

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA): Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document

Introduction – Please read

The Public Sector Equality Duty, introduced under the Equality Act 2010, requires all public bodies, including local authorities, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) allow the Council to:

- Show that we are meeting this legal duty by demonstrating due regard for the provisions of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Identify possible negative impacts on individuals and groups with protected characteristics, plan mitigating action and seek to maximise opportunities to advance equality within our activities.

EqIAs provide a methodical approach to the assessment of impacts across the [nine protected characteristics](#) and should be completed during the development and review of all Council policies, strategies, procedures, projects or functions. Where there is any doubt, the completion of an EqIA is always recommended.

Throughout the course of this form, please hover over the  symbol for guidance in relation to specific questions. When the form is completed, please send an



electronic copy to equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk. If you require any additional support completing the form, please email the above address.

Equality Impact Assessment Complete Form

Section 1: Identifying Details

- 1.1** Team and Service completing EqIA:
Planning Policy Team, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service.
- 1.2** Title of proposal:
Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- 1.3** EqIA completion date:
January 2022
- 1.4** Proposal implementation date:
Early 2022 - Adoption of the Supplementary Planning Document.
- 1.5** Who will be responsible for implementing this proposal:
Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service and external stakeholders.

Section 2: Proposal to be assessed

- 2.1** Type of proposal:
Policy guidance – Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- 2.2** Is the proposal: New
The Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD is a new document; however, it does not introduce new planning policy. The document expands and provides additional guidance on the application of policies within adopted Local Plans covering the Greater Cambridge Area, namely the South Cambridgeshire

Local Plan (September 2018) and the Cambridge Local Plan (October 2018). The Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD supersedes the South Cambridgeshire Biodiversity SPD 2009.

2.3 State the date of any previous equality impact assessment completed in relation to this proposal (if applicable):

- Draft Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD – July 2021.
- Assessments completed during the preparation of the two adopted Local Plans to which this supplementary guidance relates.

2.4 What are the headline aims of the proposal and the objectives that will help to accomplish these aims? (Approximately 250 words)

The Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD has been prepared to assist the delivery of adopted Local Plan policies relating to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. It provides technical guidance, for individuals, businesses and organisations submitting planning applications, on the information that is required to demonstrate compliance with adopted planning policies relating to biodiversity. In providing such guidance, the SPD seeks to ensure that all new development complies with current planning policy and contributes to the councils' commitment to deliver measurable biodiversity net gain across Greater Cambridge.

Specific objectives of the document are as follows:

- To explain terminology associated with biodiversity conservation to assist applicants' understanding of the importance of biodiversity within the wider environment of Greater Cambridge.
- To be clear on the ways in which development proposals in Greater Cambridge can be formulated in an appropriate manner to avoid harm to biodiversity and to provide a long-term, measurable net gain for biodiversity.
- To encourage applicants to protect, restore and enhance locally relevant natural habitats and ecological features on their sites and to create new habitats, as part of a high-quality design.
- To assist applicants to gain planning permission in Greater Cambridge more quickly by informing them of the level of information expected to accompany planning applications.

The SPD provides guidance on the following policies contained within the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018):

- NH/2 Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character
- NH/3 Protecting Agricultural Land
- NH/4 Biodiversity
- NH/5 Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance
- NH/6 Green Infrastructure
- NH/7 Ancient Woodlands and Veteran Trees
- CC/8 Sustainable Drainage Systems
- HQ/1 Design Principles

The SPD provides guidance on the following policies contained within the adopted Cambridge Local Plan (2018):

- Policy 7 The River Cam
- Policy 8 Setting of the city
- Policy 31 Integrated water management
- Policy 52 Protecting garden land and the subdivision of existing dwelling plots
- Policy 57 Designing New Buildings (criteria h)
- Policy 58 Altering and extending existing buildings
- Policy 59 Designing landscape and the public realm
- Policy 66 Paving over front gardens
- Policy 69 Protection of sites of biodiversity and geodiversity importance
- Policy 70 Protection of Priority Species and Habitats
- Policy 71 Trees

2.5 Which of South Cambridgeshire District Council's business plan priorities does this proposal link to?

- Helping Businesses to grow - ✓
- Building homes that are truly affordable to live in - ✓
- Being green to our core - ✓
- A modern and caring council - ✓

2.6 Which of South Cambridgeshire District Council's equality objectives (as detailed in SCDC's Equality Scheme) does this proposal link to or help to achieve?

- Identify, prioritise and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community- ✓
- SCDC is an employer that values difference and recognises the strength that a diverse workforce brings - ✓
- Protected characteristic groups have a voice and are represented in forming the future shape of the district - ✓

2.7 Which of Cambridge City Council's equality objectives (as detailed in CCC's Equality Scheme) does this proposal link to or help to achieve?

- To further increase our understanding of the needs of Cambridge's growing and increasingly diverse communities so that we can target our services effectively - ✓
- To continue to work to improve access to and take-up of Council services from all residents and communities - ✓
- To work towards a situation where all residents have equal access to public activities and spaces in Cambridge and are able to participate fully in the community - ✓

2.8 Which groups or individuals will the proposal affect:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| • Service Users ✓ | • Councillors ✓ |
| • External Stakeholders ✓ | • Other ✓ |
| • Employees ✓ | |

If other, please specify – all residents and visitors to the Greater Cambridge area.

