

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment: New district wide Local Plan

Organisation prepared for	Somerset West & Taunton		
Version	2	Date Completed	31 st October 2019

Description of what is being impact assessed

As outlined in the Report, Somerset West and Taunton has a statutory duty to produce a new district wide Local Plan. The Issues and Options document is the first stage Local Plan process.

The current adopted Local Plans by Taunton Deane BC and West Somerset Council are somewhat dated. They conformed to government advice at that time they were adopted. They are available at : <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/adopted-local-plans/>

A local plan sets out local planning policies and identifies how land is used, determining what will be built where. As the new district wide local plan progresses through the various statutory stages, the impacts to be assessed are those from the policies proposed within in the new district wide Local Plan. In due course this is likely to involve considering the implications of both strategic planning policies (eg those which aim to secure a significant proportion of affordable housing) and development management policies (eg those associated with the design).

Within the “Customer” function, those within development management and enforcement are responsible for implementing the policies of the Local Plan. For example, when determining planning proposals from developers. Where the Local Plan contains relevant policies, applications for planning permission should be determined in line with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

A Local Plan must demonstrate it is based on a sound evidence and further Impact Assessments will be prepared in due course as part of the plan making process.

The evidence base associated with adopted local has been collected and developed since 2006. It includes: Equalities Information Reports and Annual Monitoring Reports and "Spatial Portraits" which include specific equalities data such as age, race and gender. It also includes Individual Evidence Base Documents such as Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments, Strategic Housing Market Assessments, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNE), Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment (SHMAA), Index of Multiple Deprivation and Health Impact Assessments. Previous Engagement and Consultation also contain information relating to protected characteristics. The documents which form the evidence base can be found within the related pages to the various adopted local plans on the Councils web site at: <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/adopted-local-plans/>

As the new district wide local plan progresses through the various statutory stages, new data will be collected by the Council, its stakeholder and partner organisations to identify and monitor equality issues. With the publication of the Issues and Options document, this process has commenced. The Council will also look to other local authorities EIA's to understand how they have identified and addressed Equality.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

The Strategy team within Somerset West and Taunton are responsible for drafting, adopting and monitoring new local planning policy. This process requires approval from Full Council informed by recommendations from officers.

All geographic areas of Somerset West and Taunton could potentially be affected because the new district wide Local Plan covers the whole of the district. However, some areas / parishes / businesses / residents / protected groups / environments have more potential for being affected. For example, communities abutting land allocated for residential development.

The new district wide Local Plan will have to include a revised “Spatial Portrait” that details demographic information relevant to the new district in relation to protected characteristics such as age, sex, disability, race and religion. As set out in the Issues and Options document data is being updated on such matters. For example, through good design the Local Plan should try to reduce inequalities in the built environment experienced by people with physical disabilities and mental health issues. It could also identify areas of the new district where there are inequalities in health and actively try to deliver improvements in those areas. The Council will also be producing a Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and the Local Plan will be developed alongside this.

As previously reported, the Council also has legal duty to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This sets out how Somerset West and Taunton will involve the community; stakeholders and protected groups in the preparation, alteration and review of local planning policy and the consideration of planning applications within the Local Planning Authority area).

At this stage of the local plan process, no groups have been consulted on this EIA. Consulting on the draft contents of the SCI was seen as being a mechanism to help the Council understand what communities actually want. Having considered a schedule of representation made on the draft SCI, the forthcoming public consultation on the Issues and Options document will be in line with our approved SCI (see Agenda of this Committee). It also keeps stakeholders, our communities and protected groups informed that a review of adopted local plan policies has commenced.

In due course extensive consultation on the Local Plan will take place at each stage of the plan making process. As required by the law, the economic, environmental, and social effects of a plan from the outset of the plan preparation process will be set out in Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and the Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA).

It should be noted that the Local Plan will assume that other regulatory authorities will regulate matters within their control effectively. For example, as the Minerals and Waste Authority for Somerset (excluding Exmoor National Park), Somerset County Council will prepare Minerals and Waste Local Plans.

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at this stage of the process. The Issues and Options document is the first stage Local Plan process. The consultation document presents thoughts and ideas and asks for views on the issues and options presented. For example, as set out in under Objective 9 “Improve Wellbeing” through good design the new district wide Local Plan should try to reduce inequalities in the built environment experienced by people with physical disabilities and mental health issues. The implementation of such measures should have a positive outcome. Previously adopted Local Plans contained measures which improve access to facilities such as schools/hospitals/shops by other than the private car. The planning policies also have a focus on placing development in the most sustainable places which benefits all sectors of the community (especially the young and elderly). These Plans also seek education provision, ensuring that the young in society have access to schools. Furthermore, they mention green space and recreation which benefits all in society but particularly the young and reduces health inequalities. 			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this stage of the process. As advised above, the Issues and Options document is the first stage Local Plan process and consults on the issues and options presented. The implementation of such measures should have a positive outcome. • Previously adopted Local Plans have made provision for elderly members of the population. eg Sheltered Housing and there are policy references to Building for Life and Lifetime Homes criteria. 			☒
Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this stage of the process. • No specific reference or mention in previously adopted Local Plans. 		☒	
Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this stage of the process. • No specific reference or mention in previously adopted Local Plans. 		☒	
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this stage of the process. Within the Issues and Options document, as set out in under Objective 9 “Improve Wellbeing”, the Local Plan aims to provide opportunities to improve everybody’s physical and mental wellbeing. The implementation of such measures should have a positive outcome. • No specific reference or mention in previously adopted Local Plans. 			☒
Race and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this stage of the process. Issues and Options document seeks views on how should we proactively plan for gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople pitches. The implementation of such policies should have a positive outcome. • Previously adopted Local Plans have included policies regarding Gypsy and Travellers eg provision for new residential and transit pitches. 			☒

Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at this stage of the process. Previously adopted Local Plans have included reference to such provision within District and Local Centres as part of wider community facility provision. 		☒	
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at this stage of the process. No specific reference or mention in previously adopted Local Plans. 		☒	
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at this stage of the process. No specific reference or mention in previously adopted Local Plans. 		☒	
Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at this stage of the process. Previously adopted Local Plans contain rural exception policies to address those in housing need in rural areas. The Council supports the Somerset Armed Forces Covenant to ensure veterans are treated fairly and not disadvantaged See https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/community-and-living/armed-forces-covenant/ 		☒	

Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
Initial EIA to be reviewed by Officer with Equalities knowledge and experience	07/06/2019	Nick Bryant	At this early stage of Local Plan process commitment to consult through	☒

			the SCI and Issues & Options document	
Informed by responses on the Issues and Options document, produce an updated “Spatial Portrait” that details the baseline demographic information relevant to the new district in relation to protected characteristics such as age, sex, disability, race and religion.	31/12/2019	Laura Higgins	Through Authorities Monitoring Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Revised EIA to be reviewed by Officer with Equalities knowledge and experience	14/10/2019	Mark Leeman		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.				
None at this stage of the process.				
Completed by:	Paul Browning			
Date	14 th October 2019			
Signed off by:	Nick Bryant			
Date				
Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:	n/a			
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	Paul Browning			
Review date:	Prior to publication of a “Draft Local Plan (Reg 19) in Q2 of 2020/21.			

End