Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment: Refreshing the Strategic Planning Group

Draft EQIA, 13 November 2026, supporting the paper 'Refreshing the Strategic Planning Group' for the Strategic Planning, Finance and Commissioning Committee on 1 December 2026. The proposal retains SPG's statutory planning and review role and develops its contribution to Delivering Change through earlier community, unpaid carer and partner influence. This assessment concerns membership, participation, working arrangements and routes to influence; the paper approves no service changes, investment or changes to eligibility. Formal decisions remain with the IJB and other responsible bodies.

This draft has been prepared with support from the Artificial Intelligence Tool 'Copilot'. It has been reviewed and approved by officers and remains work in progress while this work to refresh the SPG continues.

This tool has been developed to ensure that equalities, human rights, economic, social factors and the Armed Forces Covenant Duty are being considered ahead of the implementation of any new or revised policies provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including the delivery of services. Please note for the purpose of this document these will be grouped together and simply referred to as 'activity.'

Evidence and limitations. Sources are the draft committee paper and SPG transition workshop slides for 26 November 2026, supported by Scottish Government equality and strategic planning guidance and the SPG membership regulations. The workshop has not yet taken place. The supplied documents contain no completed consultation findings, verified membership equality profile or assessment of individual participation needs. The impacts below are potential benefits and risks, not demonstrated outcomes. Missing evidence is not evidence of no impact. Proposed mitigations require agreement, named responsibilities and confirmation of resources.

Assessment approach. The assessment considers eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. For marriage and civil partnership, the equality duty relates to eliminating unlawful discrimination. The additional impact areas below are not protected characteristics. Barriers may combine, for example disability, low income and rural travel; support should respond to individual needs without requiring public disclosure. Statutory stakeholder membership alone does not establish that all equality perspectives are heard.

Protected Characteristic/ Impact Area	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Rationale	Mitigations
Age	Potential for different age groups' experiences to shape priorities earlier.	Meeting times, travel or digital-only access could exclude some participants.	Age coverage and participation preferences are not evidenced in the supplied papers.	Check missing age perspectives; offer suitable times and verbal, written and non-digital routes.
Disability	Supported lived-experience input could strengthen accessible planning.	Inaccessible venues, papers, communication or pace could limit influence.	Paper identifies accessibility support; individual requirements remain to be established.	Ask privately about adjustments; arrange accessible formats, communication support, breaks and preparation as required.
Sex	Opportunity to consider different experiences in strategic advice.	Participation or influence could be uneven if working and caring commitments are overlooked.	No sex-disaggregated membership or participation evidence supplied.	Review nomination routes, meeting accessibility and whose views influence advice; avoid assumptions about caring roles.
Gender reassignment	Inclusive engagement could bring	Privacy concerns or fear of	No specific engagement evidence	Use respectful facilitation, confidential

	otherwise missing experiences into planning.	discrimination could discourage contributions.	supplied; no direct service change proposed.	feedback and wider equality networks; do not require personal disclosure.
Pregnancy and maternity	Flexible participation could sustain involvement during pregnancy and maternity.	Travel, long sessions or inflexible attendance could create barriers.	Participation needs have not yet been established.	Discuss suitable timing, breaks, remote or written input and continuity during absence.
Race	Wider engagement could inform culturally responsive strategic priorities.	Language barriers or reliance on existing networks could leave perspectives unheard.	No evidence of ethnic diversity or language requirements supplied.	Seek input through relevant community networks; establish translation or interpreting needs; challenge discrimination.
Religion or belief	Opportunity to hear diverse religious and non-religious perspectives.	Meeting dates or arrangements could conflict with observance.	No specific requirements or engagement findings supplied.	Ask about timing and practical needs; offer alternative input without requiring disclosure of beliefs.
Sexual	Inclusive engagement	Privacy concerns or	No specific engagement	Offer confidential

orientation	could broaden the experiences informing advice.	fear of discrimination could limit participation.	evidence supplied; direct service entitlements are unchanged.	feedback, inclusive facilitation and relevant network engagement; protect personal information.
Marriage and civil partnership	No specific differential benefit identified at this stage.	No specific adverse impact identified from the proposal; evidence is limited.	Proposal concerns participation and governance, not marital-status eligibility.	Apply fair participation arrangements and review any discrimination concerns raised.
Human rights	Earlier involvement and reasoned feedback could strengthen dignity, participation and accountability.	Tokenistic involvement or identifiable personal stories could undermine influence or privacy.	SPG advises; it does not replace wider engagement, formal consultation or decision-makers' responsibilities.	Record dissent and responses; agree consent and anonymisation; keep individual cases outside strategic discussion.
Unpaid carers	Earlier carer input could strengthen planning around caring responsibilities and support needs.	Time, replacement care and expectations to represent all carers could limit involvement.	Carer representation is integral to SPG; the paper recognises participation support needs.	Check carer representation and support needs; agree flexible input and wider feedback routes; confirm any support costs.

