

The New Plan for North Dorset

Draft Equality Impact Assessment on Core Strategy Policies

December 2009



North Dorset District Council

**Core Strategy and
Development Management Policies
Development Plan Document**

**Draft Equality Impact Assessment
on Core Strategy Policies**

December 2009

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background to the Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.1. An Equality Impact Assessment (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. In this instance, the Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies in the Development Plan Document (draft DPD) 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.
- 1.3. This EqIA compliments the Sustainability Appraisal¹ (SA) that considers the wider implications of the vision, objectives and individual policies. This EqIA should be read in conjunction with a separate EqIA dated November 2009 that assessed the consultation process for the draft DPD and whether that had the potential to be discriminatory. By carrying out these initial EqIAs it is hoped that everyone has a fair chance to participate in the development of the policies and that through this process inappropriate policies will be avoided.

Legal requirements on equality and diversity

- 1.4. As mentioned previously an EqIA is a statutory requirement under legislation² and is recognised as good practice nationally in the Equality Standard for Local Government (that has taken over from Best Value). On 27 April 2009 the government published the Equality Bill³, which is expected to come into force from autumn 2010. The purpose of the Equality Bill is to consolidate existing legislation. It contains new measures, which are intended to strengthen protection against discrimination. The Equality Duty is a key part of this bill that requires

¹ Initial Sustainability Appraisal for the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document, January 2010

² Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and Sex Discrimination Act 2007

³ http://www.equalities.gov.uk/pdf/NEWGEO_FairerFuture_may09_acc.pdf

public bodies to consider the needs of diverse groups in the community when designing and delivering public services so that people can get fairer opportunities and better public services.

- 1.5. The Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West⁴, in Section 10 also seeks to ensure that people are treated fairly and can participate in society and this is reinforced in Policy SI1 that requires Local Authorities to undertake EqlAs and to take steps to mitigate any negative effects.
- 1.6. The diverse groups in the community have been divided into six equality strands. They are:

Age

Disability

Gender

Race

Religion/Belief

Sexual Orientation

- 1.7. Building on the current legal requirements the Council adopted its own Equality Scheme⁵ in August 2009. In North Dorset we value the increasing diversity in our rural communities and want to ensure that no-one is disadvantaged unfairly by their age, gender, race, faith, disability or sexual orientation. However, the corporate scheme introduced a seventh strand - **vulnerable people**. These are those people where support is required to enable or promote independent living and safe and active participation in the community.
- 1.8. The equality strands are not homogenous as people within these groups have different needs and some will be members of several groups.

Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document

- 1.9. Planning Policy Statement 12 sets the framework to which the local planning policies are to adhere to and the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West sets further regional context. The Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies in the Development Plan Document (draft DPD) conform to the national/regional policies and is one of the key documents forming the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF). 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

⁴ The Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West, incorporating the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes (July 2008)

⁵ The North Dorset Corporate Equality Scheme (August 2009)

2026, when it will be delivered and how it will be delivered. The draft DPD outlines the Council's vision for the District, sets objectives to achieve the vision and then proposes core policies and development management policies to implement these objectives.

- 1.10. The Council has already undertaken two rounds of consultation on the issues that the core strategy ought to address. These were: a series of focus group meetings in July 2005; and consultation on Issues and Alternative Options in June /July 2007. The Council had regard to the results of the consultation exercises in taking forward the draft DPD.
- 1.11. A further opportunity to make comments will be when the draft DPD is published and a more formal and time limited exercise will allow public and statutory bodies to comment on the policy options. This next stage of consultation is planned for Mar-Apr 2010 when exhibitions and events will be organised to raise public awareness and generate debate and comments.
- 1.12. The Council will then consider all representations prior to preparing a final revised DPD that will be published in the summer 2010 prior to submission to the Secretary of State in the autumn. At this time the 'soundness' of the document will be considered by a Government appointed independent Inspector at an Examination.
- 1.13. Both EqlAs will be submitted alongside the revised DPD.

