

Draft strategies/policies – Equality Impact Check

Draft strategy/policy being checked: Botley SPD

Is this draft strategy/policy: **South only**
 Vale only
 Joint across both councils

Service team: Planning Policy

Officer completing this: Ronan Leydon

Once completed:

Date completed: 15/10/2015

Signed Adrian D. Field _____ (Planning Policy Manager)

Signed Marsley _____ (Head of Service)

Signed Cheryl Reeves _____ (Cheryl Reeves, equalities officer)

Why do you need to do this Equality Impact Check?

Our strategies and policies set out the way we will deliver our services (including employment opportunities). When we are developing them, we need to check that they are not going to create any barriers which could prevent people from accessing our services.

People in Southern Oxfordshire may face barriers because of things like **disability, gender (including transgender, pregnancy and maternity), age, sexual orientation, rural isolation, income, religion/belief or ethnicity.**

As well as thinking about how our services will meet the needs of these groups of people, we also need to consider how our draft strategies and policies will help us to:

- promote positive relations within communities
- give everyone a voice
- respect and value everyone
- protect people's human rights

This Equality Impact Check provides officers with a framework to help them work through these considerations in relation to their draft policy/strategy, ensuring that we are meeting our legal duties with regards to equality and diversity.

We have a statutory duty to carry out these assessments and they contribute towards our corporate priority to 'optimise access to services (Vale)'/provide equality of access to our services' (South).

If you have any queries about this Check or would like some advice/support in completing it, please contact the Shared equalities officer (see contact details below).

Once you've completed this Equality Impact Check, please send the paperwork to the shared equality officer, along with a copy of the draft strategy/policy.

Cheryl Reeves (equalities officer)
Email: cheryl.reeves@southandvale.gov.uk
Telephone: x7324

OUTLINE OF THE DRAFT STRATEGY / POLICY YOU ARE CHECKING:

1. What are the aims and objectives of this draft strategy/policy?

The Botley Centre Draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is a framework for future development of the Botley Centre site. The aim of the SPD is to provide a set of design principles for new and improved facilities to meet the existing and future needs of the local community whilst attracting investment to serve the wider district and meet local regeneration aspirations. The development framework is a strategy to guide a high quality, prestigious development. Once adopted the Botley Centre SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

2. Who is the proposed strategy or policy designed to support / help / serve?

The Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2011 identified the need for change in Central Botley, stating a need for 'refurbishment to fulfil its potential as a local service centre' and further noting 'it does not perform as a town centre and does not provide the range of services and other facilities as would be expected.' The proposed SPD is designed to serve the existing and futures needs of the local community which include residents in Botley and those in the surrounding local area. Therefore, the proposed strategy is designed to support current residents, future residents and the surrounding local area.

3. If the draft strategy/policy relates to an existing council service/function, has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) already been completed on the service/function?

No

Yes – please list any issues/barriers identified within the assessment that your draft strategy needs to address:

The draft SPD relates to the working of the Planning department and in particular the adopted Local Plan 2011 and subsequently the saved policies following the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework. An EIA was completed on the development management function and how equality groups were involved in the consultation process of the Local Development Framework. This assessment highlighted that the sustainability assessment of the Core Strategy and SPDs, would also address equality issues. The SPD has also considered and aligns with draft policies contained in the Vale's emerging Local Plan 2031 which has been assessed recently, and is anticipated for adoption in September 2016. Following adoption of the emerging Local Plan, the Vale has committed to review the SPD and update where necessary to ensure consistency with the more recent Local Plan policies.

4. Does the draft strategy or policy have the potential to cause a negative impact or discriminate against certain groups in the community?

Equality group	Yes	No	<p>If ‘No,’ What existing evidence (presumed or otherwise) do you have for this? e.g. Will the service changes advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic? This means will they</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. • Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people <p>If ‘yes’, please explain how the strategy/policy could cause a negative impact or discriminate. If you can not justify this you will need to take mitigating action, complete the action plan at the end of this assessment.</p>
People from ethnic minority groups		√	We do not believe the draft document has the potential to cause a negative impact or discriminate against people from ethnic minority groups. The draft SPD provides a development framework intended to increase use for all and will therefore have neutral impact.
Men or women <i>(including pregnant women, women on maternity and transgender people)</i>		√	We do not believe the draft document has the potential to cause a negative impact or discriminate against men or women. The consultation process engaged parents of young children who have raised a number of comments to improve the site for pregnant women and women on maternity and overall foster a family-friendly environment. These comments have been considered as part of the consultation process.
Gay, lesbian or bisexual people		√	We do not believe the draft document has the potential to cause a negative impact or discriminate against gay, lesbian or bisexual people. A person’s sexuality does not affect the design of a building. Owners/occupiers of the buildings such as the hotel would have to comply with the Equality Act in terms of the buildings use.
People living in rural areas		√	We do not believe the draft document has the potential to cause a negative impact or discriminate people living in rural areas as it is for Botley.

