



Equalities Impact Assessment

Patching Neighbourhood Development Plan

June 2017

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on all public authorities in the exercise of their functions to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between persons who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not.
- 1.2. “Protected characteristics” are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 1.3. This report assesses the Submission Patching Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) to ensure that Patching Parish Council (as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the Patching NDP) is satisfying its statutory duties in this regard. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a systematic analysis of a policy or policies, in order to explore the potential for an adverse impact on a particular group or community. It is a method of assessing and recording the likely differential and/or adverse impact of a policy on people from different groups. If a policy results in unfairness or discrimination then changes to eliminate or lessen the impact should be considered.
- 1.4. The purpose of the analysis is to increase participation and inclusion, to change the culture of public decision-making and to place a more proactive approach to the promotion of equality and fairness at the heart of public policy. The processes involved in conducting the analysis should not be looked on as an end in themselves. Instead, it should be borne in mind that the aim is the promotion of fairness and equality of opportunity and thus it is the outcomes that are of primary concern. In undertaking the EIA, it is important to keep in mind why the Patching NDP is needed, what the intended outcomes are, and how it will be ensured that the policies will work as intended.

2. Methodology

- 2.1. An assessment has been made on whether the Patching NDP has a positive, negative or neutral impact on each of the protected characteristics (in so far as data is available). The vision and objectives of the NDP have been assessed, and individual policies are highlighted where they are considered likely to have a negative impact.

3. Baseline data

- 3.1. Data for the Parish of Patching is available from the 2011 Census for the following protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race and religious belief.
- 3.2. No data is available for the following protected characteristics: gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation.

Patching neighbourhood area – population characteristics

Total Population – 259

Age: 12% of the population are children aged 16 or less, 67.2% are in the working age groups up to the age of 64, with 20.8% in the older age groups. This means that the population has a slightly older profile than the national average.

Sex: 136 males, 123 females

Main language: English is the main language for 96.9% of residents

Country of birth: 91.5% of residents were born in the UK. 2.3% were born in the EU and 6.2% were born elsewhere.

Ethnic group: 97.7% of residents are White. 1.2% of residents are Mixed/multiple ethnic groups.

Religion: 57% of residents are Christian. 29.7% of residents do not have a religion. 11.6% of residents did not state their religion in the 2011 Census.

Health: The local community is generally healthy, with the great majority reporting “very good” or “good” health at the time of the 2011 Census. Nevertheless, 31 individuals reported long term health problems or a disability. This is a little below the national average.

4. Process of Community Consultation

- 4.1. All written communications were in English and it was not considered necessary to translate them into any other language.
- 4.2. Throughout the preparation of the Patching Neighbourhood Development Plan, Patching Parish Council has tried to promote the widest possible engagement of the local community in planning for the future development of the parish.
- 4.3. Early on an ‘Open Event’ was held and questionnaire survey sent to all addresses in the village. A second community consultation event was held once a series of objectives and draft policies were developed. Businesses operating in the parish were also contacted. A six week consultation was undertaken on the draft NDP in line with neighbourhood planning regulations. This included publicising the consultation and draft document online and a direct mail/leaflet drop to all residents, businesses and major landowners in the parish. In addition, Patching Parish Council held a ‘Neighbourhood Plan Surgery’, to which all those who had commented on a particularly controversial policy were invited to discuss their concerns with the NDP steering group and consultant. The surgery was also publicised through public notices in the village.

5. Impact on Groups with Protected Characteristics

- 5.1. The Vision of Patching NDP states that:

“In 2033, Patching will be a small, peaceful, community of character, befitting its situation within the South Downs National Park.

It will value its rural setting, local environment, community assets, and the small local businesses and farming that distinguish it. As a result, development, whether residential or commercial, will be small in scale and in sympathy with the heritage and history of the parish.

Our community will have a special, cohesive and discernible identity that is diverse in age, occupation and background, supports residents, and welcomes visitors to the parish and the wider national park.”

