



Equalities Impact Assessment

Ditchling, Westmeston & Streat Neighbourhood Development Plan

July 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 Ditchling, Westmeston & Streat Neighbourhood Development Plan (DWS NDP) to ensure that Ditchling, Westmeston and Streat Parish Councils (as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the DWS NDP) are satisfying their statutory duties in this regard. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) 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 EqIA, it is important to keep in mind why the DWS 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 DWS 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 Parishes of Ditchling, Westmeston and Streat 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.

Ditchling, Westmeston & Streat neighbourhood area – population characteristics

Total Population – 2,582

Age: 16% of the population are children aged 15 or less, 44.3% are in the working age groups up to the age of 64, and 9.6% are aged over 85. This means that the population has a slightly older profile than the national average.

Sex: 1,194 males, 1,388 females

Main language; English is the main language for 98.5% of residents

Country of birth; 91.8% of residents were born in the UK. 3.1% were born in the EU and 5.1% were born elsewhere.

Ethnic group: 97.8% of residents are White. 1.5% of residents are Mixed/multiple ethnic groups.

Religion: 65.8% of residents are Christian. 23.6% of residents do not have a religion. 8.9% of residents did not state their religion in the 2011 Census.

Health: The demographics of the area portray a distinctly older and more dependent population than average. Based on 2011 data 26.3% of all people were living with 'limiting long term illness', exceeding the East Sussex average (20.3%) and England (17.6%).

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 DWS Neighbourhood Development Plan, the Parish Councils tried to promote the widest possible engagement of the local community in planning for the future development of the parishes.
- 4.3. Early on in the process a household questionnaire was designed and distributed to all residents. Over 51% of households completed and returned the questionnaire which was an extremely good response rate. Following this a series of Open Days were held to present the results of the questionnaire. Focus groups were then set up, made up of village volunteers to develop policy ideas. A further open day was held to present to the public the focus group's work, particularly draft policies and ask for feedback. Leaflets describing the policy topic areas were distributed to every household. 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 parishes. Printed copies of the draft NDP were made available at a number of locations around the village, including at the medical centre, post office, local cafes and churches. A second pre-submission consultation was held for 6 weeks from December to January 2017. All the NDP events were publicised through a dedicated NDP website as well as on social media and through the local press.

5. Impact on Groups with Protected Characteristics

5.1. The Vision of DWS NDP states that:

“The three parishes will have continued to foster their strong and thriving communities, benefiting from interdependence while maintaining their discrete individual characteristics and identities.

The unique character of the plan area will have been protected both within and outside the SDNP. Opportunities will have been taken to protect the distinct character and identity of Ditchling village and the hamlets of Streat and Westmeston.

High-quality sustainable and diverse new development of appropriate scale will have been provided to meet local housing, commercial and employment needs, confined to the area within the settlement boundary as defined in this plan.

Ditchling's role as a service centre for residents of the plan area and visitors to the SDNP will have been maintained and enhanced. Residents of the area and visitors to the park will have benefited from a safer environment in which the volume of traffic has been reduced, speed is controlled and congestion is reduced and contributions made to sustaining the viability of the area's shops and services.

The effects of new development, traffic measures and car parking on the local landscape will have been carefully and sensitively managed..”

The vision of the DWS NDP is expected to have a **positive impact** on groups with protected characteristics. It supports the continuing role of Ditchling as a service centre for residents and visitors. The promotion of a safer pedestrian environment will also benefit groups with protected characteristics.

5.2. DWS NDP contains a series of objectives, these set out how the Parish proposes to deliver its Vision for the Beacon parishes 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
Sustainable development		
Promote sustainable development	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community.
Environment and conservation		
Engender greater awareness of need to balance development needs against potential loss of landscape assets	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community.
Promote development of the area as a gateway attraction	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community.

Set design standards leading to sensitive development	Neutral	This objective promotes design that is of a high standard and is in line with the distinctive character of the area. 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.
Conserve the rural nature of the plan area	Neutral	This objective conserves the rural nature of the area which will be enjoyed by all but is deemed to have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics.
Conserve and where possible enhance to rural identity, landscape setting, environmental quality and historic character of the area	Neutral	This objective conserves and where possible enhances the rural identity of the area which will be enjoyed by all but is deemed to have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics.
Housing		
Provide a broad mix of housing	Positive	This objective seeks a mix of housing, including shared equity and shared ownership housing for rent or purchase for residents of all generations and economic circumstances. This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community and in particular residents with protected characteristics such as age and disability.
Support residential development that is small scale and sustainably designed	Neutral	This objective supports small scale development which is sustainably designed and fits in with the local style and character of the area. While this will be enjoyed by all it is deemed to have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics.
Support residential development within the settlement boundary	Neutral	This objective supports development within the settlement boundary – as amended. While ensuring development is accessible to local facilities and services, this objective is deemed to have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics.
Support residential development that has adequate provision for residents' off-street parking	Positive	This objective seeks to ensure adequate off-street parking and in turn will 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.
Support residential development that provides traffic calming	Positive	This objective seeks to reduce the speed of traffic travelling through the area. This will have a positive impact on pedestrians, cyclists and other road users and is deemed to have a positive impact on residents with protected characteristics.
Traffic and transport		

Promote schemes that will lead to a significant reduction in through traffic and HGVs	Positive	This objective seeks to reduce overall traffic levels including HGVs. This will have a positive impact on pedestrians, cyclists and other road users and is deemed to have a positive impact on residents with protected characteristics.
Promote more off-street parking spaces for residents and visitors	Positive	This objective seeks more off-street parking and in turn will prevent additional on-road parking arising from development and visitors to the area. 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.
Make the area known for its cycling, walking and equestrian friendly policies and facilities	Neutral	This objective is deemed to have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics.
Promote public or voluntary transport facilities	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.
Local economy		
Promote conditions to ensure a thriving local economy	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community.
Encourage employment opportunities for young people	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on young people and is therefore deemed to have a positive impact on residents with protected characteristics.
Promote opportunities for part-time and voluntary employment for older people	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on older people and is therefore deemed to have a positive impact on residents with protected characteristics.
Encourage a positive visitor-friendly environment that is accessible by a range of transport choices.	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.
Promote more off-street parking spaces for residents and visitors to help maximise use of community facilities	Positive	This objective seeks more off-street parking and in turn will prevent additional on-road parking arising from use of community facilities. 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.
Community Services		
Support spiritual, cultural, sport and recreational pursuits for all ages.	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community.
Support local groups and societies	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community.

Support the provision of suitable shopping, service and community uses for residents	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community.
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5.3. All of the DWS NDP objectives are considered to have a positive or natural impact.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. The DWS 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 young people, older people and those with limited mobility.
- 6.2. In preparing the DWS NDP, Ditchling, Westmeston and Streat Parish Councils and the Project Management Group have sought to engage as widely as possible 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, this assessment finds the DWS NDP to be appropriate and that the duty of care prescribed by the Equalities Act 2010 is met.