




Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer or www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment

Organisation prepared for (mark as appropriate)		<p>X</p>			
Version	2		Date Completed	16/10/23	
Description of what is being impact assessed					
Development of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Guidance Note and associated public consultation.					
Evidence					
<p>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</p>					
<p>Professional understanding of the broad implications and scope of the BNG Guidance Note and associated public consultation. Biodiversity Net Gain is an incoming mandatory national requirement which is supported by a 2019 Government Impact Assessment - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/839610/net-gain-ia.pdf.</p>					

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

Consultation with David Crisfield (Communities Specialist) – Given the Guidance is responding to a legal requirement and is principally for the benefit of developers, landowners, land agents and planners, with minimal opportunity for residents to affect outcomes, the EIA only needs to be proportional in relation to impacts on the general populous. To that end, because the impacts table is used to ‘score’ how things are prior to any mitigations being put in place it would be appropriate to score each of the Protected Characteristics as neutral rather than positive. With a neutral score there is no need to identify any mitigations as there are no negative impacts to mitigate.

This assessment is to inform public consultation on the BNG Guidance Note. Different equalities groups will be consulted as part of the consultation as per the consultation plan, and feedback received will be taken into account in formulating the final principles for adoption. However, due to the technical nature of the subject matter, limited scope of what is being tailored locally, and the relationship with the planning process itself, the primary focus of the consultation and likely greatest interest is with the developer community, planning agents, landowners and land agents rather than the general public. Further consultation and engagement will be undertaken as part of planning applications and plan and policy development in due course.

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
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<p>Age</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Net Gain is an incoming mandatory national requirement for relevant planning applications. It has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group. However, delivery of BNG in alignment with the national requirements and local approach set out in the Guidance Note will help to improve local access to nature for all groups and communities. • Where public engagement is taking place then this will take place using different consultation methods and where appropriate through relevant equality groups. Given the technical nature of the subject matter and very specific technical aspects where the mandatory national requirement is proposed to be tailored locally it may be difficult for many in the general public to engage with. However, this has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group, is only realistically likely to be of interest to and is primarily aimed at the developer community, planning agents, landowners and land agents rather than the general public. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Disability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Net Gain is an incoming mandatory national requirement for relevant planning applications. It has no direct interaction with the 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<p>interests or protected characteristics of any protected group. However, delivery of BNG in alignment with the national requirements and local approach set out in the Guidance Note will help to improve local access to nature for all groups and communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where public engagement is taking place then this will take place using different consultation methods and where appropriate through relevant equality groups. Given the technical nature of the subject matter and very specific technical aspects where the mandatory national requirement is proposed to be tailored locally it may be difficult for many in the general public to engage with. However, this has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group, is only realistically likely to be of interest to and is primarily aimed at the developer community, planning agents, landowners and land agents rather than the general public. 			
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Net Gain is an incoming mandatory national requirement for relevant planning applications. It has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group. However, delivery of BNG in alignment with the national requirements and local 	<p>□</p>	<p>⊗</p>	<p>□</p>

	<p>approach set out in the Guidance Note will help to improve local access to nature for all groups and communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where public engagement is taking place then this will take place using different consultation methods and where appropriate through relevant equality groups. Given the technical nature of the subject matter and very specific technical aspects where the mandatory national requirement is proposed to be tailored locally it may be difficult for many in the general public to engage with. However, this has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group, is only realistically likely to be of interest to and is primarily aimed at the developer community, planning agents, landowners and land agents rather than the general public. 			
<p>Marriage and civil partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Net Gain is an incoming mandatory national requirement for relevant planning applications. It has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group. However, delivery of BNG in alignment with the national requirements and local approach set out in the Guidance Note will help to improve local access to nature for all groups and communities. • Where public engagement is taking place then this will take place using different consultation methods 	<p>□</p>	<p>⊗</p>	<p>□</p>

	<p>and where appropriate through relevant equality groups. Given the technical nature of the subject matter and very specific technical aspects where the mandatory national requirement is proposed to be tailored locally it may be difficult for many in the general public to engage with. However, this has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group, is only realistically likely to be of interest to and is primarily aimed at the developer community, planning agents, landowners and land agents rather than the general public.</p>			
<p>Pregnancy and maternity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Net Gain is an incoming mandatory national requirement for relevant planning applications. It has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group. However, delivery of BNG in alignment with the national requirements and local approach set out in the Guidance Note will help to improve local access to nature for all groups and communities. • Where public engagement is taking place then this will take place using different consultation methods and where appropriate through relevant equality groups. Given the technical nature of the subject matter and very specific technical aspects where the mandatory national requirement is proposed to be tailored locally it may be difficult for many in the general public to engage with. However, this has 	<p>□</p>	<p>⊗</p>	<p>□</p>

