral: <b>NEUTRAL</b>
Describe the Impact
9.1 No specific incidents recorded. There is no available data on the presence of trans persons amongst Church members and guests, protesters or local residents. It is not anticipated that a decision to make, or not make, a PSPO would have a disproportionate impact on this protected group.
Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect:
NOT APPLICABLE

<b>10. RACE: A group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins or race.</b>
State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral: <b>NEUTRAL</b>
Describe the Impact
10.1.No specific issues raised. The Council does not hold any data on the ethnic or racial identity of Church members and guests or protesters. However, it is noted that the Church event is international and attended by guests who come from across the UK and abroad. Materials and processes should remain inclusive and culturally aware.
Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect:
10.2.Ensure plain English materials with translation options. Reinforce equality commitments in all engagement.

<b>11. RELIGION &amp; BELIEF: Religion means any religion. Belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (for example,</b>
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<b>Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect a person's life choices or the way you live for it to be included.</b>
State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral: <b>NEGATIVE</b>
Describe the Impact
<p>11.1. Some individuals involved in protest activity identify their actions as informed by deeply held beliefs or moral convictions. Whilst no formal data is held on the religious beliefs (or lack thereof) amongst protesters who have attended events to date, it appears that many of them hold views which oppose alleged abuse in Scientology and its teachings for various reasons. As such, the protesters as a group might conceivably share the protected characteristic of religion or belief, given that by s.10 of the Equality Act this protected characteristic can include <i>lack</i> of religion or <i>lack</i> of belief.</p> <p>11.2. A PSPO would place restrictions upon protesters' behaviours and therefore clearly have a negative impact upon them. A PSPO would very likely disadvantage and possibly indirectly discriminate against protesters as a group sharing a protected belief (if their beliefs would be legally recognised by the courts in this way). The PSPO would restrict their freedom of expression and assembly by prohibiting them from protesting and sharing their views in a particular location and in particular ways.</p> <p>11.3. Members and guests of the Church of Scientology do share the protected characteristic of religion or belief. The Council acknowledges that the Supreme Court has confirmed that Scientology is properly to be regarded as a religion: <u>R (Hodkin) v Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages [2014] UKSC 77.</u></p> <p>11.4. Members and guests of the Church attend its premises for events and services of a religious nature. The Council acknowledges that even if the events attended by protesters do not consist solely of religious services, they are connected to Church membership and therefore to the beliefs and practices collectively shared by its membership. The Council also acknowledges that members and guests may perceive certain behaviours or signage displayed by protesters during the event period as targeting their faith or creating a hostile environment. Therefore this group would be negatively affected and disadvantaged by a decision <u>not</u> to make a PSPO, insofar as protesters would be permitted to continue their activities and continue having a negative impact on this group as a result of their shared protected characteristic. Conversely this group would be positively impacted if a PSPO were made insofar as they would consider themselves protected by its restrictions and requirements.</p> <p>11.5. Articles 9, 10 and 11 of the Human Rights Act are therefore engaged. The Council must carefully balance these rights insofar as they are in competition. In particular the Council may only place limitations upon these rights if justified with respect to one or more of the grounds identified in Articles 9(2), 10(2) and</p>

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<p>11(2). This includes the need to protect the rights and freedoms of others. The Council must consider protesters' rights to peacefully air their views on the one hand versus the rights of Church members and guests to peacefully manifest their religion and beliefs by attending events at the premises on the other.</p>
<p>Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect:</p>
<p>11.6. Any intervention (<i>i.e.</i> making a PSPO) would regulate behaviour, not belief. The Council could tailor the specific prohibitions and requirements contained within a PSPO so that it restricts only behaviours of particular concern as narrowly as possible in order to achieve the aims of preventing a detrimental impact on quality of life of those in the community.</p> <p>11.7. Alternatively the Council may be satisfied that lesser measures short of a PSPO are sufficient to address any behaviours of concern, in which case it would be difficult for the Council to be satisfied that the making of a PSPO is justified, necessary, reasonable or proportionate.</p> <p>11.8. The Council has undertaken engagement work with protesters on the one hand and with the Church and its representatives and members on the other. The Council has attempted to negotiate an agreed set of behaviours for both sides which would ensure protesters are able to attend and express their views without causing distress, intimidation or harassment for members and guests of the Church.</p> <p>The outcome of this exercise is the Council have offered both the Church and Protesters a voluntary code of conduct to follow during events at the Church.</p> <p>11.9. The Church was invited to agree the following voluntary Code of Conduct, but ultimately declined due to concerns about the terms of the protesters' Code of Conduct:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 The Church (its staff, volunteers, agents or contractors) shall follow and comply with any instructions given by the police.</li> <li>2 The Church shall ensure that persons providing stewarding or security services in and around its property are identifiable to members of the public by wearing high-vis jackets, armbands or similar.</li> <li>3 The Church shall provide adequate lighting at the entrance to its premises on Saint Hill Road to ensure the safety of pedestrians entering or exiting its premises from the public highway. The adequacy of lighting and any additional measures to make the entrance stand out (such as banners, balloons and so forth) should be agreed with the police and MSDC in advance of an event (and/or the same lighting may be provided if previously agreed).</li> </ol>

