

Equality Impact Assessment Form

PART 1 – Description

Directorate: Growth Directorate

Department: Planning Policy & Programmes

Assessment Lead Officer: C. Fox

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Name of the Service/Policy/Service Change: Warrington Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Date of Assessment: - February 2021

Status: - Final

1. Background Information and Context

Warrington has ambitious aims for the regeneration of the Town Centre which are framed within the Local Plan Core Strategy Policies; The Town Centre Masterplan; Warrington Means Business, Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) and the First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan. Other policy approaches such as the Climate Emergency Declaration (2019) and the Central 6 Regeneration Masterplan address important considerations such as reducing the Council's Carbon footprint and improving the social, environmental and economic conditions for residents in wards closest to the Town Centre.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are guidance which add further detail to existing policies in the adopted Development Plan; in this instance the Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy (2014). SPDs can be used to provide further guidance on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. SPDs are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions, but are not part of the Development Plan for Warrington. They must be consistent with national planning policy and guidance and must be in conformity with the policies of the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

The SPD will support the Council in managing the increasing number of development proposals coming forward in the Town Centre, by:

- Bringing together the Council's vision and aspirations for the sustainable development of the Town Centre to benefit all residents, business and visitors to the town.
- Establishing clear design principles to guide new development in the Town Centre and across key development sites.
- Requiring developers to give more detailed consideration to how their proposals will contribute to the wider Town Centre at the start of their design process.

The adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) has already been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment, a Sustainability Appraisal and independent examination before being adopted by the Council as the Development Plan for the Borough of Warrington.

2. Details of the Service/Policy/Service Change?

Expanding on existing Local Plan Core Strategy Policies, the new Warrington Town Centre SPD will cover the following areas of guidance for planning applicants:

- Preserving and enhancing the town centre's heritage and cultural assets, whilst facilitating increased densities of development, including taller buildings in appropriate locations;
- Ensuring sustainable development, with good links to public transport, and promoting improved pedestrian and cycle routes in line with the Council's 'First and Last Mile' Masterplan;
- Creating a green town centre through strong relationships between new buildings and new and improved open, green and riverside space, along with the progression towards zero carbon targets; and
- Setting standards for new town centre homes, including minimum space standards, ensuring good levels of daylight and natural ventilation, and requiring provision of outdoor private amenity space.

3. Links to General Equality Duty and Council Equality Objectives

The Town Centre SPD is able to make a positive contribution to the Council's Equality Objectives, in particular:

- Provide opportunities to improve life chances
- Work with our partners and businesses to improve accessibility and tackle discrimination

The Council's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2024 can be viewed here:

https://www.warrington.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-01/edi_strategy-objectives_2020-2024_final.pdf

PART 2 – Screening

The purpose of this stage is to assess whether or not it is necessary to carry out a full equality impact assessment. It aims to assess if there are any likely impacts on a particular equality group/s or if there are any gaps in knowledge about the likely impact. The outcome from this initial screening will determine whether a full EIA needs to be undertaken at part 3 of this form.

What impact is the **policy going to have on service users? This should include an assessment for each equality group and the type of impact that could occur?**

Equality Group	Type of Impact (Positive, Negative/Adverse, No Impact, Not Sure)	Reason/s
Age (young and older people)	Positive Impact (Potential)	The Town Centre SPD will support the development of dwellings and places that can meet the needs of all who wish to live in the Town Centre. The SPD includes a specific principle that is titled 'Multi- generational Appeal' where developments within neighbourhoods should aim to provide a mix of dwelling sizes and tenures that appeal to various generations and different life stages. This will include new and affordable homes for young people looking for their first home and older people looking to 'down size' to a convenient an accessible location.
Disability (physical or sensory impairments, and mental health)	Positive Impact (Potential)	There is specific guidance in the SPD on inclusive access and design which references the need to provide for all members of society in designing new buildings, including those with disabilities, together with the need to meet the requirements of the Equalities Act, National Planning Policy Framework and any applicable Building Regulations. The priority given in the SPD to pedestrians and cyclist through wider pavements, a greener environment and better crossing points will also help those with any type of physical, sensory or mental health disability navigate and enjoy the Town Centre better.
Learning Disability and Autism	Positive Impact (Potential)	As with the above, developers and planning applicants will need to ensure that design caters for those who may have needs in this group, especially where there is a community access and interface at entrance points and in communal area outside (for instance in green spaces) or inside buildings in lobby areas etc.

