

**NORTH DORSET LOCAL PLAN 2011 - 2026 PART 1**

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
OF THE PRE-SUBMISSION DOCUMENT**

**November 2013**



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# 1. Introduction

## What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)?

- 1.1 An EqIA is a systematic way of examining whether a new or existing function, policy or process differentially affects any person or group of persons. Functions, policies and processes do not affect everyone in the same way. People from different ethnic backgrounds, disabled people, men and women (including transgender), older people, younger people, people of different faiths, gay men, lesbians, bisexual and heterosexual people may need and experience different things from the built environment.
- 1.2 In order to provide accessible services and create inclusive environments, we need to understand the needs and aspirations of the diverse communities within the District. An EqIA enables the potential and actual processes and effects of policy to be examined, and improvements or changes introduced, to ensure fairness and encourage diversity.

## Legal Background

- 1.3 EqIA are carried out as part of the council's Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. This new Act has harmonised and replaced previous anti-discrimination legislation and includes the introduction of 'protected characteristics' and gives protection from new forms of discrimination.
- 1.4 The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have **due regard** to the need to:
- promote equality opportunity;
  - eliminate unlawful discrimination; and
  - promote good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.
- 1.5 The Public Sector Equality Duty also requires the council to consider the effect or **impact** of its policies and practices on people who share the following '**protected characteristics**', also known as equalities communities:
- age;
  - disability;
  - gender reassignment;
  - marriage and civil partnerships;
  - pregnancy and maternity;
  - ethnicity and race;
  - religion or belief;
  - sex; and
  - sexual orientation.

- 1.6 To comply with the Duty due regard must be had to the following as part of the assessment process:
- the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010;
  - the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
    - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
    - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' that are different from the needs of people who do not share it. In relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' impairments (disabilities); and
    - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low;
  - the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
    - tackle prejudice; and
    - promote understanding.

## Is an EqIA of the Pre-submission North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 Required?

- 1.7 An EqIA is required if the planned or changed service, strategy, policy or procedure is relevant to the Public Sector Equality Duty in terms of:
- the promotion of equality of opportunity;
  - the elimination of discrimination; and
  - the promotion of good relations between different equalities communities.
- 1.8 The pre-submission North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (Local Plan Part 1) contains strategic planning policies that will support and deliver the development strategy for the entire District. It gives clear guidance on how proposals for development will be considered and is the main basis for making decisions on planning applications. It forms part of 'the development plan' for any area and all planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless 'material considerations' indicate otherwise.
- 1.9 Such policies will have implications for all communities who live and work in North Dorset and as such will be relevant to the Public Sector Equality Duty identified

above. For this reason an EqIA of the Local Plan Part 1 is required. Further detail on the purpose and content of Part 1 of the Local Plan and the scope of the EqIA is set out in later sections of this report.

## Background to the Pre-submission Local Plan Part 1

- 1.10 This EqIA compliments the Sustainability Appraisal of the Pre-submission Local Plan Part 1 that incorporates the Strategic Environmental Assessment. It is one of a series of EqIAs that have been undertaken as the Local Plan has progressed over the last four years from a draft core strategy to a local plan.
- 1.11 The first EqIA dated November 2009 assessed the consultation process for the draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2010) and whether it had the potential to be discriminatory.
- 1.12 A number of issues were identified and actions were recommended for the consultation in 2010. The vast majority of those recommendations continue to be incorporated in the consultation process for the Local Plan Part 1 that is due to take place from 29 November 2013 to 24 January 2014.
- 1.13 The second EqIA dated December 2009 assessed the ‘core policies’ of the draft Core Strategy. During the scoping of the EqIA it was felt that the visions and objectives of the Core Strategy were broad and that a sufficient assessment of them had been included in the Draft Sustainability Appraisal. The scoping also described the ‘development management policies’ as providing detail and building on the ‘core’ policies and their separate assessment was not considered to be required at that time.
- 1.14 The Core Strategy has now become the Local Plan Part 1. The policies it contains are different to those proposed in 2010 as national guidance and policy has changed. Development management policies continue to build on core policies, but they are also considered to be strategic policies in the planning framework for North Dorset. They provide more detail for decision making in relation to particular issues and assessing the acceptability of certain types of development.
- 1.15 In this instance, **all the policies contained in the pre-submission North Dorset Local Plan Part 1** have been assessed to see:
- if they have the potential to be discriminatory to any of the groups; and
  - how the needs of such groups have been taken into account in relation to the development of the policies.

## 2. Equality and Diversity Framework for North Dorset

### National

- 2.1 There are three paragraphs in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012) that directly relate to equality issues.
- 2.2 Paragraph 50 states that to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes).
- 2.3 Paragraph 69 identifies that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Local planning authorities should create a shared vision with communities of the residential environment and facilities they wish to see. To support this, local planning authorities should aim to involve all sections of the community in the development of local plans.
- 2.4 Finally, Paragraph 155 states that early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that local plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision.

### Dorset County

- 2.5 Dorset Equality Scheme 2012 – 2015 promotes three ‘General Duties’:
  - GD1: To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
  - GD2: To advance equality of opportunity between people of a protected characteristic; and
  - GD3: To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.
- 2.6 Within the overall Dorset Equality Scheme 2012 – 2015 each separate District Council also produces a detailed year-by-year action plan for its own area reflecting each of the general duties (GDs).



## North Dorset

### North Dorset Equality Scheme 2012 – 2015

- 2.7 In relation to North Dorset and to General Duty 1 these detailed actions are as follows:
- GD1A: Identify and challenge discrimination harassment and victimisation in the workplace;
  - GD1B: Improve the monitoring of our workforce profile to identify trends and challenge inequality;
  - GD1C: Provide opportunities for those affected by hate crime to tell us and work with partners to tackle hate crime in Dorset; and
  - GD1D: Ensure good quality and proportionate Equality Impact Assessments are conducted to identify potential areas of discrimination.
- 2.8 In relation to General Duty 2 these detailed actions are:
- GD2A: Address inequalities in the workforce;
  - GD2B: Ensure that all staff, irrespective of age, sex, gender reassignment, race/ethnicity, faith, religion/belief, sexual orientation, disability, marriage/civil partnership have equal access to opportunities for personal development;
  - GD2C: Strive to narrow the inequality gap so that people across Dorset have fairer access to opportunities that can improve their quality of life; and
  - GD2D: Ensure that nobody in Dorset is disadvantaged in gaining access to public services.
- 2.9 In relation to General Duty 3 these detailed actions are:
- GD3A: Support our staff effectively to work towards the high standards of the core values of our organisations;
  - GD3B: Build and maintain strong and positive leadership to promote good relations between all Dorset residents;
  - GD3C: Strive to build strong and inclusive communities, and identify and respond to barriers to fostering good relations; and
  - GD3D: Support events in Dorset which celebrate the diversity of our County. (Indicates actions which are shared with Dorset Equality Scheme partners).