Socio-economic disadvantage	Wider community input could expose financial barriers affecting strategic choices.	Travel, data, care costs or lost earnings could exclude unpaid participants.	No additional funding is sought; participation costs and support are not confirmed.	Identify costs; confirm available support with budget holders and explain arrangements before participation.
Rurality and locality	Place-based discussion could bring different local needs and strengths into regional planning.	Travel distance, transport and centrally based meetings could narrow locality input.	Workshop proposes testing local differences; locality coverage remains to be checked.	Check every locality has a route in; consider venue, travel and remote options; seek missing local perspectives.
Digital inclusion	Remote options could widen access where travel is difficult.	Poor connectivity, lack of equipment or digital skills could exclude people; remote voices may be missed.	Online access is identified in the paper, but practical arrangements are not confirmed.	Retain non-digital input; test access and facilitation; offer technical preparation where available.
Armed Forces community / Covenant	Wider engagement could bring service-related experiences into relevant planning discussions.	Relevant perspectives could remain unheard if existing routes do not reach this community.	No community-specific evidence supplied; no direct service change proposed.	Check relevant engagement routes and seek Covenant advice when future proposals engage functions

within the Duty.

Overall assessment and conditions

The proposal offers a potential positive equality contribution through earlier, supported participation and clearer feedback on influence. However, the available evidence does not establish equitable participation or demonstrate that adverse impacts have been addressed. The principal risks are missing perspectives, inaccessible participation, unequal influence, unconfirmed support and tokenistic engagement. The proposal can continue to discussion and development, with this EQIA remaining draft. Membership, support, governance and equality findings should be reviewed before final Terms of Reference and implementation are approved. Future service, commissioning and resource proposals will require their own proportionate impact assessment; this EQIA does not authorise those changes or replace any separate Fairer Scotland or Consumer Duty consideration.

Proposed actions, responsibilities and review

The following are proposed responsibilities and milestones for agreement, not completed actions or confirmed funding commitments. The Strategic Commissioning Manager should coordinate the action record with meeting support, governance/equality advisers and relevant budget holders.

1. **Prepare accessible participation — before 26 November 2026.** Workshop lead and meeting support to ask members privately about papers, preparation, communication, venue, travel, online access, caring commitments and other adjustments. Confirm what can be provided, with unresolved barriers escalated and alternative input offered. Record arrangements without publishing sensitive personal details.
2. **Test representation and influence — at and following the workshop.** Workshop lead and governance support to check NHS Board and Council nominees, each locality and all prescribed stakeholder groups; identify equality perspectives not reached. Seek supplementary input from absent or missing voices. Additional officer roles must not substitute for required representation. No individual should be expected to represent everyone.
3. **Update the assessment — for committee consideration on 1 December 2026.** Report author to record what the workshop changes in this EQIA, alongside concerns, dissent, evidence gaps and further engagement required. Clearly

distinguish findings available by that date from work still outstanding; do not imply that workshop participation completes wider consultation.

4. **Confirm arrangements — before final approval and implementation.** Strategic Commissioning Manager, governance/equality advisers and budget holders to resolve membership and support arrangements, including the resources needed for adjustments, and check revised Terms of Reference, chairing and reporting. Record named action owners and agreed timescales. Formal appointments and approvals remain with the appropriate bodies.
5. **Check the experience of participation — proposed review within six months of implementation.** SPG chair, once appointed, and planning support to agree the review date before implementation. Seek accessible feedback on preparation, ability to contribute and visible influence; review locality/stakeholder gaps, unmet adjustments and whether concerns reach decision-makers. Record responses to SPG advice and return them to communities and partners. Act sooner if exclusion or discrimination is raised.

Review evidence and assurance. Use participation feedback, the membership/locality coverage check, the support action log and the record of advice and responses. Any equality monitoring should be voluntary, proportionate and privacy-protecting; avoid identifying people through small numbers. Officer/equality review, approval name and date, and arrangements for publication remain to be confirmed. Revisit this EQIA after the workshop, before final approval, if the proposal changes materially, or if new evidence identifies an adverse impact.

Sources informing this draft

Local sources: 'Refreshing SPG (draft 0.1)', committee paper for 1 December 2026; 'SPG - 26 Nov 2026 - Transition Workshop Slides (draft 0.1)'. Public framework: Scottish Government, 'Equality outcomes 2025–2029', Introduction and Outcome 3, 25 April 2025; 'Health and social care - strategic plans: statutory guidance', 10 July 2024; Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Membership of Strategic Planning Group) (Scotland) Regulations 2014, SSI 2014/308; Ministry of Defence, 'Armed Forces Covenant Duty Statutory Guidance', November 2022, updated January 2023. Public sources checked on 13 November 2026. The group-specific risks and proposed actions are assessment judgements to test through engagement, not findings reported by these sources.