Equality Impact Assessment
Validation Decision Notice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EIA Reference Number</th>
<th>195</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service, policy, or strategy</td>
<td>Basingstoke Town Centre Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Element(s) assessed</td>
<td>Proposed town centre development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job titles of Assessors</td>
<td>Paralegal, Community Development Officer, Principal Urban Designer and Town Centre Project Manager</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Consider:
Was discrimination or disadvantage identified?  No
Was the service promoting equality? Yes
Could the service be improved in promoting equality? No
Are the customers' needs understood and met? Further work to do on the detailed work
Is there good evidence and/or reasoning to support the decisions on whether groups are/aren't affected? Yes
Does the summary report properly reflect the key findings of the assessment? Yes
Is the summary report clear and easy to understand? Yes
If improvements have been identified, do they reflect and deal with the key findings?

The decision is to: Validate ✅ Not validate  

The reason/s for the decision are: please give details below
Validation given – information correct ✔
Not validated – decision not to proceed as EIA incorrect
Not validated - screening error
Not validated – research/consultation error
Not validated – improvement error

Signed  

Designation  Portfolio Holder Partnerships

Name  F.C. OSSELTON

Date  1-5-2013
STAGE 1 – Briefing Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EIA ID (Sinbad reference number)</th>
<th>195 - Basingstoke Town Centre Programme</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date of meeting</td>
<td>11 April 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Titles of assessors</td>
<td>Paralegal (Lead), Community Development Officer, Principal Urban Designer and Town Centre Project Manager</td>
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The Assessment

This EIA considers the impact of the proposed town centre development on protected characteristics (as outlined in the Equality Act 2010) and potentially vulnerable groups. The information from this assessment will be used to inform councillors as part of their decision-making process.

Background

The Basingstoke Town Centre Programme

The Central Basingstoke Vision was adopted by the Council in December 2007 and an accompanying Action Plan was adopted in July 2008. Since this time, progress in relation to the Action Plan has been reviewed on a generally six monthly basis via a report to EP&P OSCOM.

In the Council Plan: 2013 to 2017 improving economic vitality was identified as a priority, and in particular:

“Renew Basingstoke’s “Top of the Town” by working with residents and traders to make it economically vibrant, in line with other parts of the town centre”.

This is the key objective of the Basingstoke Town Centre Programme.

In order to implement this priority the Councils first Basingstoke Town Centre Programme has been drawn up, with the aim of being a rolling two-year programme, with annual reviews of progress.

The recent consultation about the High Street Innovation Fund carried out in 2012 has highlighted a number of areas for improvement and many are addressed in this programme. Details of the consultation were reported to the EP&P OSCOM in January 2013.
Stage 1

**Assessment Findings**

The Town Centre Programme will have a potentially wide impact on the town centre community, including those from the protected characteristics groups, and all those living, visiting and working in the town centre. It could have a specifically positive impact on access to services and activities for disabled individuals and young and older people. This impact would be in relation to crime, safety and security, jobs, social activities, amenities and physical environment.

**Justification**

The project is significant in terms of expenditure and impact, and it is appropriate to proceed to a scoping / screening EIA as it has a direct impact on people. The project in its present form has a variety of work-streams, each of which may require more detailed assessment as they progress. This initial assessment will be at a strategic level.
Stage 6

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Background

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In order to implement this priority the Council's first Basingstoke Town Centre Programme has been drawn up, with the aim of being a rolling two-year programme, with annual reviews of progress. The recent consultation about the High Street Innovation Fund carried out in 2012 has highlighted a number of areas for improvement and many are addressed in this programme. Details of the consultation were reported to the EP&P OSCOM in January 2013.

The Customer/Customer Group

The town centre’s community is diverse and includes stakeholders such as:

- Businesses – restaurants, offices, shops, night-life, landlords
- Residents – in town; edge of town; visiting town; owners; tenants
- Public sector – Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council; Hampshire County Council; Hampshire Police; National Health Service;
- Voluntary and Not-for-Profit sector – charities; faith community; Registered Social Landlords; Basingstoke Heritage Society

This is not an exclusive list and as part of the work in setting up the Forum, the Council will consider how best to give all relevant stakeholders a voice in the future of the town.
Stage 6

Consultation and Research

There has been considerable press coverage about the Portas Review and the High Street Innovation Fund, both nationally and locally which has generated quite a bit of local interest. In light of this a borough-wide consultation on how the fund should be used was undertaken in 2012 to gain the views of residents and local businesses. As part of the consultation five ideas were proposed on which views were sought:

- Subsidise business rates to encourage specific types of businesses
- Encourage space above shops to be converted into flats to create footfall
- Update and refurbish vacant shops
- Make Basingstoke a free WiFi Zone
- Small scale environment improvements

In addition to the feedback against these proposals people were encouraged to put forward their own ideas for the £100,000 High Street Innovation Funding from the government. The consultation undertaken is outlined in the table overleaf:

Table 1: Consultation undertaken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Borough Business Partnership</td>
<td>Businesses based in Basingstoke and other significant local employers</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28 June 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gazette Campaign</td>
<td>Residents and local businesses</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Throughout August 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snap Survey</td>
<td>Businesses, residents and other users of the town centre</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>1 August to 1 October 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top of Town Traders Meeting</td>
<td>Small business owners based in the Top of Town</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22 August 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12 September 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Feedback i.e. letter,</td>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>August and September 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>email, correspondence to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>councillors</td>
<td></td>
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The consultation was reported in full to the EPP OSCOM on 15 January 2013.
Equality Impact Assessment

Stage 6

A variety of research has been undertaken to inform the development of the town centre programme including evaluation of various programmes from other towns, and taking into account current best practice thinking from the Gfirst LEP and the Association of Town and City Management.

Key Individuals and Organisations

The consultation was led by the Business Relationship Manager and the project has a core team led by the Town Centre Project Manager, Principal Urban Designer, Property Manager, and Community Design and Regeneration Manager. The project to deliver the programme will call on resources from across the council as appropriate, and will also forge relationships with key organisations and individuals across the town’s community. This EIA has been supported by the EIA panel and Equality Working Group and Equality Strategy group.

Assessment Findings

This assessment considered the specific impact of the proposed programme on different groups. This was an EIA at strategic level focussed on a proposed programme of works. Results showed that the development of the town centre would have a generally positive impact on all groups due to a range of improvements across a number of areas of the town economy and environment. There will be a wider range of attractions, services and shops for people to use and access to these will be improved. There should also be an increase in footfall, business vibrancy and diversity.

There were no differential impacts of the proposal on the groups considered, however, potential positive impacts were identified for those who are unemployed and on benefits as there may be increased job opportunities as a result of the development. There could also be a positive impact for disabled people and those with mobility or specific access needs as the changes to the town centre should improve access in general. The actual differential positive impacts on protected characteristics groups will be further identified when specific activities are planned.

It was noted that each relevant strand of work will need to give consideration as to whether a separate EIA is necessary through the project process as it develops. This is due to the fact that, as each strand of work unfolds, some differential impacts may be identified in particular in relation to age, disability and income groups, as well as those with literacy issues and the unemployed.

Recommendations

1. EIA to be considered for each work-stream in the programme as part of the project management process.

2. It is recommended that the proposed Town Centre Forum representation includes a diverse range of interest groups.