### The North Dorset Corporate Plan

- 2.10 This Plan contains Business Plan Actions which are relevant in the drawing up of the Equalities Impact Assessment. As such it seeks to encourage the following:
- enable local people to have a greater say in shaping the places in which they live;
  - put in place measures to ensure new development contributes to the provision of the infrastructure that communities need;

- help our community partners and other volunteers to deliver services and individual projects for their neighbourhoods which will improve the areas in which they live and work;
- support vulnerable people and promoting the positive contributions of younger, older and ethnic minorities in our communities;
- equip our Members with leadership skills to act as champions for the interest of communities and support community work;
- target resources that are available to address deprivation in the most deprived parts of the District; and
- ensure people are able to receive support and also information and access to cultural and recreational activities which will help to improve health and wellbeing.

### **North Dorset Local Plan Part 1**

- 2.11 The pre-submission Local Plan Part 1 has been prepared in accordance with the NPPF that sets the national context within which all planning policy is made and forms the key document of the Council’s Local Plan. It contains a set of overarching policies for the District focusing in broad strategic terms on what development will be delivered in North Dorset over the period to 2026, and indicates broadly when it will be delivered and how it will be delivered. The Local Plan Part 1 outlines the Council’s vision for the District, sets objectives to achieve the vision and then proposes strategic policies to implement these objectives.
- 2.12 The Council has already undertaken a number of rounds of consultation on the issues that the Local Plan ought to address. These were:
- a series of focus group meetings in July 2005;
  - consultation on Issues and Alternative Options in June /July 2007.
  - Consultation on the Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document in 2010. This informal consultation was time limited and allowed public and statutory bodies to comment on the policy options;
  - further consultation on Key Issues was undertaken in 2012.
- 2.13 The final consultation on the Local Plan Part 1 is due to take place from 29 November 2013 to 24 January 2014 prior to submission to the Secretary of State and subsequent consideration by a Government appointed independent Inspector at an Examination.
- 2.14 For further information on the consultation process, refer to the Consultation Statement that accompanies the pre-submission Local Plan Part 1.
- 2.15 Consultation throughout the process has been in accordance with the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

## 3. Equality Impact Assessment

3.1 There are six steps in the EqIA process:

- 1 - Initial screening;
- 2 - Scoping and defining;
- 3 - Information gathering;
- 4 - Making a judgement;
- 5 - Action planning; and
- 6 - Publication and review.

### Initial Screening

3.2 The section above titled 'Is an EqIA of the pre-submission North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 required?' established that an EqIA of the Local Plan Part 1 is required. The background to the pre-submission Local Plan Part 1 outlined the changes in national policy and the scope of the policies it contains and concluded that **all** policies in the Local Plan Part 1 will have implications for communities who live and work in North Dorset and as such will be relevant to the Public Sector Equality Duty that requires an EqIA to be carried out.

### Scoping and Defining

3.3 The North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 sets out the strategic planning policies for the District for the period 2011 to 2026. It sets out the context within which the planning policies for the District have been developed and describes the spatial characteristics of the local area, it identifies the key issues and challenges and includes a vision and objectives to tackle the issues.

3.4 Topic and placed-based policies then proceed to establish the scale and broad location of future development in North Dorset. The topic-based policies establish an overall sustainable development strategy (Policies 1 and 2) and set out a strategic approach to: environment and climate change; meeting housing needs; supporting economic development; and infrastructure (Policies 3 to 15). A strategic approach to development in the District's four main towns and in the countryside is provided by policies 16 to 20. The largest single area of development in North Dorset will be the Southern Extension to Gillingham. How the development of this site will be taken forward is explained in Policy 21: Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation.

3.5 Part 1 also includes strategic development management policies (Policies 22 to 33) which provide more detail on a range of issues and types of development, including development in the countryside. Part 1 concludes by establishing a framework for implementation and monitoring.

- 3.6 Part 1 of the Local Plan as a whole (including all the policies and supporting text and any maps, diagrams and figures) sets out the strategic priorities for the future of North Dorset. All policies have been prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and are consistent with the principles and policies set out in the NPPF, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 3.7 The previous EqIA of the Draft Core Strategy in December 2009 focussed purely on the core policies and did not include an assessment of the development management policies as these were felt to merely add detail. The conclusion found that the impact of the core policies on the equalities communities was overall positive or neutral.
- 3.8 However, since 2009 the approach to equalities has changed. The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty to consider the effect or impact of its policies and practices on people who share protected characteristics, also known as equalities communities. The Draft Core Strategy has now turned into a Local Plan with major changes resulting from the reforms of the planning system and new evidence bases. As such the scope of the EqIA is to assess all strategic policies in the Local Plan Part 1.
- 3.9 This EqIA has been led by Trevor Warrick (Planning Policy Manager) the report has been prepared by Sarah Jennings (Planning Policy Officer) who together with the Planning Policy Team have been responsible for preparing the pre-submission North Dorset Local Plan Part 1.

## Information Gathering

- 3.10 Step 3 of an EqIA is to identify sources of information that can be used to assist in the determination of policies that are likely to have an adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community.
- 3.11 The ‘protected characteristics’ or equalities communities referred to under the Equalities Act are as follows:

Protected Characteristics	Issues Relating to:
Age	A particular age group i.e. the young or the elderly
Disability	Communities with physical or mental impairment
Gender reassignment	Men and women who have undergone, are undergoing or are about to undergo a process of reassigning their sex
Marriage and civil partnership	Marriage or civil partnership
Pregnancy and maternity	Women who are pregnant or within the period of maternity leave

Protected Characteristics	Issues Relating to:
Race	Colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin NB: Gypsy (including English, Scottish and Roma Gypsy) and Irish Travellers are a distinct ethnic group
Religion or belief	Religion or lack of religion and or religious or philosophical belief or lack of belief
Sex	Men and women
Sexual orientation	The Heterosexual, Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual communities

3.12 The above equalities communities will include everyone with many people belonging to more than one equalities community.