2.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 2.1. This EqlA has been based largely on the guidance from the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (IDeA), but also takes into consideration the advice of the Planning Advisory Service⁶ and uses the toolkit⁷ prepared by South West Regional Assembly which also suggests that EqlA's are built into the information gathering and community involvement phases of the LDF process to avoid inappropriate strategies being put in place.
- 2.2. In preparing an EqlA the IDeA recommend that a six step process is followed. The six steps are:
- 1 Initial screening
 - 2 Scoping and defining
 - 3 Information gathering
 - 4 Making a judgement
 - 5 Action planning
 - 6 Publication and review

Step 1 – Initial screening

- 2.3. The IDeA recommends that an initial screening takes place for all new and revised policies, strategies, procedures and functions to determine whether or not it is necessary to carry out a full EqlA for this area of activity.
- 2.4. In order to do this we need to ask the following question. “Does the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document have the potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?”.
- 2.5. To answer this question we need to understand the scope of the draft DPD and this is best outlined by the vision statement.
- 2.6. ***In 20 years time North Dorset will:***
- 1) ***be a District that has played a positive role in addressing the causes and effects of climate change;***
 - 2) ***have more sustainable forms of development that are adequately served by infrastructure (including sustainable transport solutions) and make prudent use of natural resources (including previously developed land);***

⁶ Equality and Diversity: Improving planning outcomes for the whole community (September 2008)

⁷ Equality Impact Assessment of Local Development Frameworks – A Toolkit for local authorities in the South West

- 3) ***have expanded thriving market towns collectively providing homes, jobs and services for those living within them and within the communities they serve;***
 - 4) ***have sustainable smaller rural communities providing local services which enable day-to-day needs to be met locally;***
 - 5) ***have a protected and enhanced locally distinctive built and natural environment that retains the qualities that make the District's urban and rural areas even more attractive and desirable places to live, work and visit;***
 - 6) ***have more housing, and in particular more affordable housing, that better meets the diverse needs of the District;***
 - 7) ***be a District: that has advanced towards more cohesive communities; that has recognised the needs of the older population; and where the life chances for children and young people have been enhanced;***
 - 8) ***have a more robust and prosperous economy (including sustainable tourism) with high quality jobs and skills, focused in locations that best support the District's growing population; and***
 - 9) ***have a range of community, leisure, cultural and recreational facilities in locations that are accessible to the local population.***
- 2.7. Due to the scope of the draft DPD it is considered appropriate for an EqlA to be carried out at this time. The policy options for each core strategy policy have been evaluated as part of the SA and preferred options identified. It is these preferred options that are assessed in this EqlA.

Step 2 – Scoping and defining

- 2.8. The draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (draft DPD) contains a strategic vision, objectives and core strategy policies and these are supported by the development management policies.
- 2.9. The vision and objectives are quite broad and have been assessed through the SA process. The development management policies provide detail and build on and/or supplement the core strategy policies and in some cases provide standards to be achieved and monitored. The draft DPD also includes a range of delivery policies and a delivery plan to manage the deliverability of the core strategy policies. The core strategy policies will also be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report that will allow for an annual review of the progress of the policies. As the core strategy policies provide the main link between the vision and objectives and the development management policies and delivery it is the core policies that are the focus of this EqlA.
- 2.10. The IDeA recommends that the different perspectives, experiences and challenges are made use of when completing an EqlA. The idea is that those responsible for delivering the strategy are involved and others with technical expertise or with specialist knowledge are involved where appropriate.

2.11. 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 Core Strategy and Development Management Policies. The technical expertise and specialist knowledge of Mark Williams (Reputation and Improvement Manager) have also been utilised.

Step 3 – Information gathering

2.12. Step 3 of the 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. The IDeA recommends using Census data and national and local statistics. Guidance from the PAS however, recognises that local authorities need to go beyond this in order to capture recent demographic changes and to the needs, experiences and aspirations of local groups.

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

- Census data
- 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
- Ghurkhas in Blandford - Dorset Race Equalities Council Group 2009
- Officer's experience and knowledge in particular from the staff on the Customer Access and Equalities Group.

