

Hertsmere Borough Council

Local Development Framework

Equalities Impact Assessment
of the
Revised Core Strategy
(as submitted to the Secretary of State)

January 2012



Introduction

This document is an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) for the Hertsmere Core Strategy (as submitted to the Secretary of State), and has been prepared by Hertsmere Borough Council.

The Core Strategy is a strategic document that sets out the key spatial objectives and policies that will guide development in the Borough for the next 15 years.

The purpose of the EqIA is to assess the impact the Core Strategy, on the relevant Equalities Duties; these being, race; gender; disability; sexual orientation; age; religious belief; caring/dependant responsibilities; pregnancy and maternity; and transgender or transsexual.

Hertsmere Borough Council is committed to the provision of high quality services in ways, which mean they are accessible to everyone. This is set out in the Hertsmere Equality and Diversity Scheme 2007-2010.

This generic equality scheme reflects the statutory duties of the Council under the Equalities Act, where most of the requirements came into force on 1 October 2010, and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) became effective from April 2011. This Act combined the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006.

The Equalities Act sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone, such as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person. The PSED focuses on the transparency and accountability of public authorities, with a general duty of eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing quality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

It also takes account of the Council's responsibilities under other equality and diversity legislation as well as best practice contained in codes of practice issued by the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission, and the Disability Rights Commission. In October 2007 these three Commissions were brought together as the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The purpose of the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to address and tackle inequality, by:

- Reducing public expenditure in an efficient and fair way;
- Create strong social and community networks; and
- Remove the obstacles to making things happen.

Findings of the Equalities Impact Assessment

An EqIA is required when a public authority plans, changes or removed a service, policy or function. The EqIA is an integral part of the development of the policy document. The EqIA relevance screening concluded that there was a need to carry out an initial EqIA of the Core Strategy.

The Initial EqIA contained, concluded that the Core Strategy is capable of having a number of positive differential impacts but is not considered to have any adverse impacts on the various equalities categories and that a full EqIA is not required. This assessment was undertaken following a previous EqIA in March 2009 and revisions with relevant public engagement taking place on the document since that time.

Initial Equalities Impact Assessment of Core Strategy (as submitted to the Secretary of State) January 2012

Unit	Planning and Building Control
Section	Policy and Transport
Person responsible for the assessment	Sarah Churchard
Policy document to be assessed	Core Strategy
Date of assessment	January 2012
Is this a new or existing policy document	New
1. What are you looking to achieve in this activity?	The purpose of the Core Strategy is to provide a strategic planning framework and direction for a spatial vision for the Borough for the next 15 years. There are 21 Local Development Framework Sustainability Objectives within the document.
2. Who in the main will benefit?	The community as a whole, community and interest groups, stakeholders, a number of land owners, private individuals and developers, in addition to the Council. These groups will all benefit in various way. The Council will benefit from having a document that provides strategic direction relating to spatial planning issues and sustainability. Councillors and HBC officers will benefit from having an up to date document to provide direction for decision making and future policy development that is line with current legislation and central Government policy requirements.
3. What are you trying to achieve with this document?	<p>The Core Strategy is expected to deliver on strategic issues that involve the use of land, and the movement of people and access to opportunities in relation to that land. In doing so the document assists in delivering the following Community Strategy objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a safer environment and increase the feelings of safety. 2. Promote and provide opportunities for healthier lifestyles and improve the quality of life for older people. 3. Combat poverty and narrow the gap. 4. Create better living conditions for Hertsmere residents. 5. Deliver and promote quality activities for young people. <p>The Core Strategy was informed and was produce in conformity with the Hertsmere Together – Community Strategy 2010-2021</p>

<p>4. How will you tell people about the document?</p>	<p>The Council has undertaken several rounds of public consultation, in compliance with The Town and Country (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (amended 2008 and 2010). Amendments have been made to the document in response to representations received. Details of the consultations have been advertised in the local newspapers, press releases and householder newsletter.</p>	
<p>5. What could prevent your communities getting the most out of the document?</p>	<p>Unforeseen/ unavoidable circumstances, such as the current economic downturn. Changes in Legislation which inadvertently impact on the Core Strategy.</p>	
<p>6. Who is the document for?</p>	<p>Local residents, community and interest groups, land owners, private individuals, developers, and the Council.</p>	
<p>7. Who implements the policy document, and who is responsible for the policy?</p>	<p>Hertsmere Borough Council Development Management – Officers ...undo delegated powers Hertsmere Planning Committee determining applications no delegated to Officers Hertsmere Borough Council Policy and Transport Team – for preparing the policies</p>	
<p>8. Could this policy document have a differential impact on racial groups</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Core Strategy addresses the overarching principles of community cohesion, social inclusion, and accessibility amongst others. In particular Policy CS6 of the document is capable of having a positive differential impact, as it makes specific provision for additional Gypsy and Travellers sites within the Borough.</p>
<p>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change? This policy is in response to the Regional Spatial Strategy (and the single issue review) and a report produced for local authorities in south and west Hertfordshire by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at Birmingham University; An Assessment of the Accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in South and West Hertfordshire; April 2005.</p>		