### Equalities Communities in North Dorset

3.13 In undertaking this assessment the following sources of information have been used:

- Census data (2011);
- National and local statistics;
- NDDC Corporate Equality Scheme 2009-2012;
- Dorset Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, Anglia Ruskin University (March 2007);
- Dorset Survey of Housing Need and Demand, Fordham Research 2008 revised 2011 (Justin Gardner Consulting);
- Ghurkhas in Blandford - Dorset Race Equalities Council Group 2009; and
- Officer’s experience and knowledge in particular from the staff on the Customer Access and Equalities Group.

Table 1 – Equality Communities in North Dorset

Age
<p>The 2011 Census population figure for North Dorset is 68,583. The age structure is as follows:</p> <p>Age 0-15 year olds (17.9%);                      Age 16-64 year olds (59.9%);                      Age 65 years + (22.6%).</p> <p>49% of the population live in the four main settlements of:</p> <p>Blandford Forum (Population 10,325);                      Gillingham (Population 11,756);                      Shaftesbury (Population 7,314); and                      Sturminster Newton (Population 4,292).</p> <p>The proportion of younger people is greater than elsewhere in Dorset due to the number of communal establishments, such as Blandford Camp, and the presence of several large</p>

boarding schools in the District.  
 Older people make up a higher proportion of the District’s population than is found nationally. In North Dorset 22.9% of the population are of retirement age compared to 25.6% in the rest of the Dorset.

**Disability**

Gathering accurate information on disability is difficult, not least because it is often personal perception that dictates whether an individual regards themselves as disabled or not. One indicator of the prevalence of disability amongst the population is the level of people claiming disability-related state benefits. In February 2010 7% of the population in North Dorset were claiming Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance (over 65s) compared to the 9% average for England and Wales.

Data from the Corporate Equality Scheme 2009-2012 showed that there are approximately 3,200 people in North Dorset with a registered disability.

Disability	Over 18	Under 18	Total
Blind	331	4	335
Partially sighted	420	1	421
Deaf with speech	146	3	149
Deaf without speech	15	0	15
Hard of hearing	798	1	799
Severely or appreciably disabled	1390	9	1399

**Gender Reassignment**

There currently are no accurate statistics available regarding the profile of the transgender population in North Dorset or the UK as a whole. However, to date the Council has not been made aware of any particular concerns or issues relating to transgender individuals within the District that the Local Plan is likely to have any impact upon and considers that the likely general impact of the Local Plan in respect of this protected characteristic can still be considered and assessed in the EqIA.

**Marriage and Civil Partnerships**

The EqIA has no information available with which to assess the impacts of the Local Plan on married couples or those people in a civil partnership. Local Plan policies neither differentiate between married people or those in civil partnerships and the Council considers that the likely general impact of the Local Plan in respect of this protected characteristic can still be appropriately considered and assessed in the EqIA.

**Pregnancy and Maternity**

There is no data available to indicate the level of pregnant women in the District. However, it is not considered that this lack of information prevents an affective EqIA being undertaken. The Council considers that the likely general impact of the Local Plan in respect of this protected characteristic can still be appropriately considered and assessed in the EqIA.

## Ethnicity and Race

The 2011 Census data shows that the proportion of the population described as White British in North Dorset is 94.7% (compared to 96.6% of the population in 2001). Ethnic diversity in England in general has been growing and over the last 10 year period the proportion of the population categorising themselves as White British has dropped from 87% to 80%. The greatest change in North Dorset has been the increase in residents in the category White Other which in 2011 accounted for 2.4% of the population.

In 2011 23,000 residents in Dorset were born outside of UK. Of the top five countries of birth outside of the UK, Germany was the number one country. This is most likely due to the number of military bases in the County. In 2011, 1,600 residents in Dorset were born in Poland. This compares to just 160 in 2001.

Polish is reported as the second highest main language in Dorset by 1,500 residents. Over a third (500+) of those speaking Polish live in North Dorset with particularly high numbers in the Gillingham and Sturminster Newton.

There are two authorised gypsy sites in North Dorset, one at Shaftesbury and one at Thornicombe, near Blandford Forum.

## Religion or Belief

The 2011 Census again provides the best source of information on religious affiliation. England is largely a Christian country with a majority (71%) of respondents stating that they follow that religion. In North Dorset 66.5% (45,631) of the population described themselves as Christian. Within the District 21,840 either refused to give an answer or expressed no religious belief. Less than 1% of the Districts residents expressed an affiliation to a non-Christian religion (the figure for England was 5.7%).

Of the non-Christian religions in North Dorset, Buddhist formed the largest proportion followed by Hindu and Muslim. The Hindu population in North Dorset is influenced by the number of Nepalese families based at Blandford Camp.

## Sex

The 2011 Census figures show that the population within the District is almost balanced equally between males and females:

34,400 (50.1%) females; and

34,200 (49.9%) males.

Nationally there are 100 females for every 98 males.

## Sexual Orientation

There are no accurate statistics available regarding the profile of the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) population within North Dorset or the UK as a whole. Sexuality is not incorporated into the Census or other official statistics; however, it is acknowledged that approximately 6-10% of any population will be LGB. Based on the 2011 Census population figure this would suggest that there are between 4,116 to 6,860 LGB people in North Dorset.

## Making a Judgement

3.14 By screening the strategic policies, or ‘making a judgement’, the EqIA establishes if there is potential for any policy to result in a less favourable outcome and whether the pre-submission Local Plan Part 1 discriminates against any equality community.