<p>People with disabilities (including carers)</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>We do not believe the draft document has the potential to cause a negative impact or discriminate against people with disabilities. The SPD provides for a development framework rather than an actual plan. The SPD requires that development follow the design approach set out in the Vale's Design Guide (March, 2015). The Design Guide includes a number of policies that support access for people with disabilities such as DG38: Inclusive Design for streets and public spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable everyone to participate equally, confidently and independently in everyday activities irrespective of a person's mobility, age, gender or ethnicity; • Meet the needs of wheelchair users, mobility impaired people and people with pushchairs; • Provide sensory richness; • Are convenient, safe and easy to use for all people without having to experience undue effort, barriers to access or separation; • Ensure that street furniture, signage, lighting and visual and textural contrast in the paving materials are carefully designed and reflect the needs of all potential users; • Provide sufficient levels of accessibility for all potential users in terms of accessible parking, pavement space and access to public transport; and • The principles of inclusive design should be incorporated from the outset, rather than at the end of the design process as an afterthought. Inclusive design principles will need to be clearly set out in applicants' Design and Access Statements. <p>DG43 Public realm materials which includes all surfacing and crossing facilities should take into account partially-sighted people or those with impaired mobility.</p> <p>DG65: Inclusive communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New residential developments should address the needs of people with disabilities by complying with Building Regulations • Design buildings to maximise the potential for lifetime use • Wheelchair accessible homes should be designed in accordance with recognised guidance such as Wheelchair Housing Design Guide (Habinteg, 2006). <p>Planning officers will ensure these elements are taken into account when a planning application is submitted. Consultation will also take place with the Vale disability access group to ensure access considerations can be designed into the redevelopment of the site.</p>
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<p>People from different religions/beliefs (including people without a religion/belief)</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>We do not believe the draft document has the potential to cause a negative impact against people from religions/beliefs. The site includes two churches; the Botley Baptist Churches and St. Peter and St. Paul Church The SPD highlights St. Peter and St. Paul's church as contributing to the identity of Botley, Paragraph 4.5.5 states that this church should be retained as part of the development of the site.</p> <p>Representatives from both churches have been involved in the preparation of the SPD since the earliest stages. Consultants contacted these representatives to gather initial views and feedback about the present situation, their aspirations and intentions. These representatives were also invited to the stakeholder workshops (two of which were held at the Botley Baptist Church) to discuss the various scenarios and acceptable uses for the site prior to commencement of public consultation. Feedback from these events has informed the SPD The levels of engagement are briefly documented in section 1.4 of the SPD.</p> <p>The SPD references, in section 2.4.29, the emerging Local Plan 2031 Part 1 Core Policy 11 relating to Botley Centre. This draft policy has been subject to a separate EIA. In this policy, part 3 states that existing community facilities, including the community hall, library and Baptist Church are replaced with facilities of an appropriate size and quality to meet current and likely future local needs. The purpose of both the SPD and the Local Plan are to ensure that current needs, as well as likely future local needs for such facilities are addressed through any redevelopment of the site, ensuring that no net loss occurs.</p> <p>Consultation responses have been analysed to determine if space for other faiths is desired/needed for this area. One of the principles set out in the SPD also supports places of worship as an acceptable use for the site (Section 4.1.2, p.25). If a library is provided consideration could be given to providing a prayer room within it. This could also be considered for the student accommodation, but this will be dependent on what uses come forward at the planning application stage.</p>
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<p>Older or younger people</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>We do not believe the draft document has the potential to cause a negative impact for older or younger people. Sovereign Housing Association’s Field and Vale House an older person accommodation which is included in the area forming part of the SPD. These homes provide services for older people, people with a mental disability and dementia.</p> <p>The SPD refers to the west side of the site as a lower activity zone (section 4.1.3) which is appropriate for more private lower activity land uses. The final version of the SPD has been updated to strengthen the case for the retention of Field House. This is evidenced in section 4.1.4 which states “the western part of the site is not a priority for redevelopment, and any future development should justify any loss of care home facilities within Field House.</p> <p>Throughout the Botley SPD community consultation, residents have identified lack of space for young people and children. The SPD has identified development principles which are supportive of safer streets and high quality public spaces (particularly close to a new community hub), the improvement to pedestrian crossings along West Way and overall more public space for social gatherings. However, the SPD does not make reference to support space specifically for young people or children. During parent focus groups at the Children’s Centre parents suggested a possible play area or community space dedicated to children and youth. The Children’s Centre is schedule to close due to lack of funding from the Government so the need for additional space with programming is crucial to the young families living in Botley.</p> <p>In regards to student accommodation, there has been significant opposition from residents throughout the community consultation. Furthermore, residents have voiced concerns of additional younger students comprising the character of the community. In regards to the allowed uses on the site, if student accommodation were removed from the adopted SPD, there is potential for young people to be impacted as a result. The final version of the Botley SPD accommodates and supports a variety of residential units, including on-site affordable housing, student accommodation and accommodation for older people.</p> <p>The following Core Strategy saved policies underpin the draft SPD: H19 – housing to meet the needs of elderly and other defined groups H16(ii) – Provision for lifetime homes</p>
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Local Voluntary, Community and Faith sector organisations			<p><i>If your draft strategy/policy doesn't relate to the VCF sector, please state that here.</i></p> <p>The impact on the faith sector has been considered above. As far as we are aware, there are no further Voluntary, Community and Faith (VCF) facilities on the site, and no feedback received through the public consultation has indicated otherwise.</p>
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5. Have reasonable adjustments been made for people with disabilities to ensure they can use the draft strategy or policy? This might mean treating disabled people better than non-disabled people in order to meet their needs