2.14. Table 1 below gives a summary of data for each equality strand in North Dorset.

Table 1 - Summary of data for each equality strand in North Dorset

Equality Group	North Dorset Summary																												
Age	<p>The 2007⁸ population figure for North Dorset was 67, 600 with an age structure as follows:</p> <p>Age 0-15 (19.2%) Age 16-RA (56.8%) Age RA+ (24.1%) (RA = Retirement age 60 (Females)/65 (Males))</p> <p>The proportion of younger people is greater than elsewhere in the County due to the number of communal establishments, such as Blandford Camp and the presence of several large boarding schools in the District. The percentage of young children between the ages of 0 and 15 in the County is 16.8%.</p> <p>Older people make up a higher proportion of the District's population than is found nationally. In North Dorset 24.1% of the population is of retirement age compared to 19% in England and Wales.</p> <p>48% of the population live in the four main settlements of: Blandford Forum (Population 9,490) Gillingham (Population 11,480) Shaftesbury (Population 7,110) Sturminster Newton (Population 3,970)</p>																												
Disability	<p>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.</p> <p>One indicator of the prevalence of disability amongst the population is the level of people claiming disability related state benefits. In February 2009⁹ there were 2365 people in the District claiming Disability Living Allowance and 1920 claiming Attendance Allowance (over 65s). The spatial distribution of those claiming these benefits is similar to the distribution of the population in general.</p> <p>A second indicator is the figures released by Dorset County Council¹⁰ that currently show that there are 3,200 people in North Dorset with a registered disability.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="531 1518 1358 1738"> <thead> <tr> <th>Disability</th> <th>Over 18</th> <th>Under 18</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Blind</td> <td>331</td> <td>4</td> <td>335</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Partially sighted</td> <td>420</td> <td>1</td> <td>421</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Deaf with speech</td> <td>146</td> <td>3</td> <td>149</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Deaf without speech</td> <td>15</td> <td>0</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hard of hearing</td> <td>798</td> <td>1</td> <td>799</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Severely or appreciably disabled</td> <td>1390</td> <td>9</td> <td>1399</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	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
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⁸ ONS: Mid Year Estimates Population

⁹ DWP: Information Directorate

¹⁰ Corporate Equality Scheme 2009-2012 – North Dorset District Council

Equality Group	North Dorset Summary
Gender	<p>The 2007¹¹ figures show that the population within the District is almost balanced equally between males and females.</p> <p>34,064 (50.4%) females 33,562 (49.6%) males</p> <p>Nationally there are 104 females for every 100 males.</p> <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. Men, similarly can also be disadvantaged in some circumstances due to workplace cultures and access to some services.</p>
Race	<p>In the 2001 Census 3.4% of the Districts population classed themselves as not being "White British" (i.e. from a black and minority ethnic (BME) group) which is lower than the proportion for England (13%). However, 1.49% described themselves as White Other and 0.5% as White Irish reflecting the number of gypsies and travellers in the District.</p> <p>There are two authorised gypsy sites in North Dorset, one at Shaftesbury and one at Thornicombe, nr Blandford Forum. Research in 2007¹² showed that the greatest need for additional pitches is in the Shaftesbury/Gillingham areas, although sites may also be needed elsewhere in the District.</p> <p>The remaining 1.38% of the Districts population described themselves as Mixed (0.47%), Asian or Asian British (0.4%), Black or Black British (0.12%) or Chinese or Other (0.38%).</p> <p>Migrant workers are increasingly playing an important role in the local economy. Data from the DWP recording the number of national insurance (NINO) registrations allocated to non-UK national gives an indication of the numbers of migrant workers coming to North Dorset to work and live. In 2007/08 the number of new registrations was 290, although this has dropped down from the 370 in 2006/07. The largest proportions (69%) are from the Accession Countries with Poland being the most common country of origin. In terms of distribution, NINO data is gathered at a Ward level. Higher numbers of registration are recorded for the market towns of Gillingham and Sturminster Newton.</p> <p>Recent research by the Dorset Race Equality Council into the Nepalese families at Blandford Camp identified language problems, poor public transport links, no Post Office facility at the Camp, inadequate Nepali food products in local stores, racism, poor understanding of cultural differences in the classroom and lack of children's and teenage facilities in Blandford. Ghurkha wives faced several barriers to employment including educational underachievement, discrimination, and lack of affordable and appropriate childcare, training and travel costs.</p>

¹¹ ONS: Mid Year Estimates Population

¹² Dorset Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment – Anglia Ruskin University (March 2007)