3.15 Table 2 identifies potential issues that may affect each equality community.

**Table 2 – Potential Issues for Each Protected Characteristic**

Protected Characteristic	Potential Issues
Age	<p>Affordability of housing for all ages, but in particular for the young families and ‘first time buyers’.</p> <p>Distribution of the population and the difficulty in accessing facilities and services. This is particularly difficult for the old and young in the rural areas of the District who may not have access to transport.</p> <p>Level of care provision for the old and young alike.</p> <p>Low wage economy, out migration and lack of further education opportunities and the impact on young people in particular.</p>
Disability	<p>Specific requirements due to sensory impairment, learning difficulties or mental health problems within the home or public environment.</p> <p>Difficulty in accessing facilities and services due to lack of mobility. This is especially acute in the rural areas.</p>
Gender reassignment	<p>Verbal and physical harassment.</p> <p>The Regional Transgender Network Assessment and Report, written by Equality Southwest, highlights the issue of depression and the above average incidence of suicide amongst transgender people.</p>
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<p>Recognition of status.</p> <p>Difficulties integrating into the community.</p>
Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>Requirements in respect of workplace pay, caring, accessing facilities and services due to lack of mobility.</p>
Ethnicity and race	<p>Low literacy levels, language problems and location mean that some groups have difficulties in integrating into the community.</p> <p>Transient nature of certain groups and the level of site provision.</p>
Religion or belief	<p>Provision of places of worship.</p>



Sex	<p>Gender roles and relationships are more flexible than they used to be. Historically women can be disadvantaged by policies and practices that may not recognise their greater caring responsibilities, differences in the patterns of their working lives and their potentially greater vulnerability to domestic violence and sexual assault.</p> <p>Men, similarly can also be disadvantaged in some circumstances due to workplace cultures and access to some services.</p> <p>The caring responsibilities of both men and women and the access to facilities and services.</p> <p>Safety and security concerns.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>The Pride, Progress and Transformation report, written by Equality Southwest, identified the real issues for gay, lesbian and bisexual people living and working in the southwest. The report highlights the mental health concerns for this protected characteristic, which results from discrimination due to their sexual identity.</p> <p>It also highlights the issues of crimes against gay, lesbian and bisexual people, particularly physical assault after dark.</p> <p>Verbal and physical harassment.</p>

### What is meant by Impact?

3.16 Impact means the effect that a decision or policy might have on an equalities community. The Council has sought to identify impacts using the following categories:

- **Neutral** impact: this means that a decision or policy would have no impact on the equalities community in question;
- **Negative** impact: this means that a decision or policy might disadvantage one or more equalities communities; and
- **Positive** impact: This means that a decision or policy would improve opportunities for one or more equalities communities or improve cohesion and relations between different communities.

3.17 The key below shows the symbols and colours used in each individual policy appraisal and the summary Table 3.

+	Positive impact
o	Neutral or no impact
-	Negative impact
+/-	Positive and negative impact

### Policy 1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

3.18 Policy 1 sets out the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ from the NPPF. It is a ‘model policy’ provided by the Planning Inspectorate, which all councils are strongly encouraged to include in their local plans. The supporting text provides guidance on how the presumption will be applied in North Dorset.

#### Assessment

3.19 The delivery of development that improves economic, social and environmental conditions in the District will benefit all members of the community.

Policy 1	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

### Policy 2 – Core Spatial Strategy

3.20 This policy identifies Blandford (Forum and St Mary), Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton as the key strategic settlements in the District and seeks to concentrate the vast majority of the District’s growth in these four main towns. It establishes that outside the four main towns, development will be more strictly controlled with an emphasis on meeting local and essential rural needs through countryside policies and neighbourhood planning and gives local communities the choice to ‘opt in’ to the Local Plan Part 2 Site Allocations document.

#### Assessment

3.21 The aim of this policy is to actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and focusses development in locations that are or can be made sustainable. At the same time it also recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and thriving rural communities within it. By focussing the majority of the growth the four main towns those the elderly, young and those with disabilities or special needs as a result of pregnancy and maternity who live in the towns will benefit as facilities and services will be local and easily accessible. In the countryside development will be strictly controlled to enable essential rural needs to be met through countryside policies and local communities will be encouraged to prepare neighbourhood plans to meet identified local needs. With the focus of growth on the towns some rural residents,

especially those who are old, young or disabled or are isolated on army camps due to poor access to transport may be discriminated against as development beyond essential needs in the countryside will be restricted unless a neighbourhood plan is prepared or the parish decide to 'opt in' to the Local Plan Part 2 Site Allocations document.

Policy 2	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+/-	+/-	o	o	o	+/-	o	o	o

### Policy 3 – Climate Change

3.22 This policy sets out a number of ways in which the Council will seek to tackle the causes of climate change and also how it is proposed to adapt to the anticipated changes. The causes will be tackled primarily through measures to improve the design and performance of new and existing development and by encouraging the use of renewable energy. Adaptation measure include: encouraging increased water efficiency; reducing the impact of flooding; and reducing heat stress through the planting of trees and other vegetation.

#### Assessment

3.23 By locating new developments in areas served by a good range of everyday facilities and encouraging cycling, walking and the use of public transport, by designing new developments to make the best use of solar radiation and passive cooling, incorporating measures to meet or exceed national targets for energy efficiency and contributing to the most up-to-date renewable energy targets by generating energy from renewable those elderly and disabled, or in general those more vulnerable people who are more likely to suffer from fuel poverty will benefit.

3.24 Development that seeks to minimise the impacts of climate change through incorporating measures to reduce water consumption, the impact excessive heat on the urban environment and the avoidance of areas at risk of flooding will also benefit the old, young, disabled and more vulnerable people in the District.

Policy 3	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

**Policy 4 –The Natural Environment**

3.25 This policy sets out the Council’s approach to the conservation of the natural environment including both landscapes (such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and wildlife interests (including internationally, nationally and locally important wildlife sites and protected or locally threatened species).

**Assessment**

3.26 Nearly all equality communities will benefit from a supported and enhanced natural environment as international, national and local designations give people the opportunity to observe and enjoy nature and the health benefits this brings. Local communities also have the opportunity to designate Local Green Space through neighbourhood planning to protect any land of local significance from development. Any development in AONB will not only be managed in a way that preserves the natural beauty of the area but will also have regard to the objectives of the AONB management plans.

Policy 4	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	+	o	+	o	o	o	+

### Policy 5 –The Historic Environment

3.27 Policy 5 sets out the Council’s approach to the conservation of the historic environment and seeks to conserve ‘designated heritage assets’ (including scheduled monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens) and ‘non-designated heritage assets’ (which are usually of more local interest) in a manner proportionate to their significance. Policy 5 also sets out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in North Dorset.

#### Assessment

3.28 The assessment of Policy 5 is similar to Policy 4 above as protected heritage assets will give people the opportunity to observe and enjoy the historic built environment and the health benefits this brings.

Policy 5	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	+	o	+	o	o	o	+

### Policy 6 - Housing Distribution

3.29 Policy 6 sets out how housing will be distributed across the District and is based on an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) that identifies a need for 4,200 homes over the 15-year plan period. The policy makes provision for the vast majority of these homes at the four main towns and indicates the approximate scale of housing to be accommodated at each town (23% in Blandford, 35% in Gillingham, 27% in Shaftesbury and 9% in Sturminster Newton). A minimum of 6% of housing growth will be in the countryside and primarily delivered through rural exception affordable housing schemes, neighbourhood plans or in the form of occupational dwellings.