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4 The Church (its staff, volunteers, agents or contractors) shall not attempt to enter or interfere with a space designated by the police for use by protesters whilst protesters are present within that space.

5 The Church (its staff, volunteers, agents or contractors) shall not obstruct (or attempt to obstruct) protesters from entering or exiting the area designated at any time by the police for their use.

6 The Church (including but not limited to its staff, volunteers, agents or contractors) shall not film or photograph protesters who remain within the space designated by the police for their use.

11.10. The Protesters have agreed the following,

The protesters who were present at the IAS event in 2023 and 2024 have agreed to the following:

1. Whilst protesting on Saint Hill Road, protesters will continue to follow and comply with any instructions given by the police and/or any officers of MSDC or WSCC.
2. At all times protesters will remain in any space designated at any time for their use in agreement with the police, other than for the reasonable purposes of entering and exiting that space.
3. At all times protesters will remain on public land or the public highway. In particular they will not enter (or attempt to enter) the property of the Church at any time.
4. Protesters will not obstruct (or attempt to obstruct) any persons from entering Church premises.

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5. Protesters will not (or will not attempt to) harass, intimidate or abuse any persons attending events at Church premises, or persons providing security or stewarding services for Church events. This includes using foul or abusive language.
  6. Protesters will follow and comply with any instructions given by the police and/or officers of MSDC as regards the use of amplified music, voice or audio.
  7. Protesters shall display this Voluntary Code of Conduct on their website and shall ensure that copies are available for any persons attending as protesters during any events at Saint Hill Road.
- 11.11. Ongoing dialogue with all parties should continue to ensure respect for conscience and minimise distress.

**12. SEX: Someone being a man or a woman.**

State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral:  
**NEUTRAL**

Describe the Impact

12.1. The Council does not hold any data on the sex of Church members and guests or protesters (or local residents and others affected). It appears that there are large numbers of both men and women amongst Churchgoers on the one hand and protesters on the other. As such it does not appear that either a decision to make a PSPO, or not make a PSPO, would have a disproportionate impact on one group or the other.

Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect:

Describe the Mitigating Action

Not applicable.

**13. SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral:  
**NEUTRAL**

Describe the Impact

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13.1 No specific incidents recorded. The Council does not hold any data on the sexual orientation of Church members and guests, protesters, or local residents and others affected. No party has made any representations or submissions connected to sexual orientation to the Council to date. As such it does not appear that either a decision to make a PSPO, or not make a PSPO, would have a disproportionate impact on one group or the other.
Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect:
13.2 Ensure inclusive language, monitor incidents, and maintain visible support for equality in all roles.

<b>14. PREGNANCY &amp; MATERNITY:</b>
State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral: <b>NEUTRAL</b>
Describe the Impact
14.1. No specific incidents recorded. The Council does not hold any data on pregnancy amongst Church members and guests, protesters, or local residents and others affected. As such it does not appear that either a decision to make a PSPO, or not make a PSPO, would have a disproportionate impact on any group sharing this protected characteristic.
Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect:
Not applicable

<b>15. : Other groups – for example Carers, Rural Isolation</b>
State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral: <b>NEUTRAL</b>
Describe the Impact
15.1. Disruption to travel or routine can impact carers and rural residents with fewer transport alternatives.

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Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect:

15.2 Maintain access routes, use temporary signage, and provide early communication through local support networks.

15.3 Engage with Transport Authority and police at earliest possible opportunity for event organisations

## CONCLUSION

### 16. Conclusion

16.1. This Equality Impact Assessment has considered how the proposed PSPO on Saint Hill Road could affect different groups in the community, including residents, church attendees, and protesters. The proposed Order would be focused on managing specific behaviours that have caused ongoing harm and distress—not restricting beliefs or identities. The Council has gathered wide-ranging evidence and is assessing whether any proposed action would be fair, legal, and proportionate.

