



# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

## Partial Assessment Form

<b>Policy, practice, function or project assessed</b>	Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Claire Spencer
<b>Team</b>	Planning Policy
<b>Start date of assessment</b>	9 February 2009
<b>Completion of assessment</b>	2 July 2009

Please use this form to record your findings in relation to the assessment of an existing policy, function, service or practice.

## **A. POLICY, PRACTICE, FUNCTION OR PROJECT TO BE ASSESSED**

### **A1. Please describe what are the main aims, objectives, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy or function?**

The purpose of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) is to expand on policies set out in Development Plan Documents (DPD) and to provide additional detail. The SPD relates to policies contained within the adopted Development Control Policies DPD.

The Biodiversity SPD provides guidance to applicants and agents preparing development proposals that may impact on biodiversity, including protected habitats (i.e. those covered by international, national or local designations) and biodiversity that is unprotected but of significance. It also guides prospective developers on the application process and criteria used to assess those applications.

Specific objectives of this document are to:

- Assist applicants' understanding of the role of biodiversity within the wider environment and how biodiversity features should be incorporated within development proposals as part of a high quality design.
- Assist applicants to gain planning permission quickly by informing them of the level of information required to accompany planning applications.
- Explain terminology associated with biodiversity conservation.
- Ensure that development works are undertaken in an appropriate manner to avoid harm to biodiversity.

### **A2. Is this policy or function associated with any other Council policy or priority?**

Supplements adopted Development Plan Document policy.

Council Aim E. We are Committed to Providing a Voice for Rural Life, Approach i. Protecting existing communities, villages and the countryside.

**A3. Who are the intended beneficiaries/stakeholders of the policy or function? How many people are affected and from what sections of the community?**

The SPD builds on national policy in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1: Delivering Sustainable Development and PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. These promote sustainable, well-designed development. In addition, they seek to ensure that biodiversity and appropriate landscaping are fully integrated to new developments in order to create accessible green spaces for wildlife and people, to contribute to a high quality natural and built environment, and to contribute to a better quality of life.

**A4. Is the policy/function corporate and far-reaching?**

Yes. District wide. One of Council aims (see A.2 above).

**A5. Are you expecting to make any significant change to the policy or service in the near future? If so, please give details.**

No.

**A6. Is this a new or existing policy or function?**

Supplements adopted Development Plan Document policy.

## **B. EVIDENCE/ DATA and CONSULTATION**

It is important to consider all information that is available in determining whether the policy or function could have a differential impact. Please attach examples of monitoring information, research or consultation reports.

### **B1. What monitoring or other information do you have about relevant target groups, which will show the impact of the policy or function?**

Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report indicators:

- Core Output Indicator CO-E2 – Change in areas of biodiversity importance;
- Local Output Indicator LOI1 – Amount of new development completed within, or likely to adversely affect, internationally or nationally important nature conservation areas;
- Local Output Indicator LOI2 – Habitats and species affected by new developments;
- Significant Effect Indicator SE6 - % of SSSIs in 'favourable' or 'unfavourable recovering' condition;
- Significant Effect Indicator SE7 – Total area designated as SSSIs;
- Significant Effect Indicator SE8 – Area of Local Nature Reserves per 1,000 people;
- Significant Effect Indicator SE9 – Progress achieving BAP targets; and
- Significant Effect Indicator SE10 - % rights of way that are easy to use.

### **B2. Have you compared the data you have with the equality profile of the local population? What does it show?**

Biodiversity not only occurs in areas recognised and designated for their importance, but also in undeveloped areas and spaces such as public parks, residential gardens and along public rights of way. Therefore everyone has the opportunity to experience and impact on biodiversity.

### **B3. Have you identified any improvements or other changes that could be made from monitoring the data?**

There have been no sites of international or national importance for nature conservation lost to development between 2004/5 and 2007/8. The number of sites of biodiversity importance affected by development has remained at zero from 2005/6 to 2007/8, whilst the change in hectares of sites of biodiversity importance has increased in 2007/8 by 1.89ha. (Source: Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2007/8). The Annual Monitoring Report will be updated annually and will identify if there is a change in trend. If necessary the SPD will be updated to ensure the continual protection of Biodiversity.

**B4. Have you consulted or involved external stakeholders about the policy or function? If so, what were their views?**

The draft SPD was subject to six-weeks public consultation with a range of external stakeholders from 27 February to 14 April 2009. A Statement of Consultation has been produced and details the representations received and subsequently amendments have been incorporated into the final adopted SPD.