#### Assessment

3.30 By concentrating new housing in the main towns and meeting identified local and essential needs in the countryside through specific polices and neighbourhood planning the Council seeks to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling in locations that are or can be made sustainable. Those people

who are old, young, disabled or vulnerable due to their ethnicity or race who do not have access to a car will benefit in particular from this policy.

Policy 6	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	o	o	o	+	o	o	o

### Policy 7 – Delivering Homes

- 3.31 This policy seeks to deliver a high quality mix of both social and private sector housing in sustainable locations. The right balance in terms of housing type, mix and density will help to achieve mixed and balanced communities, provide a labour force to support a growing economy and support the role of market towns as service centres.
- 3.32 Policy 7 sets out the mix of housing that the Council will seek, in terms of bedroom size, based on the recent SHMA update. It also sets out how the Council will meet the needs of particular groups such as families with children, older people and people with disabilities.
- 3.33 It sets out the Council’s approach to housing density, which is to seek densities that make effective use of land whilst also having regard to impacts on local character and design and amenity issues.

### Assessment

- 3.34 Policy 7 plans for a mix of housing based on current and future demographics, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community including: families with children, older people, people with disabilities and people wishing to build their own homes. The Council seeks to meet the needs of different groups in the community both through the provision of a suitable mix of market and affordable house sizes and by working with partners. The Council also supports age restricted housing for the elderly and specialist housing for people with disabilities.
- 3.35 The right mix and type of housing will meet the general needs of the old, young, disabled and vulnerable in the District.

Policy 7	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

### Policy 8 – Affordable Housing

3.36 This policy identifies the need in the District for affordable housing and through evidence base studies it specifies target proportions and site size thresholds. It also requires affordable housing to be indistinguishable from other housing and that it should be “pepper potted” across the sites where this is possible.

#### Assessment

3.37 This policy meets an identified need in the District for affordable housing. Affordable housing will benefit those people on low incomes whether they are older or younger, vulnerable due to their ethnicity or race or those who are disabled as it is these groups that tend to have the higher need. By providing quality and affordable housing school leavers and first time buyers will be retained and graduates can be attracted to the area therefore enabling existing firms to expand and new firms to be attracted to the area. By ensuring developments have a mix of tenures to meet local need balanced, mixed and sustainable communities will be created.

Policy 8	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	o	o	o	+	o	o	o

### Policy 9 – Rural Exception Affordable Housing

- 3.38 Policy 9 establishes that small sites (of up to 9 dwellings) may be permitted within or on the edge of the existing built-up areas of Stalbridge and the District’s villages, but only to meet strictly local needs. The policy sets out in detail how local need should be established, how exception sites should be selected and how any scheme should demonstrably meet identified local needs.
- 3.39 Small numbers of market homes (which should not exceed one third of the total number of dwellings) are allowed under Policy 9 as an integrated part of a rural exception scheme.

#### Assessment

- 3.40 The provision of rural exception schemes in all villages where there is an identified local need will benefit those old, young and disabled people who do not have access to especially if those villages contained a range of facilities such as shops, schools and community halls.

Policy 9	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

### Policy 10 - Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 3.41 A joint Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document is currently being prepared with other local authorities in the Dorset sub-region.

#### Assessment

- 3.42 By providing sites as permanent places to live, all members of this equality community will benefit. Access to education and health care facilities is often an issue for members of the travelling community and permanent sites will make access to such facilities easier benefiting the young, the old and pregnant mothers.



Policy 10	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	o	o	o	+	+	o	o	o

### Policy 11 – The Economy

- 3.43 This policy seeks to stimulate the District’s economy by ensuring that the scale and diversity of economic growth supports the role and function of particular places. The majority of housing growth across the District will be focussed on the market towns and therefore it is important that employment land provision keeps pace with expansion.
- 3.44 It outlines the intention to bring forward key strategic sites and sites for mixed use regeneration at the four main towns, whilst also supporting and seeking to improve town centres. Outside the four main towns, the emphasis is on meeting local economic needs through neighbourhood planning or countryside policies.
- 3.45 The policy proposes a more flexible approach to uses on employment sites, which is not limited to the traditional B-Class uses (i.e. business, general industrial and storage and distribution). The policy also highlights the key opportunities for mixed-use regeneration on sites close to existing town centres and gives support to sustainable tourism.

### Assessment

- 3.46 By creating more self-contained sustainable settlements residents of all ages will benefit as there is less need to commute, but in particular it will benefit those groups (age and disabled) who may not have access to a car.
- 3.47 By encouraging self-containment the issues related to gender are also addressed as people working closer to home will be able to share caring responsibilities. By encouraging more self-contained sustainable settlements with a mix of housing and jobs it avoids creation of large residential developments where there is little daytime activity in which young parents (typically mothers) without access to a car can feel isolated.
- 3.48 The focus of the policy is on the main towns but the rural economy is also promoted through countryside policies encouraging the re-use of existing buildings, the expansion or re-development of existing employment sites and sustainable

tourism. Local communities also have the option of preparing a neighbourhood plan to embrace any local economic opportunities.

Policy 11	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	o	o	o	o	o	+	o

### Policy 12 – Retail, Leisure and Other Commercial Developments

3.49 Policy 12 deals with retail, leisure and other commercial developments, principally those that may be regarded as ‘main town centre uses’. It defines Blandford Forum, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton as ‘town centres’ and sets out the Council’s approach to retail and other main town centre uses within them. It also sets out that the Council will: apply a ‘sequential test’ to proposals for main town centre uses outside town centres; seek to retain and enhance existing outdoor weekly markets; and encourage high quality shopfront design.

#### Assessment

3.50 People of all ages, disabilities, sexual orientation, religion and race benefit from vibrant town centres and mixed use regeneration in edge of town centre locations. However, old, young, disabled and vulnerable people and certain racial groups who live in the countryside may be discriminated against due to transport issues. Policy 13 seeks to mitigate this disadvantage for those equality communities in the countryside by seeking to improve scheduled bus services between the main towns, encouraging community-led transport schemes in rural areas and providing and enhancing walking and cycling facilities between the towns and villages.