2.9 How will these groups or individuals be affected?



The Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD has been prepared to provide a clear framework to better enable consideration of biodiversity issues in decision making relevant to the delivery of new development across the Greater Cambridge area.

The SPD will apply to new development across the Greater Cambridge area. As such, there is potential for it to affect a large and wide-ranging proportion of existing and future communities by facilitating environmental improvements and improved access to natural green spaces within and around new developments.

The SPD sets out guidance to assist applicants for planning permission in meeting local and national policy requirements for biodiversity in their proposed developments. In this regard, the SPD will specifically affect applicants, agents, landowners, and developers by providing additional clarification and guidance.

As part of the public consultation on the draft SPD held from 23 July 2021 to 17 September 2021, views were invited from a range of local groups and individuals, including the following:

- Existing and future residents of Greater Cambridge
- Local Parish Councils and Residents Associations
- Local Members
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Adjacent Local Authorities
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
- Delivery partners, including householders, landowners, developers, infrastructure providers, transport providers
- Community organisations
- Local businesses

The views expressed by individuals, communities, businesses, academic institutions, and stakeholders during the consultation have fed into the final version of the SPD. All consultation and community engagement in respect of the draft Biodiversity SPD was undertaken in accordance with the [Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Statement of Community Involvement](#) (2019), including the Addendum prepared in response to restrictions related to the Coronavirus pandemic.

2.11 How many people will this proposal affect?

The Biodiversity SPD has the potential to affect all existing and future residents, workers, and visitors to the Greater Cambridge area.

2.12 If any part of the proposal is being undertaken by external partners, please specify how SCDC will ensure that they will meet equality standards?

The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service commissioned external consultants to prepare the draft version of the Biodiversity SPD, with oversight and input from a Project Team of specialist officers from within the Service. The procurement process addressed tackling inequalities in employment and equal opportunities for our communities.

Section 3: Evidence and Data

3.1 Describe any research (this could include consultation) and analysis you have undertaken to understand how [protected characteristic groups](#) are likely to be affected? Please list any key sources that you used to obtain this Information. 

The South Cambridgeshire District Council [Equality Scheme](#) describes the district as a rural area with a population which is expected to grow at faster than the national average. A growing elderly population, greater mobility, immigration, and other social trends are making changes to the population. These changes will accelerate as a result of the population growth facing the district in the future, leading to a more diverse society than previously. The following is a snapshot of the residents of South Cambridgeshire:

- At present approximately 19% of the South Cambridgeshire population falls within the 65+ age group and this is expected to grow to approx. 22% in 2031.
- In 2011 approximately 14% of the population declared a disability whereby day-to-day activities are limited a little or a lot.
- The 2011 Census data shows that in South Cambridgeshire 87.3% of the population were White British (which has fallen in the last ten years from 93.2%) and 6% declared themselves as White Irish, White Gypsy/Irish Traveller and White Other.

The Cambridge City Council [Equality Scheme 2018 – 2021](#) sets out the Council’s proposed objectives related to equality and diversity work over the three year period and includes useful data regarding the nine protected characteristics collated from a range of Council services and functions. It describes the city as an urban area which is experiencing growth. The following is a snapshot of the residents of Cambridge:

- The number of households increased by 9.5% between 2001 and 2011.
- There is a bulge in the number of people in the 16 to 24 and 25 to 39 age groups. This reflects the large number of students living in the city.
- Overall, the population of Cambridge had aged slightly; however, the increase in the number of older people as a proportion of the population was not as high as in other areas.
- 34% of Cambridge residents are from minority ethnic groups compared to 15.5% for the County as a whole. 11% of the population are Asian/Asian British compared to 4.1% in the County and 1.7% are Black/African/Caribbean/Black British compared to 1% in the County.

No evidence has been found to suggest the SPD will have a specific adverse impact upon protected characteristic groups; however, it does have the potential to deliver increased access to natural green spaces and other green infrastructure for the benefit of whole communities across Greater Cambridge. Such access has been shown to have a positive impact upon an individual’s mental health and overall well-being.

3.2 Describe any research (this could include consultation) and analysis you have undertaken to understand any effects on any other groups of people not mentioned in the nine [protected characteristic groups](#) (for example people who live in rural areas, who live in areas of high growth, or from low-income backgrounds). 

n/a

3.3 If you have not undertaken any consultation, please detail why not, or when consultation is planned to take place. 



Public consultation exercises were undertaken at various stages in the preparation of both adopted Local Plans covering the Greater Cambridge area. This is evidenced in the [South Cambridgeshire Local Plan \(2018\) Consultation Statement](#) and the [Cambridge Local Plan \(2018\) Consultation Statement](#).

