



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Partial Assessment Form

Policy, practice, function or project assessed	Landscape in New Developments Supplementary Planning Document
Lead Officer	Claire Spencer
Team	Planning Policy
Start date of assessment	18 September 2009
Completion of assessment	2 March 2010

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 and policies in individual Area Action Plans for major developments that may vary from the district-wide policies.

Landscaping should not be peripheral to the planning process but fully integrated into the design stages. The Landscape SPD seeks to ensure consideration is given, wherever possible, to the retention of landscaping features within developments, or to incorporating new planting into new designs. Landscaping is a valuable addition to any development, often helping to create accessible green spaces for wildlife and people, and achieve development of a high quality design in the local landscape or townscape, and to contribute to a better quality of life.

Specific objectives of this document are to:

- Assist applicants' understanding of the role a landscape scheme to both the actual site and to the wider landscape as part of a high quality design.
- Assist applicants' understanding of the landscape assessment, design, implementation and aftercare implications of their proposals to ensure a sustainable scheme.
- To guide applicants through the planning process by informing them of what information is required to accompany their planning applications.
- Ensure that development works are sustainable and undertaken in an appropriate manner, to ensure there will not be an unacceptable impact on the countryside, landscape character or biodiversity.

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

The Landscaping SPD supplements the adopted Development Plan Document policy, and is linked to the following Council Aims:

Council Aim C: We are committed to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.

Council Aim E: We are Committed to Providing a Voice for Rural Life, Approach E1: 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, PPS 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 15: Planning and the Historic Environment. These promote sustainable, well designed, development that ensures landscape and biodiversity are at the heart to help create green spaces for people and wildlife, to contribute to a high quality natural and built environment, and contribute to a better quality of life.

Landscape will not be peripheral to the development but will be fully integrated into the design. A good landscaping scheme is not about 'planting a few shrubs' or an 'afterthought' or about 'left-over land'. What is needed is a creative approach which recognises a well designed landscape as an essential element in the delivery of a successful development.

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

Yes, the SPD applies district wide, and links with several 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 changes are anticipated.

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

The SPD supplements and amplifies the 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?

The following Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report indicators help address the success of the SPD:

- Core Output Indicator CO-E2 – Change in areas of biodiversity importance
- Local Output Indicator LOB1 – Gains or losses of open space and outdoor recreation land resulting from new developments and percentage of planning permissions meeting open space standards
- Local Output Indicator LOE2 – Amount of land adjacent to an Important Countryside Frontage that has been lost to development
- 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 LOK1 – Amount of inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- 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
- Significant Effect Indicator SE10 - % rights of way that are easy to use
- Significant Effect Indicator SE25 - % residents feeling 'safe' or 'fairly safe' after dark
- Significant Effect Indicator SE26 – Hectares of strategic open space per 1,000 people
- Significant Effect Indicator SE27 – number of sports pitches available for public use per 1,000 people

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

Landscape not only occurs in areas recognised and designated for their importance, but is all around us 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 landscape.

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

Landscape and biodiversity are closely linked as biodiversity habitats form part of the wider landscape.

The following is taken from the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report, December 2008:

No development has been completed in nationally or internationally important nature conservation sites or in the Cambridge Green Belt, and no land adjacent to Important Countryside Frontages has been lost.

The data for indicator CO-E2 shows that since 2005, there have been no sites of biodiversity importance affected by housing or non-housing developments completed. However, in the last monitoring year, two new County Wildlife Sites have been selected in South Cambridgeshire, which have resulted in an additional 1.89 ha of land in the district being classified as sites of biodiversity importance.

The data shows that an increasing number of species are affected by development (see 'number of developments intersecting species records'), and an increasing number of developments affect species (see 'number of species records intersecting developments'). However, in the same period the number of NERC s41 species records and South Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) records held by CPBRC have increased, so it is not yet possible to determine the cause of the change.

The district has performed well since the area of SSSIs has remained consistent at 948 hectares for the past five years (Indicator SE7).

The area of Local Nature Reserves per 1,000 people has remained at 0.22 hectares for the past four years. There has been no loss of existing nature reserves and there has been no new land designated so the total area of Local Nature Reserves within the district is 29.46 hectares (Indicator SE8).

The district made good progress in achieving priority BAP targets (Indicator SE9).

Landscape schemes for new developments are approved through the planning application process and can be controlled through planning conditions and/or S106 agreements.

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 23 October to 4 December 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 79 representations were received during the consultation period of which 12 were supporting, 29 objecting and 28 comments to the draft SPD. The main issues raised include:

- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) – several respondents noted that the references to SUDS were brief, and should be extended.
- Maintenance and Management - several replies noted that it was important that Maintenance (generally short term) and Management (Long term vision of the scheme) should be made distinct.
- Green Infrastructure - requests were made for further support for green infrastructure.
- Landscape examples - requests for examples of good and bad landscapes, and clarification of maps and drawings.
- Request for inclusion of reference to allotments.

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:
<http://www.scambs.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/DistrictPlanning/LocalDevelopmentFramework/SPD.htm>

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.scams.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)
GENDER: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on men and women	Positive	
RACE: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different race/ethnic groups	Neutral	
DISABILITY: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on disabled people	Positive	
AGE: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different age groups	Positive	
SEXUAL ORIENTATION: potential impact of the policy on lesbian, gay men, bisexual or heterosexual people	Neutral	
RELIGION/FAITH: Identify the potential impact the policy on different religious/faith groups	Neutral	
OTHER		

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?

Through the following Council Aims, the Landscaping SPD helps to promote better community relations:

Council Aim C: We are committed to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.

Council Aim E: We are Committed to Providing a Voice for Rural Life, Approach E1: Protecting existing communities, villages and the countryside.

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.

Well designed landscaping, whether hard or soft can have a positive influence on Gender, Disability and Age by creating spaces that assist in making people, particularly women, feel safe and through accessible and stimulating designs for all users of spaces.

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

ACTION PLAN for enhancing existing practice

Recommendation/ issue to be addressed	Planned Milestone	Planned completion of milestone (date)	Officer Responsible	Progress
The success of the Landscaping SPD will be addressed through the Annual Monitoring Report	-	Annually		

RESOURCES

Does the above action plan require any additional resources?

No resource issues have been identified.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING

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

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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.