The vision of the Patching NDP is expected to have a **positive impact** on groups with protected characteristics. It recognises and supports the diversity of age, occupation and background of residents.

- 5.2. Patching NDP contains a series of objectives, these set out how the Parish proposes to deliver its Vision for Patching up to 2032. Delivery of the objectives will be through both planning policies and community action. Each objective is reviewed to assess whether it is likely to have an impact on groups within the parish with protected characteristics:

Objective	Likely impact	Commentary
People; Our Community		
1. Promote a safe and cohesive community with access to a wide range of local facilities within the Parishes of Patching and Clapham	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community. Local facilities will be used and valued by all groups of the community.
2. Ensure that valued green space, outdoor sport and recreational land is protected from development	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community, but also in particular young people who will frequently use the local green and open spaces.
3. Support and protect facilities shared with the Parish of Clapham	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community. As Patching is a small village community, it is recognised that some facilities will be shared with nearby Clapham e.g. the primary school, village shop and village hall.
4. Support community farm orchard/allotments	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community.
5. Protect assets of community value	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community.
Places – Our Buildings, Landscape and Environment		
1. Prepare a list of historic assets of merit and buildings of character, with the aim of providing a special policy for their preservation	Neutral	This objective is not expected to have either a positive or negative impact on groups within the community with protected characteristics.
2. Conserve historic/listed buildings and buildings of special character which	Neutral	This objective is not expected to have either a positive or negative impact on groups within the community with protected characteristics

contribute to the heritage value and setting of the parish, together		
3. To seek designation of new conservation areas at Michelgrove and Myrtlegrove	Neutral	This objective is not expected to have either a positive or negative impact on groups within the community with protected characteristics
4. Ensure new developments are of a design and construction, with appropriate materials, that are sympathetic to their surroundings and locally distinctive appearance, informed by a Parish Design Statement	Neutral	This objective promotes design and construction that is locally distinctive. While this can be enjoyed by all it does not specifically make provision for any groups with protected characteristics. This objective is therefore deemed to have a neutral impact.
5. Maintain the rural nature and identity of the Parish within the National Park	Neutral	This objective protects the rural identity of the parish which will be enjoyed by all but is deemed to have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics.
6. Ensure that agricultural land and greenfield sites are protected from development	Neutral	This objective restricts development which will limit for example the development of new housing. However the objective also protects the rural character of parish and it is deemed to have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics.
7. Maintain and improve footpaths and bridleways	Neutral	This objective is expected to have benefits for all of the community by improving the local footpaths and bridleways. The objective could go further in promoting access by mobility scooter or pushchair, it is therefore considered to have a neutral impact for older people, people with a disability, and parents of young children.
8. Control further equine development	Neutral	This objective is not expected to have either a positive or negative impact on groups within the community with protected characteristics
9. Retain and increase hedgerows, woodlands and trees	Neutral	This objective protects and enhances hedgerows and woodland. Whilst the objective is likely to promote a general feeling of well-being for many it is deemed to have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics.
10. Ensure that flood risk and water pollution are minimised	Neutral	This objective seeks to minimise flood risk and water pollution. Whilst the reduction of flood risk will be to the benefit of many and reduced water pollution can be enjoyed by all it is deemed to have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics.
11. Resist harmful development of Patching Pond and its surroundings	Neutral	This objective Patching Pond and its surroundings. Whilst the objective is likely to promote a general feeling of well-being for many it is deemed to have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics.
Prosperity – Our Village, its Housing, Business and Transport		
1. To continue the longstanding policy of strict control over new residential development in the parish	Negative	This objective restricts new residential development in the parish. This is likely to have a negative impact on older people wishing to stay in the village but down size and also young people wanting to find a home in the village. It will