Equality Group	North Dorset Summary
Religion or Belief	<p>The 2001 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 78% of the population described themselves as Christian. Within the District 21% 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%).</p> <p>Of the non-Christian religions in North Dorset Buddhist formed the largest proportion (25%), followed by Muslims (18%) and Hindu (15%). This is in contrast to the national figures of 4.8%, 51.8% and 18.5% respectively. The Hindu population in North Dorset is influenced by the number of Nepalese families based at Blandford Camp.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>Of all strands of diversity sexual preference is the hardest to measure as there is a lack of information at both local and national level on the size of these communities.</p> <p>The 2001 Census asked a question regarding the relationship between adults living in the same sex household. In North Dorset 0.12% of all respondents said they lived as a same sex couple which is lower than the national average of 0.19%.</p> <p>As there is no local or national data for Lesbians and Gay men the Government use a figure between 5 and 7% of the population which is seen by most national lesbian and gay organisations as reasonably accurate. This would suggest, based on the 2007¹³ population figure for North Dorset, that between 3,330 and 4,662 people living in North Dorset are either Gay or Lesbian.</p>
Vulnerable People (Deprivation/poverty)	<p>In survey of housing need¹⁴ in 2007 special needs groups were identified. It was estimated that there are 5,390 households in the District with one or more members in an identified special need group. This represents 19.2% of all households which is greater than the average Fordham Research has found nationally (13-14%). The number of households in each category exceeds the total number of special needs households because people can have more than one category of special need.</p> <p>The number of households in the District with residents who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are frail elderly 2,387 (8.5%) Have physical disability 2,480 (8.9%) Have learning difficulties 572 (2.0%) Suffer from mental health problems 840 (3.0%) Have severe sensory disability 569 (2.0%) Have a medical condition 2,890 (10.3%) Or have other needs 295 (1.1%) <p>The proportion of households with special needs does not vary significantly across the District and ranges from 18.3% in Sturminster/Stalbridge to 20.9% in Shaftesbury.</p>

¹³ ONS: Mid Year Estimates Population 2007

¹⁴ Dorset Survey of Housing Need and Demand, Fordham June 2008.

Step 4 – Making a judgement

- 2.15. By screening the core strategy policies, or ‘making a judgement’, the EqIA can establish if there is potential for any policies themselves to result in a less favourable outcome on any group within the community, or whether the draft DPD discriminates against any equality group.
- 2.16. Table 2 identifies issues that may affect each equality strand and Table 3 then outlines the key characteristics of each individual policy within the core strategy and identifies whether there is the potential for the policy to have a less favourable outcome, or for it to discriminate or have a negative affect, against any one group within the community based on the issues identified in Table 2.
- 2.17. Where it is considered that a policy will have a positive impact on a group this has also been shown as a ‘+’ symbol. In some cases there is a positive and negative affect of a policy on a certain group. The key below shows all symbols used in Table 3

Symbol	Likely Impact
+	Positive
o	Neutral/Negligible
-	Negative
+/-	Positive and negative
N/A	Not Applicable

Table 2 – Potential issues for each equality strand

Equality	Potential Issues
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Affordability of housing for all ages, but in particular for the young families and ‘first time buyers’. b) 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. c) Level of care provision for the old and young alike. d) Low wage economy, out migration and lack of further education opportunities and the impact on young people in particular.
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) Specific requirements due to sensory impairment, learning difficulties or mental health problems within the home or public environment. f) Difficulty in accessing facilities and services due to lack of mobility. This is especially acute in the rural areas.
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> g) The caring responsibilities of both men and women and the access to facilities and services. h) Safety and security concerns.
Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Low literacy levels, language problems and location mean that some groups have difficulties in integrating into the community j) Transient nature of certain groups and the level of site provision.
Religion/ Belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> k) Provision of places of worship.
Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> l) Verbal and physical harassment.
Vulnerable People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> m) Distribution of the population and the impact of poor public transport provision leading to rural isolation for vulnerable people. n) Specific requirements due to sensory impairment, learning difficulties or mental health problems within the home or public environment.

