

Hertsmere Local Plan

Development Plan Document

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan

Equalities Impact Assessment

July 2015



Introduction

This document constitutes an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) for the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADM) which is being published on 3 August 2015. Both documents have been prepared by Hertsmere Borough Council.

The 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. This generic equality scheme reflects the statutory responsibilities of the Council under the Equalities Act 2010.

The Equality Duty and the Council's Responsibilities

The Equalities Act 2010 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. It sets out an equality duty for public authorities.

The Equality Duty 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.

The Equality Duty is a duty on the Council when carrying out public functions. The Council must consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to its own employees.

The Equality Duty covers the following protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race (including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality)
- religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- sex
- sexual orientation.

There is no explicit requirement in the Equalities Act to refer to the Equality Duty in recording the process of consideration but it is considered good practice to do so.

Assessment of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan

SADM seeks to deliver the adopted Core Strategy (January 2013) by allocating sites, by defining areas (referred to in the Core strategy) and by setting out more detailed complementary policies for managing development.

Both SADM and the Core Strategy have been subject to an iterative process of independent sustainability appraisal. Sustainability appraisal considers the social, environmental and economic impacts of policies. The purpose behind this is to promote "sustainable development", making the plan as sustainable as possible. The social objectives which embrace equalities are a key component of this analysis: i.e.

- to improve educational achievement, training and opportunities for lifelong learning and employability
- to ensure ready access to essential services and facilities for all residents

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- to improve the quality and affordability of housing
- to reduce poverty and social exclusion and promote equality of opportunities
- to reduce and prevent crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- to improve the population's health and reduce inequalities both geographically and demographically.

The Core Strategy was adopted after examination and consideration of relevant planning and sustainability issues. SADM is a subordinate planning document to the Core Strategy which should (and does) accord with it. At a strategic level therefore, SADM has already been subject to satisfactory sustainability appraisal.

The policies in the Consultation Draft and Pre-Submission (or Publication) Draft SADM are accompanied by appraisals.

The detailed sustainability appraisal accompanying the Pre-Submission Draft indicates that the policies would either have no effect or positive effects on all of the social objectives.

The most significant difference between the two drafts of SADM is the inclusion of a new policy on Provision for Faith Communities based on local evidence. This was derived from a Faith Community Needs Assessment undertaken in 2012.

Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is required when a public authority plans, changes or removes a service, policy or function. The EqIA is therefore an integral part of the development of a policy document.

Sustainability appraisal is concerned with the shaping (and delivery) of planning policy, and provides the fullest appraisal of social objectives.

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is more broadly based. In this case it provides a check on whether SADM (and the process of preparing SADM) reasonably meets the Equality Duty and satisfies the Hertsmere Equality and Diversity Scheme. The underlying purpose of the EqIA is to help address and tackle inequality, by:

- using public expenditure in an efficient and fair way (in the context of reducing financial resources);
- creating strong social and community networks; and
- removing the obstacles to making things happen.

The Core Strategy was subject to a satisfactory EqIA.

The assessment for SADM is attached at Appendix 1.

Findings of the Equalities Impact Assessment

The assessment in Appendix 1 takes the form of a screening. It concludes that there is no need to carry out a further or fuller Impact Assessment of SADM.

No significant adverse impacts are identified.

Limited suggestions are made in respect of disability (Q10) – i.e. minor wording changes to clarify the importance of design for mobility in parking and site layouts.