		<p>restrict supply, making properties more and more expensive and negatively impact those on lower incomes wanting to buy or rent a home.</p> <p>The objective is in line with local and national policy which limits housing development in the National Park. Also as the village has few local facilities, it is not considered to be a sustainable location for housing growth.</p> <p>Policy HBTI 'New residential development' states that new dwellings will be very strictly controlled except where there is a demonstrable agricultural or forestry need or where the dwelling arises from the conversion of a redundant agricultural building. This is in line with local and national planning policy.</p> <p>In addition to the exceptions set out in HBTI there is also rural exception site policy for affordable housing in the adopted local plan.</p> <p>Patching Parish Council did consider a policy which allowed for some limited residential development which meets local needs. However, it was decided that the parish council did not have the administrative capacity to run a complex policy (requiring registration, vetting and auditing of local housing need at regular intervals) and it would be difficult to ensure the policy was not exploited to provide open market housing. The local needs exception to the restriction on new housing was subsequently removed.</p> <p>Whilst the objective is likely to have a negative impact on people with protected characteristics it is considered that Patching Parish Council has given due regard to the likely impact of the policy and considered all possible mitigations.</p>
2. To support and maintain current business activities, in existing locations within the Parish	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community.
3. To retain existing employment opportunities within the Parish	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community.
4. To control the introduction of new non-rural commercial activity in to the Parish	Neutral	This objective limits new commercial activity in the parish to activity that is appropriate to the rural setting. This is to ensure that commercial activity is not detrimental to the local character or to people's enjoyment of the attractive and peaceful rural area. This objective is not expected to have either a positive or negative impact on groups within the community with protected characteristics.
5. To support improved communication facilities within the Parish	Positive	This objective will positively impact all sectors of the community including people working from home, school

		children doing their homework and all residents maintaining social contact.
6. To retain and maintain the rural nature of the roads and thoroughfares within the Parish	Neutral	This objective maintains the rural character of roads within the parish. Whilst the lack of pavements or street lighting can be problematic for many residents wishing to walk within the parish this is balanced against retaining the rural feel and identity of the parish which is highly valued by its residents. The Parish Council will also seek to make roads safer by supporting speed limits and traffic calming measures particularly in the area of the village school. It is therefore considered that the objective will have a neutral impact on people within the community with protected characteristics.
7. To ensure there is no on-road parking arising directly or indirectly from new development	Positive	This objective seeks to prevent additional on-road parking arising from development. On-road parking restricts the available road width and can therefore make accessing the village more difficult for those using a mobility scooter or pushchair. The objective is therefore deemed to have a positive impact on people with protected characteristics.
8. To control increases in vehicular traffic in the residential areas of the Parish arising from a growth in the number of visitors to the SDNPA	Positive	This objectives seeks to limit traffic impacts from growing visitor numbers to the South Downs National Park. There is no dedicated visitor car park in the village and Policy HBT9 supports proposals for a new car park which is landscape sensitive, has easy access to the public rights of way network and avoids traffic impacts for residents. Limiting traffic impacts on residents will benefit all sectors of the community and will have a positive impact on people with protected characteristics.
9. To ensure roads and thoroughfares elsewhere in the Parish are safe for foot, cycle and equestrian use, and, specifically, to gain support for a reduction of the speed limit on the A280 in the area of the village school	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community.
10. To support the maintenance and improvement of bus services to the Parish	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community, but in particular those who have limited or no access to a car.

5.3. All but one of the Patching NDP objectives are considered to have a positive or natural impact. The objective of strictly controlling new residential development is likely to have a negative impact on residents with protected characteristics. However, the objective is in line with local and national policy and Patching Parish Council has given considerable thought to a potential alternative approach which supports housing for local needs but found this policy approach to not be implementable.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. The Patching NDP provides a suite of objectives and policies to respond to the vision for the benefit of the local community as a whole including those with protected characteristics but perhaps most particularly older people, children and their parents, people with a disability and those with limited mobility.
- 6.2. In preparing the Patching NDP, Patching Parish Council and the NDP Steering Group have sought to engage widely with the all of the local community. They have gone beyond minimum consultation requirements to gather the views of the community.
- 6.3. In conclusion, the assessment finds the Patching NDP to be appropriate and that the duty of care prescribed by the Equalities Act 2010 is met.