Table 3 – Core Policies and equality impacts

Core Policy	Equality Group							Commentary
	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion/ Belief	Sexual Orientation	Vulnerable People	
<p>Core Policy 1 – Tackling Climate Change This policy seeks to address the causes and effects of climate change by reducing green house gas emissions and taking account of likely effects, such as the increase risk of flooding. Measures to reduce green house gas emissions include encouraging energy efficiency, requiring the use of sustainable construction techniques and supporting the production of energy from renewable sources.</p>	+	+	o	o	o	o	+	<p>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. In turn this will benefit the elderly, disabled and those vulnerable people who are more likely to suffer from fuel poverty.</p> <p>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 affect them.</p>
<p>Core Policy 2 – Delivering Sustainable Forms of Development This policy seeks to deliver sustainable forms of development by: making settlements more self contained and improving the quality of life for residents; by ensuring the relevant infrastructure is provided; by minimising the need to travel and encouraging modal shift; by promoting a prudent use of natural resources; encouraging good design; and safeguarding amenity.</p>	+	+	+	o	o	+	+	<p>By promoting sustainable transport systems, minimising the need to travel and encouraging modal shift the old, young, disabled and vulnerable will benefit the most as access to services and facilities will be improved. Carers (both male and female) with no access to a car will also benefit from this policy.</p> <p>Through good design policies developments will be safe and secure for people of all sexes. They will be legible and easy to move around in for those people who are vulnerable or disabled and promoting local distinctiveness in the built and natural environment will provide landmarks acting as aide memoirs for the older population who may be suffering from illnesses. Design also considers energy efficiency through orientation and location of buildings and again this will improve energy efficiency and this will benefit people of all groups who suffer from fuel poverty.</p>

Core Policy	Equality Group							Commentary
	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion/ Belief	Sexual Orientation	Vulnerable People	
<p>Core Policy 3 – Core Spatial Strategy for North Dorset This policy seeks to focus most development in the existing towns and villages that function as local service centres and to protect the countryside from non-essential development. It identifies the main service centres as Blandford, Gillingham and Shaftesbury. Sturminster Newton and the larger villages in the District are identified as local service centres.</p>	+/-	+/-	o	+/-	o	o	+/-	The aim of the core spatial strategy is to create thriving market towns and sustainable rural communities that act as hubs serving the surrounding rural areas. It will benefit a majority of the population who live in the towns and larger villages, especially the older and younger people and those with disabilities as facilities and services will be local and easily accessible. However, those people both old, young, disabled, vulnerable and certain racial groups who live in the small villages, army bases and the open countryside may be discriminated against as development beyond essential rural needs in the countryside will be restricted.
<p>Core Policy 4 - Housing (including affordable Housing) Distribution This policy sets out the overall strategic approach to housing growth within the District. It reflects aspects of the District's vision and objectives and conforms to the regional spatial strategy for the area. It sets the housing numbers (including affordable housing) for the thriving market towns, the larger more sustainable villages whilst seeking to safeguard the environment through allocating limited development in the countryside.</p>	+	+	o	+	o	o	+	By concentrating new housing in the main towns and the larger villages where there is a good range of facilities and services everyone will benefit, but in particular it is those people who are old, young, disabled or vulnerable who do not have access to a car.
<p>Core Policy 5 – Managing Housing Land Supply This policy is required to achieve the Government's priority of delivering housing growth in a sustainable way.</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Core Policy 5 has no direct impact on any equality group

Core Policy	Equality Group							Commentary
	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion/ Belief	Sexual Orientation	Vulnerable People	
<p>Core Policy 6 – Economy This policy seeks to stimulate the Districts 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.</p>	+	+	+	o	o	o	+	<p>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 do not have access to a car.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The focus of the policy is in the main towns and larger villages but the rural economy is also promoted through policies encouraging the re-use of existing buildings, the expansion or re-development of existing employment sites and sustainable tourism.</p>
<p>Core Policy 7 – Retail and Other Town Centre Uses This policy focuses on creating thriving market towns with a range of retail, leisure, entertainment facilities, certain intensive sport and recreation uses, offices, arts, cultural and tourism uses.</p>	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	o	o	+/-	<p>People of all ages, disabilities, gender 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 small villages and open countryside may be discriminated against due to transport issues.</p>

Core Policy	Equality Group							Commentary
	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion/ Belief	Sexual Orientation	Vulnerable People	
<p>Core Policy 8 – Housing Mix, Type and Density 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.</p>	+	+	o	o	o	o	+	The right mix and type of housing will meet the general needs of the old, young, disabled and vulnerable in the District. This combined with the requirement for all new homes, where feasible and viable, to be constructed to Lifetime Homes Standards will also address the specific needs of the young, old, disabled and vulnerable. 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.
<p>Core Policy 9 – Affordable housing 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 site.</p>	+	+	o	o	o	o	+	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 or disabled as it is these groups that tend to have the higher need. For example 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.
<p>Core Policy 10 – Affordable Housing: Rural Exception Schemes The focus of the core strategy is for development in the larger and more sustainable locations. However, Core Policy 10 addresses the rural need for affordable housing for those people who are unable to access market housing, but who have a particular tie to a settlement because of family or work.</p>	+	+		+	o	o	+	The provision of rural exception schemes in villages where there are a range of facilities, such as village shops, post offices, primary schools etc within walking distance will benefit those old, young, disabled and vulnerable people who do not have access to a car.