Appendix 1: Assessment

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| Unit | Planning and Building Control |
| Section | Policy and Transport |
| Person responsible for the assessment | Richard Blackburn (Senior Planning Officer) |
| Policy document to be assessed | Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADM) |
| Date of assessment | July 2015 |
| Is this a new or existing policy document | New |
| 1. What are you looking to achieve in this activity? | |
| | The purpose of SADM is to provide an effective implementation framework and guiding principles for development in the whole of the borough (except the Elstree Way Corridor) in accordance with the adopted Core Strategy (January 2013). This includes the delineation of areas and identification of specific sites, including sites for new housing. [The Elstree Way Corridor is covered in a separate Area Action Plan adopted on 8 July 2015.] |
| 2. Who in the main will benefit? | |
| | Potentially the whole community. The use of criteria based policies will depend on specific planning applications/development proposals under consideration. The main site allocations are for new housing. Residents (including younger and older residents) will benefit from an increase in housing choice and in the retention/promotion of local facilities and services (e.g. shops, open spaces and community facilities). The Council will benefit by having greater control in the manner in which development and related infrastructure will be delivered. Developers/landowners and infrastructure providers will benefit by having a greater degree of transparency and certainty. The wider community will benefit from better transport links and |

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| | <p>more effective transport provision, from jobs shops and services, and the provision of new community facilities.</p> |
| <p>3. What are you trying to achieve with this document?</p> | <p>SADM has two main purposes:</p> <p>(a) to provide environmental and other criteria, against which all development proposals and planning applications can be judged; and</p> <p>(b) to define sites and areas:- these are shown on a Policies Map. They include the Green Belt, towns and villages, town centres, employment areas and housing sites and open spaces. For site proposals, the plan lists specific planning criteria or constraints which should be adhered to.</p> <p>SADM fits within the framework of the objectives in the Core Strategy. The relevant objectives are listed at the beginning of each Chapter in SADM.</p> |
| <p>4. How will you tell people about the document?</p> | <p>The Council has consulted on the document previously and, of course, on the adopted Core Strategy. Consultation was carried out in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. There was a full public consultation in respect of the Consultation Draft SADM between 3 March and 14 April 2015. Publicity included a two page article in 'Hertsmere News' which is delivered to every residential household and well attended drop-in sessions were held across the borough.</p> <p>All responders to the Consultation Draft will be directly notified by letter/email that SADM has been published, in addition to 'consultation bodies' and those asking to be contacted through the Council's e-alert system introduced this year. Copies of the proposed submission documents (including Pre-Submission Draft of SADM) and supporting studies will be made available at deposit points across the borough and on the Council's website.</p> |
| <p>5. What could prevent your communities getting the most out of the document?</p> | <p>Unforeseen factors affecting development viability and/or progress, such a new economic downturn. Changes in legislation or Government policy which might impact on the ability to</p> |

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| | deliver SADM. |
| 6. Who is the document for? | Local residents, community and interest groups, land owners, private individuals, utilities and infrastructure providers, developers and the Council. |
| 7. Who implements the policy document, and who is responsible for the policy? | <p>Delivery is guided by the planning policies, encouraging change and conservation in the most appropriate places. However, it is the drive of individuals, organisation and developers, supported by the Council as local planning authority, that will ensure that new facilities/homes and workplaces are delivered.</p> <p>The Council is responsible for implementation and review of the policies.</p> |
| 8. Could this policy document have a differential impact on racial groups | Generally no. However Policy SADM5 supports the provision of sites for Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople: this includes Gypsies and Irish travellers. Policies SADM33 (Key Community Facilities) and SADM34 (Provision for Faith Communities) support the accommodation of local needs: this includes faith groups (e.g. Hindu, Jewish) and other groups which may have a specific racial component (Faith Communities Needs Assessment - December 2012). |
| What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change? ONS Population Census and Faith Communities Needs Assessment. | |
| 9. Could this policy document have a differential impact on gender? | Probably not. Policies supporting access to and provision of local services may help those responsible for childcare, more usually women. |
| 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? | <p>Because SADM elaborates and helps take forward the Core Strategy, there will be effects in respect of disability.</p> <p>Policies supporting access to and provision of local services may help. Policy SADM33 (Key Community Facilities) supports the accommodation of local needs following Core Strategy</p> |

