

West Berkshire Local Plan
Local Plan Review Development Plan Document

Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) Summary
November 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1. West Berkshire District Council is currently working on the production of the Local Plan Review (LPR) which will set out policies to guide development in West Berkshire up to 2039.
- 1.2. This Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) presents the findings of an assessment of the likely effects of the Submission version of the LPR on equality impact issues.
- 1.3. The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine 'protected characteristics' and seeks to protect people from discrimination on the basis of these characteristics. They are – age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; gender; and sexual orientation.
- 1.4. The Submission LPR has been reviewed to consider the likely impacts of the policies on each of the nine protected characteristics in terms of their likely effects (positive, neutral or negative). The findings are summarised under Benefits (page 4). The detailed appendices will be available for reference purposes at the start of the Regulation consultation.
- 1.5. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('The Act') is known as the 'public sector equality duty' and requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to:
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
 - foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- 1.6. The Act describes 'due regard' as considering the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, stating that this involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to;
 - a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
 - c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low."

2. Protected characteristics

2.1. Protected characteristics is the legal term used in the Equality Act 2010 to describe the groups against whom discrimination is unlawful under The Act, these are:

- **Age.** A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32 year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30 year olds).
- **Disability.** A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- **Gender reassignment.** The process of transitioning from one gender to another.
- **Marriage and civil partnership.** Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).
- **Pregnancy and maternity.** Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context.
- **Race.** Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
- **Religion and belief.** Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
- **Sex.** A man or a woman.
- **Sexual orientation.** Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

2.2. The EqIA has considered potential impacts on all protected characteristic groupings at all stages and throughout all policy assessments, and the results have influenced the final form of policies in the submitted LPR.

3. AIMS of the LPR

- 3.1. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development which is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The planning system should be plan-led with concise and up-to-date development plans. The West Berkshire LPR is an important part of the development plan. It identifies the development that is required to meet local needs until 2039. It sets out the strategy for distributing development within the district and the policies for protecting, conserving and enhancing the natural and built environment. It helps local people in West Berkshire achieve sustainable development.

OBJECTIVES

- 3.2. The West Berkshire LPR will help people in West Berkshire to achieve sustainable development. It will provide a framework for the future of the area to meet local needs until 2039 and sets out a strategy for distributing development within the district.

OUTCOMES

- 3.3. Planning applications must be decided in accordance with the development plan, unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise. The LPR outcomes are:

Climate Change

- 3.3.1. To mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and minimise demand for energy and other resources.

Housing

- 3.3.2. To ensure that the identified housing need will be met across the District up to the end of the plan period.

Sustainable and Quality Development

- 3.3.3. To ensure provision of sustainable developments of high quality design, construction and efficiency (including land use) which contribute to an attractive, safe and accessible environment for all.

Economy

- 3.3.4. To facilitate and support a strong, diverse and sustainable economic base across the District, including the provision of employment land which provides for a range of local job opportunities.

Town Centres

- 3.3.5. To enhance the vitality and viability of town, district and local centres in West Berkshire as places for shopping, leisure, business and community activities.

Culture

3.3.6. Together with partners, to develop and promote the cultural distinctiveness of the area, recognising it is fundamental to the improved future wellbeing and sustainability of West Berkshire's economy and communities.

Heritage –

3.3.7. To conserve and enhance the local distinctive character, identity, significance and special interest of the built, historic and natural environment in West Berkshire's towns, villages and countryside.

AONB

3.3.8. Together with partners, to continue to conserve and enhance the North Wessex Downs AONB, with appropriate landscape-led development delivering wider environmental, economic and social benefits.

Green Infrastructure and Healthy Living

3.3.9. To ensure that West Berkshire contains a strong network of multi-functional green infrastructure which provides health and environmental benefits and enhances the overall quality of life of sustainable communities.

Transport

3.3.10. To make provision for transport networks that support sustainable growth in West Berkshire and to promote low emission transport choices.

Infrastructure

3.3.11. To ensure that infrastructure needs (physical and social) arising from the growth in West Berkshire are provided to support and keep pace with development in accordance with the detail set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

4. Benefits

4.1. The LPR will deliver a range of beneficial social, environmental and economic outcomes. The LPR will have a positive impact on all people with protected characteristics through the delivery of housing (including affordable housing) and employment; improved transport and accessibility; and the provision of improved, and safe access to, open space, recreational, health, education, leisure, community and faith facilities and services. This is expanded on in table 1 below.