No

√ Yes - please provide detail:

See information included in the table above which demonstrates how the SPD will meet the needs of people with disabilities due to the principles in design guide under pinning it.

6. Have there been any equality related recommendations in the area that your draft policy/strategy is covering which have arisen from, for example, internal/external audits or scrutiny reports?

Recommendation made	Is this being addressed in your draft strategy or policy? If not, please explain why.
No	

7. Will the draft strategy or policy help to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it e.g will the changes help to tackle prejudice and promote understanding between the different groups

No (*If you feel there is scope to improve how you foster good relations, amend your decision accordingly*)

√ Yes – please explain how

As referred to earlier, consultation feedback has raised some concern about the development including student accommodation. Workshops and consultation events sought to address issues raised by the community, which principally focussed on the lack of any evidence supporting the need for student accommodation. The council needs to consider what the need for such accommodation is in the area, and balance this against concerns.

8. Will the draft strategy or policy protect and promote human rights? [You may find it helpful to view the human rights articles and case studies on the intranet to help you decide]

No – please explain why and how you will amend the draft policy/strategy to eliminate the effect (if you think the effect cannot be eliminated but can be justified, please also give details):

√ Yes

The following Human Rights are relevant to the draft SPD:

Article 8 Right to respect for a private and family life ‘Everyone has the right to enjoy living in their home without public authorities intruding or preventing them from entering it or living in it. People also have the right to enjoy their homes peacefully’

The council will ensure that whilst the development is taking place that residents of Field and Vale house are not prevented from accessing their property. And that every care is taken to ensure impact due to noise and dust is minimised?

Article 14 Prohibition of discrimination - Article 14 only works to protect people from different treatment in exercising their other Convention rights. Therefore comes into effect with article eight above.

9. Has there been consultation with relevant community groups to help inform this draft strategy or policy?

No – please explain why and how you will amend the draft policy/strategy to eliminate the effect (if you think the effect cannot be eliminated but can be justified, please also give details):

√ Yes

The council has engaged with the following important community groups, amongst others, throughout the process of preparing the SPD:

- West Way Community Concern
- North Hinksey Parish Council

- Cumnor Parish Council
- Botley Baptist Church
- St. Peter and St. Paul Church

Do you feel there are any groups that the draft strategy or policy significantly affects who you have not currently consulted? If yes, please contact the shared equality officer for advice (see page 2 for contact details).

- No
 Yes

10. Has the draft strategy or policy missed opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and positive attitudes?

- No
 Yes

Action plan for mitigating action or advancing equality of opportunity

Action	Person responsible	Target completion date
Consideration should be given to any future planning applications for this site being reviewed by a member of the NRAC (National Register of Access Consultants) this will help to ensure access considerations are designed in.	RL/SH	N/A