The draft Biodiversity SPD was subject to a formal public consultation from 23 July to 17 September 2021, in accordance with the [Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Statement of Community Involvement \(2019\)](#), (including the Addendum prepared in response to restrictions related to the Coronavirus pandemic), to actively engage with the local community and key stakeholders. During the consultation period the draft SPD and supporting documents were available to view on the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning website. A wide range of stakeholders, including equalities organisations representing the interests of the protected characteristics, were notified of the consultation. Consultation documents were made available in an accessible format online and paper copies were available on request. It was possible to make comments on the draft SPD using an online questionnaire. For those without access to the internet, or experiencing difficulties responding online, a contact telephone number for the Natural Environment Team at the Planning Service was provided.

A Statement of Consultation has been prepared which sets out the nature of the consultation undertaken, including a summary of who was consulted, the main issues raised in representations and how these were addressed in the final version of the SPD.

Section 4: Impact of proposal on those with protected characteristics

4.1 Age:

4.1.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

The guidance provided by the SPD applies to new development and has the potential to improve access to natural green spaces across the Greater Cambridge area. Such improved access may be beneficial to specific age groups. For example, the provision of 'green corridors' within a new residential development may be of particular benefit to those residents unable to drive to similar amenities further afield i.e., younger or older age groups. The provision of natural green spaces within a new business park may be particularly beneficial to people of working age as it may be possible to access these during the working day.

The Planning Service were mindful of this protected characteristic in planning for the public consultation on the draft SPD. It is recognised that younger age groups are less likely to engage in consultations. To reach out to younger people, organisations such as the ChYpPS (Children and Young People's Participation Service) were notified of the consultation exercise and regular updates were posted on social media platforms throughout the consultation period to raise awareness.

Evidence suggests that a relatively high proportion of people within older age groups may not have access to the internet and therefore are less able to participate in public consultation exercises. Whilst current COVID-19 restrictions have limited the opportunities for members of the public to view hard copies of documents at council buildings, a contact telephone number for the Natural Environment Team was provided on all publicity materials, including public notices, which enabled appropriate viewing arrangements to be made.

4.1.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.1.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

4.2 Disability:

4.2.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

Whilst no specific impacts on this protected characteristic have been identified, the Biodiversity SPD has the potential to improve access for less mobile individuals and groups to natural green spaces within or around new developments in Greater Cambridge.

The Planning Service was mindful of this protected characteristic in planning for the public consultation on the draft SPD by ensuring all documents were made available in an accessible format. Provision was made for respondents to submit their comments using an online questionnaire. For those without access to the internet, or experiencing difficulties responding online, a contact

telephone number for the Natural Environment Team was provided. Braille and large print versions of the documents were available on request.

4.2.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.2.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

4.3 Gender Reassignment:

4.3.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

NO.

4.3.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 📖
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.3.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

4.4 Marriage and Civil Partnership:

4.4.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

NO.

4.4.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 📖
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.4.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

4.5 Pregnancy and Maternity:

4.5.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

NO

4.5.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.5.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

4.6 Race:

4.6.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

Whilst no specific impact on this protected characteristic has been identified, during the forthcoming consultation members of the public will be provided with a contact telephone number to arrange to access the consultation documents translated into other languages, should this be required.

4.6.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.6.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

4.7 Religion or Belief:

4.7.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

NO

4.7.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.7.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

4.8 Sex:

4.8.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

NO.

4.8.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 📖
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.8.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

4.9 Sexual Orientation:

4.9.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

NO.

4.9.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 📖
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.9.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

4.10 Other: (e.g., rurality, growth, socio-economic status etc.)

4.10.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

The guidance provided by the SPD applies to new development and has the potential to improve access to natural green spaces across the Greater Cambridge area. Such improved access may be of particular benefit to those within lower income groups who may be less likely to have use of a car to drive to similar amenities further afield.

People from lower income groups may not have access to the internet and therefore could be less able to participate in public consultation exercises. Whilst COVID-19 restrictions limited the opportunities for members of the public to view paper copies of documents at council buildings, a contact telephone number was provided on all publicity materials, including public notices, to enable alternative viewing arrangements to be made.

4.10.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 📖
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.10.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Section 5: Summary

5.1 Briefly summarise the key findings of the EqIA and any significant equality considerations that should be taken into account when deciding whether or not to proceed with the proposal (this section can be included within the ‘equality implications’ section of any committee reports). (Approximately 250 words).

The Draft Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD was subject to a public consultation exercise in summer 2021. A wide range of stakeholders, including statutory consultees, community groups and equalities organisations representing the interests of the protected characteristics, were notified of the consultation. No specific equality issues were raised as a result of the consultation.

5.2 Confirm the recommendation of the officer completing the EqIA:

- Approved (No major change): Your analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust, and the evidence shows no potential for discrimination

and that you have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.

5.3 Date of completion:
January 2022

Section 6: Sign Off

- 6.1** Approving officer EqIA review outcome: (delete as appropriate):
- Approved (No major change): Your analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust, and the evidence shows no potential for discrimination and that you have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.
- 6.2** Do you give permission to publish this EqIA on SCDC website (delete as appropriate)? If no, please state reason.
Yes.
- 6.3** When will this proposal next be reviewed and who will this be?
New biodiversity policies will form part of the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, which will be subject to further equality impact assessments.
- 6.4** Approving officer signature:
- 6.5** Date of approval: January 2022