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| | <p>Policy CS19 (Key community facilities)</p> <p>In terms of mobility, Core Strategy Policy CS22 reiterates the importance of delivering attractive and accessible environments and seeks the provision of all new homes to Lifetime Homes Standards. Parking standards are set in a supplementary planning document in accordance with parameters provided by Core Strategy Policy CS25 (Accessibility and parking): this includes a requirement for mobility-impaired users. Policy SADM41 (Highway and Access Criteria for New Development) refers to all users: however a reference to people with a disability would emphasise the importance of mobility for them. See suggestion below.</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <p>Add to the second sentence in paragraph 6.9 "...and ensuring that disabled persons are fully catered for."</p> <p>Insert the following in Policy SADM41 criterion (iv) after 'give priority to': "disabled persons and"</p> |
| <p>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change? Lifetime homes are a government standard, which has been designed around the needs of elderly and disabled groups. The design and layout of access and parking in schemes normally reflects the needs for these groups and would be consistent with the adopted policies and approach of the local highway authority (e.g. in the Local Transport Plan).</p> | |
| <p>11. Could this policy document have a differential impact on people due to sexual orientation?</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change? N/A</p> | |
| <p>12. Could this policy document have a differential impact on people due to their age?</p> | <p>See answer to Q10.</p> |

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| What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change? | |
| Lifetime homes are a government standard, which has been designed around the needs of elderly and disabled groups. The design and layout of access and parking in schemes normally reflects the needs for these groups and would be consistent with the adopted policies and approach of the local highway authority (e.g. in the Local Transport Plan). | |
| 13. Could this policy document have a differential impact on people due to their religious belief? | Yes. Policies SADM33 (Key Community Facilities) and SADM34 (Provision for Faith Communities) support the accommodation of local needs: this includes faith groups (e.g. Catholic, Muslim, Jewish) and other groups which have a specific cultural component (Faith Communities Needs Assessment - December 2012). |
| What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change? ONS Population Census and Faith Communities Needs Assessment. | |
| 14. Could this policy document have a differential impact on people due to their having caring/ dependant responsibilities? | Probably not. Policies supporting access to and provision of local services and community facilities may help those responsible for care. |
| What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change? N/A | |
| 15. Could this policy document have a differential impact on people due to their offending past? | No |
| 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 |
| What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change? N/A | |

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| <p>17. Could this policy document have a differential impact on people due to issues surrounding poverty?</p> | <p>Yes</p> <p>Policies supporting access to and provision of local services, work (employment land) and community facilities may help – i.e. through easier/cheaper access.</p> <p>The key issue is the cost of housing: the high property prices in the borough affect people’s ability to afford housing. SADM helps to implement the Council’s adopted affordable housing policy (Core Strategy Policies CS4 and CS5). The Council seeks 35% or 40% of all new dwellings as affordable on sites above a set threshold size (i.e. 5 or more dwellings or > 0.2 ha) (Policy CS4) and small-scale schemes on ‘rural exception sites’ (Policy CS5). Policy SADM4 seeks financial contributions towards affordable housing on small sites (5-10 units). Policy SADM3 aims to retain affordable housing which could be lost through redevelopment.</p> <p>In addition, Policy SADM5 supports the provision of sites for Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople. Gypsies and travellers are nationally among the lowest income groups and lowest educational achievers on average.</p> |
| <p>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this differential change? The Council’s adopted affordable housing policy has been developed with regards to local needs and local income as set out in the Council’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment; the policy was tested for deliverability through a Development Economics Study. It has more recently been assessed through other viability assessments (i.e. in connection with individual sites and the Community Infrastructure Levy).</p> | |
| <p>18. Could the policy document impact on the relationships and attitudes between different groups of people? Could this impact be negative?</p> | <p>There is no clear evidence of any negative impact actually or potentially arising between different groups of people.</p> |
| <p>19. Can this negative impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for particular equalities groups?</p> | <p>N/A</p> |

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| 20a. As a result of this assessment is a Full Impact report Assessment necessary? | No. SADM is not considered to have any adverse effects that are not capable of being mitigated. | 20b. Date on which the Full assessment will commence. | N/A |
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