Table 1
Summary EqIA of Submission Local Plan Review

Group Affected	What might the effect be?	Information to support this
AGE	POSITIVE IMPACT	<p>West Berkshire has 30% more over 65's than the national average and this is projected to increase. Older people can have specific housing needs including adaptations in the home. Policies in the Plan that help to deliver well designed housing and more specialist housing will be of particular benefit for older people. (SP1, SP2, SP3, SP5, SP6, SP7, SP12, SP13, SP14, SP15, SP16, SP17, SP18, SP19, DM1, DM3, DM4, DM16, DM17, DM18, DM19, DM20, DM21, DM22, DM23, DM27, DM28, DM29, DM30, DM31, DM39, DM40, DM41)</p> <p>The Plan will promote the delivery of sustainable and alternative modes of transport which will improve access for everyone. However, many people are particularly disadvantaged by poor access to facilities and buildings such as the elderly, disabled people and pregnant women. This policy will therefore be particularly beneficial for older people who may have reduced mobility. (SP23, DM44, DM45)</p> <p>Data shows that 11.2% of people aged 16-24 were unemployed in the UK in the three months to December 2021, the highest of any age group. Between 1992 and 2021, older age groups have had lower unemployment rates, and 16-24 year olds have consistently had the highest unemployment rate. People aged 16-24 are therefore well placed to benefit positively from additional employment opportunities created in the district as a result of the Local Plan. Source: ONS, A06 SA: Educational status and labour market status for people aged from 16 to 24 (seasonally adjusted). (SP20, SP21, DM32, DM34, DM35, DM36, DM37, DM38, DM39, DM41)</p> <p>The Plan aims to secure a sufficient supply of housing to meet the needs of existing and future households. New housing is more likely to benefit younger people as they are less</p>

Group Affected	What might the effect be?	Information to support this
		<p>likely to be homeowners. They are therefore more likely to benefit from new homes being built, as a result of the resulting downward pressure on house prices and rents. (SP12, SP18, SP19, DM1, DM4, DM16, DM17, DM18, DM19, DM20, DM21, DM22, DM23, DM24, DM25, DM30, DM31)</p> <p>The Plan will protect and deliver childcare, early years and educational facilities and infrastructure which will benefit children and young adults. (SP1, SP16, SP17, SP24, DM3, DM38)</p> <p>The Plan seeks to protect and improve open spaces, sport and recreational facilities which will benefit children and younger people, as well as older people with higher health-related needs. (SP7, SP8, SP10, DM3, DM40)</p>
DISABILITY	POSITIVE IMPACT	<p>Data shows that in West Berkshire, 13.2% of the population has a long-term health problem or disability. This is lower than the rest of the South East (15.7%) and England as a whole (17.6%). Nonetheless, it equates to 16,002 people and this figure is projected to rise by an additional 6,300 people by 2036. There is a direct correlation between people living with a health problem or disability and age, as a higher proportion of older people have a disability or health problem. Policies in the Plan that help to deliver well designed housing and more specialist housing will therefore be of particular benefit for people living with a long term health problem or disability. Source: West Berkshire Affordable Housing Report 2020</p> <p>(SP1, SP2, SP3, SP6, SP7, SP10, SP13, SP14, SP15, SP16, SP17, SP18, SP19, SP20, SP21, SP22, SP23, SP24, DM3, DM4, DM5, DM16, DM17, DM18, DM19, 20, DM21, DM22, DM23, DM24)</p>

Group Affected	What might the effect be?	Information to support this
		<p>Data also shows that people with a long term health problem or disability are more likely to live in social rented housing or be outright owner occupiers. The lowest incomes are found in the social rented sector and therefore people with a disability are likely to be relatively disadvantaged compared to the rest of the population in terms of income and access to the housing market. The need for affordable housing is therefore higher for people with long term health problems and disabilities. The policies within the LPR will deliver additional affordable housing and housing for specialised needs, and will ensure that new development is well designed, which will be of particular benefit for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Source: West Berkshire Affordable Housing Report 2020 (SP7, SP18, SP19, SP24, DM3, DM6, DM7, DM8)</p> <p>The Plan will promote the delivery of sustainable and alternative modes of transport which will improve access for everyone. However, many people are particularly disadvantaged by poor access to facilities and buildings such as the elderly, disabled people and pregnant women. This policy will therefore be particularly beneficial for older people who may have reduced mobility. (SP1, SP3, SP7, SP23, DM42, DM45)</p> <p>The Local Plan will safeguard and provide new community, open space and play, and health facilities and services which will be of benefit to disabled people and people with a long term health problem. (SP7, SP8, SP10, SP24, DM3, DM40)</p>
GENDER REASSIGNMENT	POSITIVE IMPACT	<p>Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that one in four trans people (28%) experience crime in the year ending March 2020, compared with 14% of people whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were registered at birth.</p>