	<p>no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group, is only realistically likely to be of interest to and is primarily aimed at the developer community, planning agents, landowners and land agents rather than the general public.</p>			
<p>Race and ethnicity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Net Gain is an incoming mandatory national requirement for relevant planning applications. It has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group. However, delivery of BNG in alignment with the national requirements and local approach set out in the Guidance Note will help to improve local access to nature for all groups and communities. • Where public engagement is taking place then this will take place using different consultation methods and where appropriate through relevant equality groups. Given the technical nature of the subject matter and very specific technical aspects where the mandatory national requirement is proposed to be tailored locally it may be difficult for many in the general public to engage with. However, this has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group, is only realistically likely to be of interest to and is primarily aimed at the developer community, planning agents, landowners and land agents rather than the general public. 	<p>□</p>	<p>⊗</p>	<p>□</p>

<p>Religion or belief</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Net Gain is an incoming mandatory national requirement for relevant planning applications. It has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group. However, delivery of BNG in alignment with the national requirements and local approach set out in the Guidance Note will help to improve local access to nature for all groups and communities. • Where public engagement is taking place then this will take place using different consultation methods and where appropriate through relevant equality groups. Given the technical nature of the subject matter and very specific technical aspects where the mandatory national requirement is proposed to be tailored locally it may be difficult for many in the general public to engage with. However, this has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group, is only realistically likely to be of interest to and is primarily aimed at the developer community, planning agents, landowners and land agents rather than the general public. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Sex</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Net Gain is an incoming mandatory national requirement for relevant planning applications. It has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group. However, delivery of BNG in 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<p>alignment with the national requirements and local approach set out in the Guidance Note will help to improve local access to nature for all groups and communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where public engagement is taking place then this will take place using different consultation methods and where appropriate through relevant equality groups. Given the technical nature of the subject matter and very specific technical aspects where the mandatory national requirement is proposed to be tailored locally it may be difficult for many in the general public to engage with. However, this has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group, is only realistically likely to be of interest to and is primarily aimed at the developer community, planning agents, landowners and land agents rather than the general public. 			
<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Net Gain is an incoming mandatory national requirement for relevant planning applications. It has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group. However, delivery of BNG in alignment with the national requirements and local approach set out in the Guidance Note will help to improve local access to nature for all groups and communities. 	<p>□</p>	<p>⊗</p>	<p>□</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where public engagement is taking place then this will take place using different consultation methods and where appropriate through relevant equality groups. Given the technical nature of the subject matter and very specific technical aspects where the mandatory national requirement is proposed to be tailored locally it may be difficult for many in the general public to engage with. However, this has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group, is only realistically likely to be of interest to and is primarily aimed at the developer community, planning agents, landowners and land agents rather than the general public. 			
<p>Armed Forces (including serving personnel, families and veterans)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity Net Gain is an incoming mandatory national requirement for relevant planning applications. It has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group. However, delivery of BNG in alignment with the national requirements and local approach set out in the Guidance Note will help to improve local access to nature for all groups and communities. Where public engagement is taking place then this will take place using different consultation methods and where appropriate through relevant equality groups. Given the technical nature of the subject matter and very specific technical aspects where the mandatory national requirement is proposed to 	<p>□</p>	<p>⊗</p>	<p>□</p>

	<p>be tailored locally it may be difficult for many in the general public to engage with. However, this has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group, is only realistically likely to be of interest to and is primarily aimed at the developer community, planning agents, landowners and land agents rather than the general public.</p>			
<p>Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Net Gain is an incoming mandatory national requirement for relevant planning applications. It has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group. However, delivery of BNG in alignment with the national requirements and local approach set out in the Guidance Note will help to improve local access to nature for all groups and communities. • Where public engagement is taking place then this will take place using different consultation methods and where appropriate through relevant equality groups. Given the technical nature of the subject matter and very specific technical aspects where the mandatory national requirement is proposed to be tailored locally it may be difficult for many in the general public to engage with. However, this has no direct interaction with the interests or protected characteristics of any protected group, is only 	<p>□</p>	<p>⊗</p>	<p>□</p>

	realistically likely to be of interest to and is primarily aimed at the developer community, planning agents, landowners and land agents rather than the general public.			
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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
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

There will remain some negative impacts in relation to public consultation due to the technical nature of the topic. However, the scope of the local influence on BNG and scope of the consultation are such that whilst the general public are invited to respond and appropriate consultation methods will be used, they are not a key stakeholder in this case. As such, a proportionate and reasonable approach has been suggested.

Completed by:	Graeme Thompson
Date	16/10/2023
Signed off by:	James Divall
Date	20/10/2023
Equality Lead sign off name:	Tom Rutland

Equality Lead sign off date:	22/01/2024
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	
Review date:	