Core Policy	Equality Group							Commentary
	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion/ Belief	Sexual Orientation	Vulnerable People	
A joint Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD will be jointly prepared with other local authorities in the Dorset sub-region.	+	o	o	+	o	o	o	The location of new pitches will be outlined in a separate site allocations DPD, but by providing sites as permanent places to live the young and old within this community will benefit from improved access to education and health care facilities.
<p>Core Policy – 11 Grey Infrastructure This policy 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.</p> <p>The policy also identifies rural accessibility needs and states that community led transport schemes that complement public transport will be encouraged.</p>	+	+	+	+	o	o	+	<p>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, males/females and vulnerable people who do not have access to a car. In some cases it will also benefit certain racial groups who suffer from rural isolation. For example the Nepalese families at Blandford Camp who cited poor access to facilities and rural isolation as an issue.</p> <p>Grey infrastructure also includes telecommunications. Here the Councils overall approach is to allow for networks to meet the growing needs of business, public services and individuals. Improved communications will benefit all groups especially those wanting to work from home.</p>

Core Policy	Equality Group							Commentary
	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion/ Belief	Sexual Orientation	Vulnerable People	
<p>Core Policy 12 – Social Infrastructure This policy seeks to provide and safeguard a range of social infrastructure in our towns and villages from town and village halls to schools and colleges and GP’s surgeries and community hospitals. It also includes commercial community facilities such as village shops and public houses that make communities more sustainable.</p>	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	<p>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 and vulnerable who use them most together with those men and women with caring responsibilities. In particular providing child care and primary schools will benefit young families.</p> <p>Working with partners such as Yeovil College, Blandford Camp and the Learning Skills Council the young people will also benefit from improved access to further education and community learning facilities. 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.</p> <p>The provision of community halls will provide venues for cultural activities so the needs of different racial groups and religions can also be met.</p>
<p>Core Policy 13 – Green Infrastructure The aim of this policy is to develop a Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy that will improve linkages between towns and villages and the towns and residential areas. It will protect open space, support new strategic facilities such as new playing fields in Blandford Forum, will meet the need for allotments and provide access to wildlife sites for relaxation and educational purposes.</p>	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	<p>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.</p> <p>Green Infrastructure will help to create attractive and pleasant environments that can provide psychological benefits for certain more vulnerable groups. It also creates areas of biodiversity that can be used to educate the young.</p>

Core Policy	Equality Group							Commentary
	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion/ Belief	Sexual Orientation	Vulnerable People	
Core Policy 14 – Protecting and Enhancing the Environment This policy seeks to safeguard the District's environment by conserving and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity; landscape character and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs); and heritage assets, including archaeology.	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	Through the AONB management plans, that have regard for the economic and social needs of local communities, the issues relating to rural isolation for those old, young, disabled and vulnerable will be addressed.
Core Policy 15 – Blandford This policy outlines the strategy for Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary in terms of housing numbers, employment, retail and other town centre opportunities together with the supporting infrastructure requirements (grey, social and green)	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	The provision of homes, employment opportunities, retail and other town centre uses together with the supporting infrastructure will result in Blandford, Gillingham and Shaftesbury becoming 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.
Core Policy 16 – Gillingham This policy outlines the strategy for Gillingham in terms of housing numbers, employment, retail and other town centre opportunities together with the supporting infrastructure requirements (grey, social and green)	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	
Core Policy 17 – Shaftesbury This policy outlines the strategy for Shaftesbury in terms of housing numbers, employment, retail and other town centre opportunities together with the supporting infrastructure requirements (grey, social and green)	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	