16.2. The Council has not made any decision to implement a PSPO. Instead, it is currently assessing whether a PSPO would be a justified and proportionate response to the issues raised around the Scientology international event. This consideration forms part of a broader options assessment which includes a range of potential interventions.

16.3. These include (but are not limited to):

- Taking no action at all
- Negotiating a voluntary code of conduct between protesters and the Church
- Improved event and traffic management coordinated with Sussex Police and the Highway Authority
- Environmental Health-led investigation into potential statutory nuisances from amplified sound
- Increased local authority or police presence in 2025 or beyond
- Serving Community Protection Warnings or Notices (where appropriate)
- Use of existing police powers under public order and criminal law
- Exploring the feasibility of injunctions or byelaws (with legal and practical limitations)

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16.4 This Equality Impact Assessment supports that work by identifying the likely or potential impacts of different enforcement approaches, including the consideration of a PSPO. The Council's final decision will be based on evidence, legal advice, and proportionality, and will be subject to Cabinet approval.

**17. What evidence, data sources and intelligence did you use to assess the potential impact/effect of your proposal?** Please note the systems/processes you used to collect the data that has helped inform your proposal.

**A. Local Evidence and Observations**

- Testimonies – 50+ written submissions via online forms and direct outreach describing distress, disruption, and safety concerns.
- Council Officer Logs and Observations – On-site presence over multiple event days in 2024, recording behaviours and impacts.
- Photographs and Video Footage – Collected by officers for internal analysis and verification of reported behaviours.
- Formal Submissions from the Church of Scientology – Accounts of guest experiences and concerns regarding protest activity.
- Engagement with Protest Groups – Written statements and structured meetings about lawful protest and civil liberties.
- Sussex Police Feedback – Shared intelligence and post-event assessments noting peaceful classification and no arrests.
- Community Surveys and Engagement Letters – Targeted outreach to residents to capture a broad range of impact statements.
- Internal Consultation with Environmental Health Consideration of statutory nuisance and access impacts.
- West Sussex County Council Highways – considering impacts on Public Highway
- Legal Services Advice – Reviewed PSPO thresholds, alternatives, and ensured legal compliance.
- Barrister advice on due diligence, process and evidence gathering



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- Cabinet Papers and Officer Briefings – Documented legal basis, evidence, and community engagement for decision-making.

**B. Legislation and Rights-Based Frameworks**

- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Legal basis for PSPOs; actions must be reasonable, proportionate, and address persistent behaviour.
- Equality Act 2010 – Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.
- Human Rights Act 1998 – Articles 9, 10, and 11 relevant to religion, expression, and assembly. Restrictions must be proportionate.
- GDPR / UK Data Protection Act 2018 – Ensures lawful handling of testimonies and community data.
- Home Office Statutory Guidance on PSPOs – Best practice for evidence collection, consultation, and proportionality.
- Local Government and Police Accountability Frameworks – Emphasis on responsible, evidence-based enforcement.
- Environmental Protection Act 1990 – Alternative for addressing amplified sound and nuisance complaints.
- Local Transport and Access Legislation – Informs management of access routes and emergency planning.
- - Case Law and Judicial Review Precedents – Learning from other PSPO challenges and successful implementations.

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Application for PSPO Saint Hill Road and West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead

**Action Planning: (What are the next steps for the proposal please list i.e. what it comes into effect, when migrating actions<sup>1</sup> will take place, how you will measure impact etc.)**

Action	Outcomes	Success Measures	Timescales/ Milestones	Lead Officer (Contact Details)
Additional Comments:				

**Sign off: (All EAA's must be signed off once completed)**

Completing Officer Sign Off:	Service Assistant Director Sign Off:
Signed: Paul Turner	Signed: Lucy Corrie
Head of Service for Communities	Assistant Director - Communities

1.1. \_\_\_\_\_

1.2.

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**Appendix 1: Legal obligations under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:**

As a public authority, Mid Sussex District Council must have due regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- 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:

AGE, DISABILITY, GENDER REASSIGNMENT, RACE, RELIGION OR BELIEF, SEX, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, PREGNANCY & MATERNITY, MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

Having due regard to advancing equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, involves considering the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage participation in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Having due regard to fostering good relations includes the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding between persons from different groups.

Complying with these duties may involve treating some people more favourably than others; but this should not be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited under the Act.

This principle has been applied throughout the Council's assessment of the potential Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) at Saint Hill Road, East Grinstead, and supports both the Equality Impact Assessment and the broader options appraisal to ensure that any decision is fair, lawful, proportionate, and inclusive of all communities.