Group Affected	What might the effect be?	Information to support this
		<p>The LPR seeks to deliver well designed development that reduces crime and improves safety. This should therefore have a particularly positive benefit for people who are more likely to be victims of crime, including people with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Source: Office for National Statistics Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Data Tables (SP1, SP2, SP3, SP7, DM3, DM40, DM41, DM42)</p>
MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	NEUTRAL IMPACT	<p>The LPR sets out the distribution of development and is written positively with no differential impact on people with this protected characteristic.</p>
PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY	POSITIVE IMPACT	<p>The Local Plan will safeguard and provide new community and health facilities and services which will be of benefit to pregnant people and people with children.</p> <p>(SP7, SP8, SP10, SP18, SP19, SP22, SP24, DM3, DM16, DM17, DM30, DM31, DM39, DM40, DM41, DM42, DM45)</p>
RACE	POSITIVE IMPACT	<p>As of the 2011 census, in West Berkshire 94.8% of the population is white, 2.5% Asian, 1.6% mixed, 0.9% black and 0.9% other ethnic group.</p> <p>Data shows that people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities are typically in higher need of affordable housing. The LPR policies will deliver additional affordable housing which will benefit all races but will be of particular benefit for people from black, Asian people and minority ethnic communities.</p> <p>(SP12, SP13, SP14, SP15, SP18, SP19, DM3, DM4, DM16, DM17, DM18, DM19)</p> <p>White people notably have the lowest unemployment rate (as of quarter 4, 2021) at 3.5% compared to higher rates for Black people (8.6%), Pakistani people (10.2%), Bangladeshi people (9.4%), Chinese people (7.6%), Indian people (4.4%) and people with mixed ethnicity (7.6%).</p> <p>Source: Office for National Statistics, Labour market status by ethnicity (not seasonally adjusted).</p> <p>(SP20, SP21, SP22, SP23, DM32, DM34, DM35, DM36, DM37)</p>

Group Affected	What might the effect be?	Information to support this
		<p>Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are therefore well placed to benefit positively from additional employment opportunities created in the district as a result of the LPR.</p> <p>Data shows that white people were the least likely to have experienced crime while people of mixed or multiple ethnic backgrounds and those of Asian ethnic backgrounds were more likely to be victims of crime. Source: Office for National Statistics Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Data Tables.</p> <p>The LPR seeks to deliver well designed safe development. This should therefore have a particularly positive benefit for black, Asian and minority ethnic people who are more likely to be victims of crime. (SP7, DM3, DM41)</p> <p>The LPR will safeguard and provide additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers which will be of benefit to this racial group. (RSA24, RSA25, DM20)</p>
RELIGION OR BELIEF	POSITIVE IMPACT	<p>As of the 2011 census, in West Berkshire 97,896 people (or 64%) are Christian, 41,042 people (or 26.7%) have no religion, 495 people (or 0.3%) are Buddhist, 1,106 (or 0.7%) are Hindu, 212 (or 0.1%) are Jewish, 1,218 (or 0.8%) are Muslim, 236 (or 0.2%) are Sikh, and 607 people (or 0.4%) have another religion.</p> <p>The LPR will safeguard faith facilities, which will be of benefit to people with this protected characteristic. (SP24, DM3, DM39, DM41)</p>

Group Affected	What might the effect be?	Information to support this
SEX	POSITIVE IMPACT	<p>Data shows that women are at a higher risk from crime / are more likely to be victims of crime. The Local Plan seeks to deliver well designed safe development. This will have a particular positive benefit for women who are at greater risk from crime.</p> <p>Source: Office for National Statistics Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Data Tables. (SP1, SP3, SP12, SP18, SP19, SP22, SP23, SP24, DM3, DM39, DM41)</p>
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	POSITIVE IMPACT	<p>Data shows that heterosexual people were less likely to have experienced a crime than those who identified as gay, lesbian or bi sexual. The LPR seeks to deliver well designed and safe development. This will be of particularly benefit to LGBTQIA+ people who are more likely to be victims of crime than heterosexual people.</p> <p>Source: Office for National Statistics Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Data Tables. (SP1, SP3, SP12, SP18, SP19, SP22, SP23, SP24, DM3, DM39, DM41)</p>

5. FUTHER COMMENTS

5.1. No issues were raised in relation to people with protected characteristics in response to the revised Statement of Community Involvement consultation.

5.2. Everyone on the planning policy consultation database was consulted on the Regulation 18 Local Plan Review. This database includes some groups and bodies that represent different groups including, for example, the West Berkshire Disability Alliance, and the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups. No comments relating specifically to groups with protected characteristics were received in response to the Regulation 18 consultation.

5.3. There is no evidence that the LPR will have a negative impact on people with protected characteristics. Nonetheless, the Council will monitor this throughout the delivery of the LPR and consider further action if any negative impacts are identified. This will be highlighted in the Annual Monitoring Reports into the Local Plan Review.