Core Policy	Equality Group							Commentary
	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion/ Belief	Sexual Orientation	Vulnerable People	
<p>Core Policy 18 – Sturminster Newton This policy outlines the strategy for Sturminster Newton in terms of housing numbers, employment, retail and other town centre opportunities together with the supporting infrastructure requirements (grey, social and green)</p>	+	+	o	o	o	o	+	By taking forward the opportunities to regenerate and expand Sturminster Newton and improve its town centre to support and enhance its function as the District's largest local service centre the old, young, disabled and vulnerable who live in the town and do not have access to a car will benefit.
<p>Core Policy 19 – Stalbridge and the Larger Villages This policy outlines the strategy for Stalbridge and the Larger Villages in terms of housing numbers and employment opportunities together with the supporting infrastructure requirements (grey, social and green) to enable them to become local service centres meeting the day to day needs of the surrounding rural areas.</p>	+	+	o	o	o	o	+	By creating sustainable rural communities with new homes and employment opportunities and safeguarding the local service centres the needs of the old, young, disabled and vulnerable who live in the larger villages and who do not have access to a car will benefit. The larger villages will also act as day to day service centres for surrounding rural communities.

Core Policy	Equality Group							Commentary
	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion/ Belief	Sexual Orientation	Vulnerable People	
<p>Core Policy 20 – The Countryside (Including Smaller Villages) This policy will support the rural economy and meet essential rural needs as development in the countryside will be limited to the types appropriate as set out in Core Policies 2, 6, 10, 11 and 12. For any other type of development to be acceptable in the countryside, the Council needs to be convinced that there is an overriding need for a countryside location as it supports the rural economy or meets an essential rural need.</p>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	<p>The countryside policy of restraint will have a negligible impact on all equality groups as through Core Policies 2, 6, 11, 12, 18 and 19 the small towns and larger villages will become local hubs for community facilities and services. Rural exceptions for housing in the countryside will be permitted through Core Policy 10 and if there is an overriding need Core Policy 20 identifies possible exceptions to policy.</p> <p>Core Policy 2 considers sustainable forms of development and is supported by Development Management Policies 2, 3 and 4 which provide more detail on sustainable transport, design and amenity.</p> <p>Core Policy 6 considers employment and training opportunities and this is supported by Development Management Policies 5, 11, 12 and 13 that cover sustainable tourism, re-use of existing buildings, employment sites and equine related development in the countryside.</p> <p>Core Policy 10 specifically addresses affordable housing needs in rural areas for all groups and is supported by Development Management Policies 3 and 9 to ensure good design and landscaping detail.</p> <p>Core Policy 11 provides for sustainable transport links between the main towns and villages in their hinterlands in order to improve access to services and reduce social exclusion and Core Policy 2 gives further detail.</p> <p>Core Policy 12 seeks to retain community facilities and provide educational services to benefit the whole community. The retention of community facilities is supported by Core Policy 7.</p>

Step 5 – Action planning and justification

- 2.18. Table 3 identified that a majority of the policies within the draft DPD meet the needs of the local diverse community and that overall the policies themselves have a positive impact on all groups.
- 2.19. However, Core Policy 3 The Core Spatial Strategy for North Dorset and Core Policy 7 Retail and Other Town Centre Uses show a positive and negative impact on certain groups. The positive impact is for all those people who already live or are going to live in the main towns as they will be the focus for new homes, jobs, services and facilities and that these will be easily accessible to all.
- 2.20. In rural areas like North Dorset, national policy¹⁵ seeks to focus most development at existing towns and villages that function as local service centres and to protect the countryside from non-essential development. The emerging RSS¹⁶ provides strategic guidance on how growth should be distributed across the South West and for North Dorset that means the market towns (or RSS Development Policy B settlements) are the focal points for '*locally significant development*', including '*the bulk of district housing provision*' and that small towns and villages (or RSS Development Policy C settlements), should accommodate some small-scale development, including housing to meet identified local needs to '*support their roles as local hubs for community facilities and services, including public transport*'. Development (particularly of housing) in the region's countryside will be strictly controlled in accordance with national policy.
- 2.21. But by focusing development in the main towns it will naturally lead to discrimination for those people, but specifically the old, young, disabled and vulnerable people in the rural areas as over half of the District's population live outside the four largest towns. The key issues that all of these groups have in common is poor access to services and transport which can lead to rural isolation
- 2.22. Poor access to services and transport issues were points identified in the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) for Dorset where it noted that older people and the disabled are particularly affected by poor levels of accessibility and that this disadvantages the young and their ability to access employment, training and leisure opportunities¹⁷.
- 2.23. 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.