A total of 116 representations were received during the consultation period of which 5 were supporting and 111 objecting to the draft SPD. The main issues raised include:

- Suggested text be amended slightly to reflect rather than repeat the requirements of PPS9
- Seeking clarification of the differences between the SPD and Biodiversity Strategy and their relationship as council documents
- Suggested clearer links to further information relating to protected species
- Suggested refinement of when Priority Species Survey and Assessment is required for clarity
- Suggested amendments to Tables 1 & 2
- Suggested refinement of the development guidelines
- Suggested refinement of the set of Biodiversity Issues, particularly:
  - Biodiversity Issue 3 (mitigation and compensation)
  - How biodiversity gain is to be achieved
  - Ensuring that the expectation placed upon applicants is not unreasonable
  - Clarification of Priority Species, Priority Habitats and Protected Species issues
  - Ensuring that Biodiversity Issues are not confused with, or repeat, policy
- Suggested refinement of the text relating to the registration process
- Suggested refinement of the “triggers” for Site Assessment and Survey
- Need for more focus on biodiversity benefits of SUDS
- Need to bring forward the Countryside Enhancement Area and Wildlife Corridor map from the Biodiversity Strategy

**B5. Have you undertaken any consultation with staff to assess their perception of any impacts of the policy or function? If so, what has been learnt from them?**

Yes, internal consultation was undertaken during the preparation of the SPD. The Consultation Statement details the comments received.

**B6. Please provide information about any other consultation, research, or involvement undertaken in relation to this impact assessment.**

The SPD was published for a six-weeks public consultation, as detailed in B4 above. A public notice was placed in the Cambridge News at the start of the public consultation. A number of stakeholders were sent a letter and CD-Rom containing each of the public participation documents, supporting documents, and forms for making comments. All documents were available to view and / or download from the Council's website: <http://www.scamb.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/DistrictPlanning/LocalDevelopmentFramework/SPD.htm>, and a link was included from the home page. Interactive online versions of documents were also available to enable people to make comments online during the consultation period, as well as Word and PDF versions of a response form that could be completed and emailed / posted to the Council. South Cambs Magazine, which is delivered to every household in the district, also included information on the consultation. Printed copies of the document were also available to view or purchase at the Council's offices.

## C1. IMPACT OF THE POLICY OR FUNCTION

Assess the potential impact on each of the equality strands/groups. The impact could be negative, positive or neutral. If you assess a negative impact for any of the groups then you will need to assess whether that impact is low, medium or high. Refer to the evidence you use.

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACT	Nature of Impact (Positive, Neutral, Adverse)	Extent of Impact (Low, Medium, High)
<b>GENDER:</b> Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on men and women	Neutral	
<b>RACE:</b> Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different race/ethnic groups	Neutral	
<b>DISABILITY:</b> Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on disabled people	Neutral	
<b>AGE:</b> Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different age groups	Neutral	
<b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION:</b> potential impact of the policy on lesbian, gay men, bisexual or heterosexual people	Neutral	
<b>RELIGION/FAITH:</b> Identify the potential impact the policy on different religious/faith groups	Neutral	
<b>OTHER</b>		

**PLEASE NOTE:** Following completion of the section above, if the nature of the impact is adverse then you may need to proceed to a full equality impact assessment.

**C2. Could you minimise or remove any adverse or potential impact that is high, medium or low significance, in advance of a full impact assessment? Explain how.**

N/A

**C3. Does the policy or function actively promote equal opportunities and good community relations? Or could changes be made so that it does so?**

No

**C4. Please provide any further information, qualitative or quantitative that does not fit into the questions but you feel has a likely impact on this assessment.**



<b>D. CONCLUSIONS</b>			
<b>D1. Was there sufficient data to complete the partial assessment?</b>	Yes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>If “NO”, what arrangements are in place for evidence gathering and continuing with the assessment?</b>
	No?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>D2. Is the outcome of the partial assessment that the policy or function would have an adverse impact (medium or high impact) on one or more target group?</b>	Yes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>If “YES”, will you proceed to a full assessment? If so, what arrangements are in place to carry out the full assessment?</b>
	No?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>D3. Is the outcome of the partial assessment that the policy or function would have a neutral or positive impact on equalities?</b>	Yes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>If “YES”, have you included proposals in the Action Plan to further improve the impact of the policy or function on equalities?</b> No
	No?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Do you plan to review the service or policy again in future to assess whether there has been any change? If so, when?</b> No. <b>Has the Equalities Steering Group and the Consultative Forum reviewed the assessment? If so what were their comments?</b> No.
<b>D4. Do you have any other conclusions/outcomes from the partial assessment?</b>			

**ACTION PLAN for enhancing existing practice**

Recommendation/ issue to be addressed	Planned Milestone	Planned completion of milestone (date)	Officer Responsible	Progress

**RESOURCES**

Does the above action plan require any additional resources?

**ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING**

Please give your plans for monitoring the achievement of the above actions.

**SIGN OFF: The officers below confirm that this partial assessment has been completed in accordance with the Council's guidance**

Signature of Lead Officer		Date:
Signature of Corporate Manager or Chief Officer:		Date:

Please retain the original form on your service area and return a copy of the completed form to the Equality & Diversity Officer.