Policy 12	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+/-	+/-	+/-	o	o	+/-	+/-	o	+/-

**Policy 13 - Grey Infrastructure**

- 3.51 Grey infrastructure identifies future needs for: transportation (including roads, cycleways, footpaths and measures to facilitate public transport use); utilities (electricity, gas, water, sewerage and telecommunications); drainage and flood protection measures; waste; and the public realm (i.e. street art and urban enhancement works).
- 3.52 In particular it seeks to encourage modal shift, to make the key destinations, especially those in towns, more accessible by sustainable transport modes and to improve links between the main towns and villages in their hinterlands in order to improve access to services and reduce social exclusion.
- 3.53 The policy also identifies rural accessibility needs and states that community led transport schemes that complement public transport will be encouraged.

**Assessment**

- 3.54 By improving access and reducing social exclusion to services in both towns and villages this policy will lead to benefits for the old, young, disabled, and those with a different sexual orientation, race or religion who do not have access to a car. For example, the Nepalese families at Blandford Camp cited poor access to facilities and rural isolation as an issue.
- 3.55 Grey infrastructure also includes telecommunications. Here the Council’s overall approach is to allow for networks to meet the growing needs of business, public services and individuals. Improved communications will benefit all equality communities especially those wanting to work from home to help with caring responsibilities.
- 3.56 Street art and urban enhancement works will help to create vibrant and safe environments that will benefit certain protected characteristics.

Policy 13	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	+	o	+	+	+	o	+

### Policy 14 – Social Infrastructure

3.57 Social Infrastructure identifies future needs for: education facilities including schools; health services including doctors’ surgeries; emergency services; cultural facilities including libraries; recreation and sports facilities; and community facilities including community halls.

#### Assessment

- 3.58 By improving and safeguarding services and facilities in both the towns and the villages everyone in the community will benefit, but those who are likely to benefit the most are the old, young, disabled who use them most together with those men and women with caring responsibilities. In particular providing child care and primary schools will benefit those with young families.
- 3.59 Improved access to social and health care facilities will assist in particular those gay, lesbian and transgender people suffering from mental and physical ill-health as a result of social prejudice, bullying and abuse and will aid their rehabilitation.
- 3.60 Improved access to further education and community learning facilities will benefit the old and young alike whilst opportunities that improve the skills base will also benefit particular ethnic groups who experience language problems and suffer from low literacy levels. In turn this means that the local economy also benefits as a young and skilled workforce are retained.
- 3.61 The provision of community halls will provide venues for cultural activities so the needs of different racial groups and religions can also be met. This may assist in creating unified communities which in turn may reduce the prevalence of racially motivated crime.

Policy 14	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

### Policy 15 – Green Infrastructure

3.62 Policy 15 states that the Council will produce a Green Infrastructure (GI) strategy to set out a strategic approach to the provision, design and management of an integrated network of green spaces, green links and other green elements in our

towns and villages. The policy also identifies standards for the provision of certain types of open space, such as outdoor play space and allotments.

- 3.63 The aim of GI strategy is to improve linkages between towns and villages and the towns and residential areas and provide access to wildlife sites for relaxation and educational purposes.

**Assessment**

- 3.64 Green Infrastructure in the towns, villages and rural areas will benefit all, but in particular those older and younger people as it offers the opportunity for sports, play and informal recreation and improved access through sustainable transport links.

- 3.65 Green Infrastructure will help to create attractive and pleasant environments that can provide psychological benefits for certain more vulnerable groups who suffer mental and physical ill health as a result of social prejudice, bullying and abuse. It also creates areas of biodiversity that can be used to educate the young.

Policy 15	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

**The Town Policies (Policy 16 to 19)**

- 3.66 Policies 16 to 19 are the ‘place-based’ policies for the District’s four main towns (Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton). For each town the policy summarises: the town in context of the sustainable development strategy; how the environment and climate change issues have shaped the policy; how the towns’ housing needs are met; how the policy supports economic development; and the associated grey, social and green infrastructure.

**Assessment**

- 3.67 The provision of homes, employment opportunities, retail and other town centre uses together with the supporting grey, social and green infrastructure will help to maintain Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton as thriving market towns. In particular the provision of and access to enhanced facilities within easy walking distance of homes is likely to have significant effects on the old, young, disabled and vulnerable groups in this area who do not have access to a car.

Policy 16, 17, 18 and 19	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

### Policy 20 – The Countryside

- 3.68 The countryside for the purposes of the Local Plan is defined as all the land outside the settlement boundaries of the District’s four main towns. Policy 2 establishes that in the countryside the focus is on meeting local, rather strategic, needs where local communities will be encouraged to prepare neighbourhood plans.
- 3.69 The emphasis of Policy 20 is therefore on restraint although the Council will permit some forms of development to support the rural economy and meet essential rural needs in line with the strategic policies for the District as a whole.
- 3.70 Policy 20 identifies a range of different types of development that may be appropriate in the countryside. This includes: rural exception affordable housing (under Policy 9); the re-use of existing rural buildings primarily for employment purposes (under Policies 11 and 29), equine-related developments (under Policies 11 and 32); and essential new community facilities (such as new village halls) on the edge of the existing built-up areas of villages (Policy 14). For a full summary break down of policies guiding development in the countryside see the table below.

Local Plan Section	Type of Development	Main Policy	Development Management Policy
Environment and Climate Change	Renewable energy schemes	3	22
Meeting Housing Needs	Rural exception schemes	9	-
	Occupational dwellings	6	33
	Re-use of heritage assets	5/6	29
	Re-use of redundant or disused buildings	11	29
	Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	10	26

Local Plan Section	Type of Development	Main Policy	Development Management Policy
Supporting Economic Development	The reuse of existing rural buildings	11	29
	Redevelopment or expansion of existing employment sites	11	30
	Equine-related developments	11	32
	Rural tourist accommodation	11	31
Infrastructure	Retention of community facilities (commercial and non-commercial)	14	27
	New community facilities (non-commercial)	14	-

- 3.71 For any other type of development to be acceptable in principle in the countryside, the Council will need to be convinced that there is an overriding need for a countryside location. The acceptability of any scheme put forward in the countryside on the basis of ‘overriding need’ would be considered against all other relevant planning policies in the development plan including those relating to sustainability, design, amenity and the protection of the environment.
- 3.72 Communities in Stalbridge and all the District’s villages will be able to ‘opt in’ to the North Dorset Local Plan Part 2 Site Allocations document, as an alternative to meeting local needs for housing, employment or other forms of development through countryside policies and neighbourhood planning.