Gender Reassignment (person proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone reassigning their sex)	No Impact	The SPD is inclusive of all gender groups. There is no clear or direct impact on equal opportunities relating to those proposing to undergo, are undergoing or having undergone gender reassignment from the SPD.
Pregnancy and maternity (the rights of a woman and her maternity leave)	No Impact	There is no clear or direct impact relating to Pregnancy and Maternity from the SPD.
Race (include nationality, ethnicity inc. Gypsy and Travellers)	No Impact	There is no clear or direct impact on equal opportunities relating to race from the SPD.
Religious / Faith Groups	No Impact	There is no clear or direct impact on equal opportunities relating to religious/faith groups from the SPD.
Sex (Gender and gender non-conforming)	No Impact	There is no clear or direct impact on equal opportunities relating to sex or gender from the SPD.
Sexual Orientation	No Impact	There is no clear or direct impact on equal opportunities for different sexual orientation groups from the SPD.
Carers of Children and Dependant Adults	Positive Impact (Potential)	<p>The SPD sets out guidance on minimum space standards for dwellings plus guidance on private and public amenity space for dwellings and developments. Anyone who is living in the Town Centre including those living in affordable housing will have a positive benefit from these standards.</p> <p>The SPD supports connectivity across the Town Centre for pedestrians and cyclist to facilities and green spaces. Supporting these improvements which will include widening and greening pavements and enhancing pedestrian priorities at crossing points will enable all to navigate the town in a pleasant and less challenging environment.</p> <p>As stated above, there is guidance in the SPD on inclusive access and design which specifically references the need to provide for all members of society in designing new buildings, including those with disabilities, together with the need to meet the requirements of the Equalities Act, National Planning Policy Framework and any applicable Building Regulations.</p>

2. Is a full customer (equality) impact assessment required?

No, given the above Part 2 screening assessment that has been undertaken, is not considered that a full equality impact assessment is required in this instance.

Across the equalities groups, the SPD has been assessed as having either 'potential positive impacts' or 'no impacts.' A key objective of the SPD is to ensure that everyone within the community can live in, work in and enjoy the Town Centre. The SPD sets out measures to ensure that national and local policy requirements for equality are met. It also goes further by ensuring that access needs; connectivity across the town; dwelling size standards; and private and public amenity standards are set out as principles and standards for developers and planning applicants to meet when submitting proposals.

However, although no negative impacts have been noted as part of this assessment in relation to specific characteristics, it should be noted that public consultation will be undertaken on the SPD and this may raise issues Officers are not currently aware of. The equality impact assessment will be reviewed and updated, where necessary, once the initial consultation has taken place.

It should also be noted that the Local Plan and associated planning policy documents are themselves subject to separate Equalities Impact Assessments.

Completed by: C. Fox

Date: February 2021

Job Title: Senior Planning Policy Officer

Authorisation

Service Manager Signature: M. Bell

Date: February 2021

Job Title: Planning Policy & Programmes Manager

PART 3: Monitoring and Review

Who will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy?

Responsible Officer: C. Fox

Job Title: Senior Planning Policy Officer

Directorate: Growth Directorate

Department: Planning Policy & Programmes

Telephone Number: 01925 442734

Email: Catherine.fox@warrington.gov.uk

Date to be reviewed: Within 5 years, or sooner, depending on any legislative changes and when they are implemented.

Authorisation

Service Manager Signature: M. Bell

Date: February 2021