9. Could this policy document have a differential impact on gender?	No	The Core Strategy addresses the overarching principles of community cohesion, social inclusion, and accessibility amongst others. It is not expected to have any differential impact on this equalities group.
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change? N/A		
10. Could this policy document have differential impact on disability?	Yes	The Core Strategy addresses the overarching principles of community cohesion, social inclusion, and accessibility amongst others. In particular Policies CS7 on Housing Mix; CS17 on Access to Services; CS18 on Key Community Facilities; and CS21 on Securing a High Quality and Accessible Environment. It is expected that these policies could provide either a neutral or positive differential for this equalities group through for example, a need for a proportion of sheltered or extra care housing; and the 100% lifetime home requirement in CS21, which represents a step change from the current requirement lifetime homes provision.
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change? The only real evidence is that current policies do not go as far as those in this document in meeting the needs of these groups. Implementing the new policies should therefore deliver benefits to this group.		
11. Could this policy document have a differential impact on people due to sexual orientation?	No	The Core Strategy addresses the overarching principles of community cohesion, social inclusion, and accessibility amongst others. It is not expected to have any differential impact on this equalities group.

What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change? N/A		
12. Could this policy document have a differential impact on people due to their age?	Yes	The Core Strategy addresses the overarching principles of community cohesion, social inclusion, and accessibility amongst others. In particular Policies CS7 on Housing Mix; CS17 on Access to Services; CS18 on Key Community Facilities; and CS21 on Securing a High Quality and Accessible Environment. It is expected that these policies could provide either a neutral or positive differential for this equalities group through for example, a need for a proportion of sheltered or extra care housing; and the 100% lifetime home requirement in CS21, which represents a step change from the current required lifetime homes provision.
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change? The only real evidence is that current policies do not go as far as those in this document in meeting the needs of these groups. Implementing the new policies should therefore deliver benefits to this group.		
13. Could this policy document have a differential impact on people due to their religious belief?	Yes	The Core Strategy addresses the overarching principles of community cohesion, social inclusion, and accessibility amongst others. In particular Policy CS18 on Key Community Facilities. It is expected that this policy could provide either a neutral or positive differential for this equalities group, where there should not be a loss or displacement of key community facilities. Places of worship are considered to constitute a key community facility.
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change? N/A		
14. Could this policy document have a differential impact on people due to their having caring/ dependant responsibilities?	Yes	The Core Strategy addresses the overarching principles of community cohesion, social inclusion, and accessibility amongst others. In particular Policies CS7 on Housing Mix; CS17 on Access to Services; CS18 on Key Community Facilities; and CS21 on Securing a High Quality and Accessible Environment. It is expected that these policies could provide either a neutral or positive differential for this equalities group, through for example, a need for a proportion of sheltered or extra care housing; and the 100% lifetime home requirement in CS21, which represents a step change from the current requirement lifetime homes provision.

What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change?

The only real evidence is that current policies do not go as far as those in this document in meeting the needs of these groups. Implementing the new policies should therefore deliver benefits to this group.

15. Could this policy document have a differential impact on people due to their offending past?

No

The Core Strategy addresses the overarching principles of community cohesion, social inclusion, and accessibility amongst others. It is not expected to have any differential impact on this equalities group.

What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change? N/A

16. Could this policy document have a differential impact on people due to their being transgender or transsexual?

No

The Core Strategy addresses the overarching principles of community cohesion, social inclusion, and accessibility amongst others. It is not expected to have any differential impact on this equalities group.

What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change? N/A

17. Could this policy document have a differential impact on people due to issues surrounding poverty?

Yes

The Core Strategy addresses the overarching principles of community cohesion, social inclusion, and accessibility amongst others. In particular Policies CS4 on Affordable Housing; CS5 on Affordable Housing in Rural Areas; CS9 on Local Significant Employment Sites; CS17 on Access to Services; CS18 on Key Community Facilities; and CS23 on Development and Accessibility to Services and Employment. It is expected that these policies could provide either a neutral or positive differential for this equalities group.

What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change?

An increased Affordable Housing requirement to 35% and reduced site thresholds (10 units down from 25 units) should increase provision of Affordable Housing through the planning system. Protection for local significant employment sites may also assist this equalities area given the importance of promoting opportunities for local businesses; the 2010/2011 Annual Monitoring Report revealed a gain of approximately 300 sq.m of B1 and B2 floor space; and a decrease in vacant employment land by 1.18ha on the previous year.

<p>18. Could the policy document impact on the relationships and attitudes between different groups of people? Could this impact be negative?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>During the production of this policy document the provision of Gypsy and Traveller Sites and Affordable Housing within the Borough both proved to be contentious issues for some people within the wider community. The document makes recommendations in line with national policies planning polices and statutory obligations.</p>		
<p>19. Can this negative impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for particular equalities groups?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Without making provision for Gypsy and Traveller, and Affordable Housing there are at least two equalities groups that would suffer a detrimental impact on their equality of opportunity. The Council would also be failing to comply with national planning policy and its statutory obligations.</p>		
<p>20a. As a result of this assessment is a Full Impact report Assessment necessary?</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The emerging Core Strategy is not considered to have any adverse effects that would warrant a full EqIA</p>	<p>20b. Date on which the Full assessment will commence.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Completed by Sarah Churchard, Planning Officer
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