### Assessment

- 3.73 The policy of restraint in isolation could have had a negative impact on many equality communities. However, the Council has sought to mitigate the negative impact with the introduction of specific countryside policies to meet particular needs.
- 3.74 In terms housing need, Policy 7 – Delivering Homes and Policy 9 - Rural Exception Schemes seek to meet the needs of the old, young, disabled and more vulnerable groups.
- 3.75 Policy 10 seeks to meet the housing needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- 3.76 Policy 11 seeks to maintain rural jobs to ensure those who are disadvantaged by poor access to transport, generally the young, are not discriminated against when looking for work.

- 3.77 Policy 14 seeks to ensure that the needs of all equality communities are met by providing places to meet and socialise and importantly seeking to maintain them when they are at risk of being lost. The policy also permits new community facilities where there is an identified need without the need for a neighbourhood plan.
- 3.78 Many of the policies above are supported by development management policies to provide detail and guidance when applications for development are submitted.
- 3.79 Neighbourhood planning also enables local communities to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood, to choose where new homes, shops and offices and other development should be built, identify and protect Local Green spaces and influence what buildings look like.
- 3.80 Based on local evidence and need neighbourhood planning is a positive tool to address equality issues as local people know and understand local issues best. Where a local communities recognises that they have development needs but do not have the resources to take forward growth or have encountered difficulties in getting a neighbourhood plan adopted Policy 2 gives local communities to the option to ‘opt in’ to the Local Plan Part 2, which will deal with site allocations.

Policy 20	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+/-	+/-	o	o	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	o

**Policy 21 – Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation**

- 3.81 The southern extension of Gillingham will take the form of a sustainable mixed-use development that will expand the built-up area of the town to the south and east. It will be linked to the existing town by improved transport links and an enhanced green infrastructure network. The southern extension will be developed mainly with housing, with employment development to the south of Brickfields Business Park and on Kingsmead Business Park.
- 3.82 It will be developed with the infrastructure necessary to support growth including major items, such as a ‘principal street’ linking New Road (B3092) and Shaftesbury Road (B3081) and a local centre including small local convenience shops, health facilities, a primary school, a community hall and other local facilities and services.



3.83 The policy sets out that the future development of the site needs to be guided by a master planning framework, building on the technical work, engagement with key stakeholders and consultation with the community that has been undertaken to date.

**Assessment**

3.84 The development will include housing, employment land, retail facilities and social/community facilities, which will benefit all equality communities as Gillingham will become a vital and thriving urban centre. In particular the provision of and access to enhanced facilities within easy walking distance of homes is likely to have significant benefits for the old, young, disabled and vulnerable groups in this area who do not have access to a car.

Policy 21	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

**Policy 22 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy**

3.85 This policy encourages the production of energy from renewable and low carbon resources. Such schemes should be built into new development from the outset. While favouring such development schemes the Council will require them not to have adverse impacts on their surroundings.

**Assessment**

3.86 In the long term encouraging energy efficiency, the increased use of sustainable construction methods and production of energy from renewable sources will result in reducing the cost of heating and servicing a home for everyone. In particular, this this will benefit the elderly, disabled and those vulnerable people who are more likely to suffer from fuel poverty.

3.87 Reducing the impacts of climate change and the resulting risks to the community of flooding will also benefit the old, young, disabled and vulnerable as evidence shows that the impacts of climate change disproportionately affects them.

Policy 22	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	o	o	+	o	o	o	o

### Policy 23 – Parking

3.88 Policy 23 deals specifically with parking issues. It requires provision for residential and non-residential parking for a range of types of vehicles and addresses the needs of those with impaired mobility.

#### Assessment

3.89 Sufficient and well-designed parking will enable all users to better utilise services and facilities and improve quality of life, but for those with impaired mobility it will ensure a more usable and sufficient parking resource.

Policy 23	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	o	+	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

### Policy 24 –Design

3.90 This policy sets out design principles, and various aspects of development form. Design principles focus on character, continuity and enclosure, ease of movement, quality of the public realm, legibility, adaptability (including Lifetime Homes), diversity, energy efficiency and safety and security.

3.91 Aspects of development form influence how a space functions, its appearance and how people use it for their everyday activities include layout, density and mix, scale and appearance.

3.92 The policy also includes space standards for cycle storage, laundry drying and for the storage of storage bins and recyclables as well as guidance on local context and design quality.

**Assessment**

3.93 All equality communities will benefit from good design in general, but where developments have regard to Lifetime Homes standards this will facilitate adaptations to meet the changing needs of occupants and will in particular benefit those old, young and disabled people within the community. For example by designing homes to the standard this will enable older people to stay in their homes, or to be cared for at home, rather than requiring a care or residential home.

3.94 By creating safer environments through appropriate design and layout new developments will help to address the issue of hate crime towards vulnerable people because of their sexual orientation, race or beliefs.

Policy 24	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

**Policy 25 – Amenity**

3.95 This policy deals with the need to ensure that new development will not have an adverse impact on local residents or potential occupiers. It deals with the issue of amenity in terms of: privacy and private open space; sunlight and daylight; artificial light intrusion; noise and vibration; and unpleasant emissions (such as odour and fumes).

**Assessment**

3.96 A good standard of amenity is of benefit to all persons affected by the potential issues for each equality strand. Policy 25 however has no direct impact on any equality community.

Policy 25	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

**Policy 26 – Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

3.97 Policy 10 explains that the Council intends to make provision to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople through a joint plan produced in association with all other councils in Dorset (including Bournemouth and Poole). Policy 26 provides more detailed criteria on how individual planning applications for sites for Gypsies, Travellers and travelling Showpeople will be assessed.

**Assessment**

3.98 By setting out the criteria for site development a much clearer and appropriate set of requirements has been provided. The provision of sites will benefit race equality and the requirement for sites to have good access to local services and community facilities is also likely to benefit the old, the young and pregnant mothers.

Policy 26	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	o	o	o	+	+	o	o	o

**Policy 27 – Retention of Community Facilities**

3.99 The Council seeks the retention of community facilities, where possible, and Policy 27 sets out the circumstances when their loss may be permitted. For private commercial businesses, such as a village shop or local pub, the key consideration is whether the business is viable, or could be made viable. For other facilities, the main issues are whether there is a need for the current use and, if not, whether the

facility could be put to an alternative community use, bearing in mind funding issues.

