

Draft strategies/policies – Equality Impact Check

Draft strategy/policy being checked: Joint Design Guide (Draft for consultation)

Is this draft strategy/policy:

- South only
- Vale only
- Joint across both councils

Service team: Planning Service

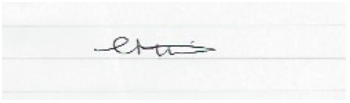
Officer completing this: Jake Bassett

Once completed:

Date completed: 09/12/2021

Signed  (Jake Bassett Urban Design Officer)

Signed _____ ARD _____ (Adrian Duffield Head of Service)

Signed  (Lynne Mitchell Equalities Officer)

PLEASE NOTE – THIS CHECK MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE YOUR DRAFT STRATEGY IS SUBMITTED TO MANAGEMENT TEAM AND COUNCILLORS FOR APPROVAL

Why do you need to do this Equality Impact Check?

Our strategies and policies set out the way we will deliver our services (including employment opportunities). When we are developing them, we need to check that they are not going to create any barriers which could prevent people from accessing our services.

People in Southern Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse may face barriers because of things like **disability, gender (including transgender, pregnancy and maternity), age, sexual orientation, rural isolation, income, religion/belief or ethnicity.**

As well as thinking about how our services will meet the needs of these groups of people, we also need to consider how our draft strategies and policies will help us to:

- promote positive relations within communities
- give everyone a voice
- respect and value everyone
- protect people's human rights

This Equality Impact Check provides officers with a framework to help them work through these considerations in relation to their draft policy/strategy, ensuring that we are meeting our legal duties with regards to equality and diversity.

We have a statutory duty to carry out these assessments and they contribute towards our corporate priority to 'optimise access to services (Vale)/' provide equality of access to our services' (South).

If you have any queries about this Check or would like some advice/support in completing it, please contact the Shared equalities officer (see contact details below).

Once you've completed this Equality Impact Check, please send the paperwork to the shared equality officer, along with a copy of the draft strategy/policy.

Lynne Mitchell (equalities officer)
Email: lynne.mitchell@southandvale.gov.uk
Telephone: 07598 545906

OUTLINE OF THE DRAFT STRATEGY / POLICY YOU ARE CHECKING:

1. What are the aims and objectives of this draft strategy/policy?

Production of a new Design Guide to cover both South and Vale districts (currently both districts have separate design guides; adopted in 2016 for South and 2015 for Vale)

The Joint Design Guide will be a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). SPDs build upon and provide more detailed guidance about policies in the Local Plan. They do not form part of the Local Plan itself and they are not subject to independent examination, but they are material considerations in determining planning applications.

Since the project began, the scope of the design guide has had to broaden to bring design guidance and practice up to date with the current revisions of the NPPF, National Design Guide, National design code and Building regulations.

This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) specifically covers the draft Joint Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

2. Who is the proposed strategy or policy designed to support / help / serve?

Planning officers, property developers, planning applicants, agents, landowners, design consultants, Councillors, Town and parish councillors and neighbourhood groups, new and existing residents.

3. If the draft strategy/policy relates to an existing council service/function, has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) already been completed on the service/function?

No

Yes – please list any issues/barriers identified within the assessment that your draft strategy needs to address:

The Joint Design Guide is supplementary to the Local Plans for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils. An EIA for the Joint Design Guide is now being carried out. An EIA was carried out as part of the current South Oxfordshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document November 2016 which also seeks to raise the quality of design (including inclusive accessibility) in new development in the district.

As a result of that EIA some editorial changes were made. The supporting text within the current adopted Design Guide included references to *“the needs of all users including the elderly, disabled, parents and carers”*. Other edits were made within the design

principles such as adding a principle around ‘seeking to improve access and movement for all users’. A definition for inclusivity was included within the glossary. This negated the need to make reference to each relevant protected characteristic within a policy as we could inadvertently forget a relevant group. Therefore, in some policies it says ‘all users’. These edits have been carried forward into the new draft Joint Design Guide.

Reference to the Fieldfare Trust guidance (‘Countryside for All’ – A good practice guide to Disabled People’s Access in the Countryside) has also been made.

4. Does the draft strategy or policy have the potential to cause a negative impact or discriminate against certain groups in the community?

Equality group	Yes	No	If ‘yes’, please explain how the strategy/policy could cause a negative impact or discriminate. If you can not justify this you will need to take mitigating action, complete the action plan at the end of this assessment.	If ‘No,’ What existing evidence (presumed or otherwise) do you have for this? e.g. Will the service changes advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic? This means will they <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
People from ethnic minority groups		No		The Joint Design Guide is not expected to create any barriers to participation for people in this target group. The South and Vale councils will make documents available in alternative languages if this is needed, with the aim of reducing barriers for people who do not have English as their first language. The Joint Design Guide website can be translated automatically to other languages via Google translate at the bottom of every page.