¹⁵ Paragraphs 3 and 1(iv), PPS 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas – ODPM (2004)

¹⁶ as identified in Policy CSS – the Core Spatial Strategy in the Proposed Changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy

¹⁷ The issue of access to services is explained in Section 3.5 of Shaping Our Future: The Community Strategy for Dorset 2007 – 2016, Dorset Strategic Partnership (June 2007)

- 2.24. These challenges were identified at the start of the core strategy process and were considered as part of the public consultation exercise in 2005 and 2007. 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.
- 2.25. By focussing certain development in the main towns the EqIA has identified that some groups could be disadvantaged by this policy, but through separate policies that aim to mitigate any negative effects the overall core strategy and development management policies will not disadvantage any one group.
- 2.26. The vision, objectives, core policies and development management policies of this draft DPD have all been assessed in the wider context through the SA process and equality issues have been considered throughout with SA objectives including:
- Creating balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet the needs, improving access to essential services.
 - Reducing barriers to individuals participating in their community, promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life
 - Improving the quality of life through well designed developments were SA objectives against which policies were assessed.
- 2.27. Core Policy 19 and 20 specifically refer to Stalbridge, the larger villages and the countryside. They support Core Policy 2 that considers sustainable forms of development and development management policies 2, 3 and 4 which provide more detail on sustainable transport options, design and amenity.
- 2.28. Core Policy 6 considers employment and training opportunities in the towns and rural areas and this is supported by Development Management Policies 5, 11, 12 and 13 that cover sustainable tourism, re-use of existing buildings, employment sites and equine related development in the countryside.
- 2.29. Core Policy 10 specifically addresses affordable housing needs in rural areas for all groups and is supported by Development Management Policies 3 and 9 to ensure good design and landscaping detail.
- 2.30. Core Policy 11 provides focus on sustainable transport links between the towns, villages and rural areas and Development Management Policy 2 provides detail.
- 2.31. Finally, Core Policy 12 seeks to retain community facilities and provide educational services that will benefit the whole community. The

retention of community facilities, especially in the countryside and larger villages is supported by Development Management Policy 7.

- 2.32. In summary, Core Policies 2, 6, 10, 11 and 12 with supporting development management policies together with Core Policies 19 and 20 seek to ensure that the overall spatial vision for the District is not discriminatory to any equality group and that the needs of such groups have been taken into account. They specifically address the issues identified by the EqlA and the SCS and are a direct response to the vision and objectives.
- 2.33. As mentioned in Table 3 a separate Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD is currently being jointly prepared. Since this will take some time and the fact that it is important to have a policy framework for assessing proposals before this joint DPD is produced, and so that applications on non-allocated sites can be assessed, a separate Development Management Policy has been created. Development Management Policy 6 seeks to ensure that sites are located, designed and managed to meet the needs of these specific groups.

Step 6 – Publication and review

- 2.34. It is a legal requirement to publish an EqlA; however, before one can be published it is required to be considered by the appropriate body within the Council. At NDDC all EqlA are considered by the Service Review Committee.
- 2.35. It is also a legal requirement to publish an EqlA in a manner that meets the needs of the community. As such this EqlA will be placed on the Council's website and will be made available in a hard copy and in different formats on request.
- 2.36. As part of the review it is also important to monitor implementation of the various policies. As mentioned previously Section 4 of the draft DPD includes delivery policies, a delivery plan and monitoring procedures. If any particular policy fails to deliver then its impact on the equality groups will need to be considered and any actions to mitigate the negative effects will be taken.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1. The aim of this EqIA has been to see if the core strategy policies within the draft DPD have the potential to be discriminatory to any of the equality groups and to see how the needs of such groups have been taken into account in the policies themselves.
- 3.2. Following guidance from the IDeA and other bodies and completing the six steps in the EqIA process it has shown that some groups in the District could be discriminated against by two of the spatial policies. However, by ensuring that the core strategy contains additional policies that seek to mitigate any negative impacts the overall assessment of the draft DPD is that it is not discriminatory to any equality group and that the needs of all equality groups have been taken into account.



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