**Assessment of Policy**

- 3.100 The retention of community facilities will benefit certain equality communities. In particular the young with play groups and mother and toddler groups, the old and disabled with various activity clubs and those in minority groups who use community facilities as a place to meet and socialise.

Policy 27	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	o	o	+	+	+	o	o

**Policy 28 – Existing Dwellings in the Countryside**

- 3.101 This policy focuses on ensuring that any additions to such dwellings are ancillary in nature and do not form an independent and separate unit.

**Assessment**

- 3.102 This policy allows for justified ancillary accommodation that will benefit those in the community with a need to provide for older or disabled family members and for those with extra caring responsibilities. In addition vulnerable people with specific requirements due to sensory impairment, learning difficulties or mental health problems could potentially benefit from such justified ancillary accommodation.

Policy 28	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	+	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

### Policy 29 – The Re-Use of Existing Buildings in the Countryside

3.103 Policy 29 deals with the re-use of existing buildings in the countryside. It sets out: the characteristics existing buildings should have to make them acceptable for re-use; the Council’s approach to different types of use (prioritizing economic development and community uses); and how the Council will assess the acceptability of any scheme for re-use.

#### Assessment

3.104 The policy is likely to be neutral for all equality groups. However, in a limited number of cases the re-use of a building for community uses may benefit vulnerable people living nearby.

Policy 29	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

### Policy 30 – Existing Employment Sites in the Countryside

3.105 This policy permits the redevelopment and limited expansion of employment sites in the country for employment purposes to help support the rural economy.

#### Assessment

3.106 Policy 30 will have a positive impact in respect of the provision of employment in the countryside thereby benefitting younger people who tend to have poor access to transport.

Policy 30	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

**Policy 31 – Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside**

3.107 Policy 31 guides the provision of tourism provision in countryside areas, identifying the most appropriate sustainable locations and establishes that built accommodation will only be permitted where an existing building is re-used. It permits caravan and tent camping sites which are sustainably located, or that will demonstrably support farm diversification, provided that in both cases they can be successfully integrated into the landscape.

**Assessment**

3.108 Tourist accommodation may provide additional employment and help farm diversification, but the policy is likely to be neutral for all equality groups.

Policy 31	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

**Policy 32 – Equine-related Developments in the Countryside**

3.109 This policy sets out the Council’s approach to equine-related activities in the countryside. It outlines the types of developments that are likely to require planning permission; discusses some of the general issues that apply to all equine-related developments; set’s out the Council’s approach to different types of development ranging from field shelters to stud farms; and discusses the issue of ancillary uses, such as riding arenas.

3.110 It seeks to promote a strong rural economy whilst also protecting environmental quality and rural character.

**Assessment**

3.111 Equine related development in the countryside may provide additional employment and help farm diversification, but it will not benefit any particular equality group.

Policy 31	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

### Policy 33 – Occupational Dwellings in the Countryside

3.112 Policy 33 sets out the Council’s approach to the provision of dwellings for agricultural, forestry and other full-time workers in the countryside where there is an essential need for them to live at or near their place of work.

#### Assessment

3.113 Occupational dwellings are required to tackle the low wage economy associated with certain types of countryside activities. They tend to be required for younger workers and their growing families and so meet the needs of this equalities group in the countryside and provide extra opportunities for young people to enter employment.

Policy 31	Protected characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Ethnicity and race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
	+	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

### Action Planning and Justification

3.114 The above assessment shows that the majority of the policies within the Local Plan Part 1 meet the needs of the local diverse community and that overall the policies themselves have a positive or neutral impact on all groups.

3.115 However, three policies (Policy 2 – Core Spatial Strategy, Policy 12 - Retail, Leisure and other Commercial Developments and Policy 20 – The Countryside) that focus development in the main towns and restrain development in the countryside could



lead to some equality communities being disadvantaged. The Council recognised the possible negative impacts of this spatial approach to sustainable growth and have sought to introduce specific countryside policies to mitigate these effects. The common issue for many of the equality communities in the countryside is poor access to services and transport that can lead to rural isolation.

- 3.116 Poor access to services and transport issues are points identified in the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) for Dorset where it notes that older people and the disabled are particularly affected by poor levels of accessibility and that this also disadvantages the young and their ability to access employment, training and leisure opportunities.
- 3.117 In this respect the key challenges for North Dorset from the SCS can be identified as being: to ensure that levels of service provision (both in the towns and the rural area) are maintained and where possible improved; and to encourage better public transport that meets the needs of local communities.
- 3.118 These challenges (which are still occurring) have been identified throughout the plan preparation process and were considered as part of the public consultation exercise in 2005 and 2007 and also in 2010 and 2012. For further information on the consultation background to the Local Plan Part 1 please refer to the Consultation Statement.
- 3.119 The preferred issues and options considered the needs of all groups in the District and the resulting overall spatial strategy for the District seeks to create thriving market towns and sustainable rural communities where the environment is protected and managed, housing needs are met and the quality of life for residents is improved.
- 3.120 The vision, objectives and strategic policies in the Local Plan Part 1 have all been assessed in the wider context through the SA process and equality issues have been considered throughout in conjunction with SA objectives, including:
- creating balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet the needs of residents, and improving access to essential services;
  - reducing barriers to individuals participating in their community, while promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life; and
  - improving the quality of life through well-designed developments reflecting SA objectives against which policies were assessed.

## Publication and Review

- 3.121 It is a legal requirement to publish an EqIA in a manner that meets the needs of the community. As such this EqIA will be placed on the Council's website and will be made available in a hard copy and in different formats on request.

- 3.122 As part of the review it is also important to monitor implementation of the various objectives. Chapter 11 of the Local Plan Part 1 sets out a framework for monitoring. If any particular objective is appearing to fail to be delivered then its impact on the equality communities will need to be considered and any actions to mitigate the negative effects will be taken.

## 4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The aim of this EqIA has been to see if the strategic policies within the Local Plan part 1 have the potential to be discriminatory to any of the equality communities and to see how the needs of such groups have been taken into account in the policies themselves.
- 4.2 It has been shown that some groups in the District could be discriminated against by the spatial policies. However, by ensuring that the Local Plan Part 1 contains additional policies that seek to mitigate any negative impacts, the overall assessment of the Local Plan Part 1 is that it is not discriminatory to any equality group and that the needs of all equality groups have been taken into account.