Equality group	Yes	No	If 'yes', please explain how the strategy/policy could cause a negative impact or discriminate. If you can not justify this you will need to take mitigating action, complete the action plan at the end of this assessment.	If 'No,' What existing evidence (presumed or otherwise) do you have for this? e.g. Will the service changes advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic? This means will they <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
People with disabilities <i>(including carers)</i>		No		The Joint Design Guide is a tool used to submit and assess planning application. The applications will need to comply with the Building Regulations which cover the requirements to ensure disabilities are catered for in the built environment. Therefore, the Joint Design Guide is not expected to create any barriers to participation for people in this target group. Regarding the consultation, we will ensure that the consultation portal is as accessible and as easy to use as possible. We will achieve this by using clear language. We will also make hard copies of documents available in libraries and alternative formats are available upon request.
Men or women <i>(including pregnant women, women on maternity and transgender people)</i>		No		The Joint Design Guide is not expected to create any barriers to participation for people in this target group and therefore it is not considered that it will cause a negative impact or discriminate this targeted group.
Gay, lesbian or bisexual people		No		The Joint Design Guide is not expected to create any barriers to participation for people in this target group and therefore it is not considered that it will cause a negative impact or discriminate this targeted group.

Equality group	Yes	No	If 'yes', please explain how the strategy/policy could cause a negative impact or discriminate. If you can not justify this you will need to take mitigating action, complete the action plan at the end of this assessment.	If 'No,' What existing evidence (presumed or otherwise) do you have for this? e.g. Will the service changes advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic? This means will they <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. • Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
People from different religions/beliefs <i>(including people without a religion/belief)</i>		No		The Joint Design Guide is not expected to create any barriers to participation for people in this target group and therefore it is not considered that it will cause a negative impact or discriminate this targeted group.
Older or younger people		No		The Joint Design Guide is not expected to create any barriers to participation for people in this target group and therefore it is not considered that it will cause a negative impact or discriminate this targeted group. The Joint Design Guide SPD consultation will use written methods of engagement alongside digital methods. We send out letters to those who request it and have no other means of engaging with us. We provide hard copies of documents upon request and consultation documents are distributed to deposit locations. For younger people, the impact is positive, as young people are likely to engage with our online methods of communication, using the Council's social media channels.

Equality group	Yes	No	If 'yes', please explain how the strategy/policy could cause a negative impact or discriminate. If you can not justify this you will need to take mitigating action, complete the action plan at the end of this assessment.	If 'No,' What existing evidence (presumed or otherwise) do you have for this? e.g. Will the service changes advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic? This means will they <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
People living in rural areas		No		The Joint Design Guide is not expected to create any barriers to participation for people in this target group and therefore it is not considered that it will cause a negative impact or discriminate this targeted group. Hard copies of consultation documents are provided in specific deposit locations, including libraries across the district.
Local Voluntary, Community and Faith sector organisations		No		<i>If your draft strategy/policy doesn't relate to the VCF sector, please state that here.</i> The SPD does not specifically relate to the VCF sector. However, the draft SPD is not expected to create any barriers to participation for people in this group and therefore it is not considered that it will cause a negative impact to, or discriminate, this group.

5. Have reasonable adjustments been made for people with disabilities to ensure they can use the draft strategy or policy? This might mean treating disabled people better than non-disabled people in order to meet their needs

No

Yes - please provide detail:

The Joint Design Guide SPD has been written using plain English and in a style that is easy to read and navigate. The document has been made available through a website format and is designed so that it can be printed directly from the website. At the bottom of the website there is a google translate option which allows to view the content in other languages. We have prepared a pdf format document for those who wish to request it. The survey has been designed to be easy to use. We will make copies of any of our planning consultation documents available in Easy Read, Braille, large print and audio upon request. A printed version of the website will be available to view at the main library locations in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

6. Have there been any equality related recommendations in the area that your draft policy/strategy is covering which have arisen from, for example, internal/external audits or scrutiny reports?

Recommendation made	Is this being addressed in your draft strategy or policy? If not, please explain why.
None	

7. Will the draft strategy or policy help to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it e.g will the changes help to tackle prejudice and promote understanding between the different groups?

- No (*If you feel there is scope to improve how you foster good relations, amend your decision accordingly*)
- Yes – please explain how

The draft Joint Design Guide SPD will help to foster good relations by demonstrating that the Council is engaging with the community in the preparation of guidance to raise the standard of design quality and sustainability across both districts.

8. Will the draft strategy or policy protect and promote human rights? [You may find it helpful to view the human rights guide for public authorities on the intranet to help you decide]

- No – please explain why and how you will amend the draft policy/strategy to eliminate the effect (if you think the effect cannot be eliminated but can be justified, please also give details):
- Yes – please list relevant articles and briefly explain how you think your policy/strategy demonstrates compliance

The contents of the Joint Design Guide does not have the potential to affect Human Rights
The relevant human rights in this draft SPD consultation are as follows:

Article 8 - Respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence.

Article 10 - Freedom of expression.

Article 14 - Protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms.

Protocol 1, Article 1 - Right to peaceful enjoyment of your property.

No human rights will be affected by the draft Joint Design Guide SPD. Human rights will continue to be taken account of during the planning process.

9. Has there been consultation with relevant community groups to help inform this draft strategy or policy?

The draft Joint Design Guide will be subject to public consultation. This will be publicised by sending emails or letters to those registered on the planning consultation database, as well as promoting on our website, via social media, a press release and by providing posters to go up at main libraries across the district.

The Equality Impact Officer has been contacted to request a list of groups that the Officer may feel should be consulted. These groups will then be contacted as part of the external consultation to seek their views on the content of the Joint Design Guide.

10. Has the draft strategy or policy missed opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and positive attitudes?

No

Yes – please outline the plans you have to address the missed opportunities (complete table below)

The Council will continue to encourage the participation of all sectors of the community in the preparation of this SPD.