

Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan

Equalities Impact Assessment October 2022

1. Introduction

1.1. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on all public authorities in the exercise of their functions to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between persons who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not.

1.2. “Protected characteristics” are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

1.3. This report assesses the submission Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan (ES&BG NP) to ensure that Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green Parish Council (as the Qualifying Body responsible for preparing the ES&BG NP) is satisfying its statutory duties in this regard. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is a systematic analysis of a policy or policies, in order to explore the potential for an adverse impact on a particular group or community. It is a method of assessing and recording the likely differential and/or adverse impact of a policy on people from different groups. If a policy results in unfairness or discrimination, then changes to eliminate or lessen the impact should be considered.

1.4. The purpose of the analysis is to increase participation and inclusion, to change the culture of public decision-making and to place a more proactive approach to the promotion of equality and fairness at the heart of public policy. The processes involved in conducting the analysis should not be looked on as an end in themselves. Instead, it should be borne in mind that the aim is the promotion of fairness and equality of opportunity and thus it is the outcomes that are of primary concern. In undertaking the EqIA, it is important to keep in mind why the ES&BG NP is needed, what the intended outcomes are, and how it will be ensured that the policies will work as intended.

2. Methodology

2.1. An assessment has been made on whether the ES&BG NP has a positive, negative or neutral impact on each of the protected characteristics (in so far as data is available). The vision and objectives of the ES&BG have been assessed, and individual policies are highlighted where they are considered likely to have a negative impact.

3. Baseline data

3.1. Data for the Parish of Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green is available from the 2011 Census for the following protected characteristics: sex, age, disability, race, marriage and civil partnership and religious belief. (Data from the 2021 Census is not yet available at a Civil Parish level.

3.2. No data is available for the following protected characteristics: gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation.

Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green Neighbourhood Area population characteristics

Total Population – 1,048 520 males (49.6%) , 528 females (50.4%)

Age

Children aged 17 or less	27.3 %
Adults aged 18 to 64	61.2 %
Adults 65 or over	11.6 %

Household Language

Main language English for all residents	97.7 %
Main language English for at least one person aged 16 or over	2.2 %
No resident has main language English	0.3 %

Country of birth

UK	94.2 %
EU	2.6 %
other	3.2 %

Ethnic group

British White	95.2 %
Irish white	0.6 %
Other White	2.0 %
Mixed/multiple ethnic	1.1 %
Asian/Asian British	0.2 %
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	0.7 %
Other	0.2 %

Marriage or Civil Partnership

Single	30.5 %
Married	51.7 %
Same-sex civil partnership	0.0 %
Separated	3.4 %
Divorced	9.4 %
Widowed	5.0 %

Religion

Christian	59.6 %
Buddhist	0.1 %
Jewish	0.2 %
Muslim	0.2 %
Other	0.6 %
No Religion	28.7 %
Religion not stated	10.7 %

Health

The local community is generally healthy, with the great majority (88.3%) reporting “very good” or “good” health at the time of the 2011 Census. Nevertheless, 11.0% of the local population reported long term health problems or a disability.

Data sourced from NOMIS: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

4. Process of Community Consultation

4.1. All written communications were in English, and it was not considered necessary to translate them into any other language.

4.2. Throughout the preparation of the ES&BG NP the Parish Council has encouraged engagement with the local community in planning for the future development of the parish.

4.3. Consultations took place after wide ranging publicity using a variety of formats - leaflet drops to all homes in the Parish; notices in the local area magazine; emails; Parish website; Facebook; parish notice boards. Regular updates were published in the local area magazine, on the Parish website and on Facebook. E-copies of the draft NP and supporting documents were available via the Regulation 14 pre-submission page of the parish council website and a link was notified to every household with a leaflet drop. Printed copies of the draft NP were available on request. Three separate drop-in sessions were organised in different parts of the parish for those who wished to see a paper copy of the draft NP and ask questions. Full details of the community consultation are in the accompanying Consultation Statement and Appendices.

5. Likely Impact of the Neighbourhood Plan on Groups with Protected Characteristics

5.1. The Vision Statement for the Neighbourhood Area is:

A small rural parish located near prosperous towns that nurtures modest organic growth and continues to evolve towards a more sustainable lower-carbon future. Peaceful settlements with a rural character where residents prosper and enjoy both their communities and the surrounding countryside as well as having easy access to employment, vital services and leisure activities. Confidence that the highly-valued natural environment, biodiversity and landscape are continuously improving and that important heritage assets and views are maintained for future generations. Housing development is limited, in keeping with the rural environment, governed by local growth, the need for affordability and with more options for young families, the elderly and less mobile.

5.2. The ES&BG NP contains a series of objectives. These set out how the Parish Council proposes to deliver its vision for the area up to 2039. Delivery of the objectives will be through both planning policies and community actions. Each objective is reviewed to assess whether it is likely to have an impact on groups within the parish with protected characteristics:

Objective and associated Policies	Likely impact
Retain and enhance the rural character of the parish and its settlements. Policies ESBG 1/2/5/6/7/12/13/14/15/17	Neutral
Ensure the inherently limited sustainability of our small village settlements is not damaged by inappropriate development and is nurtured with improvements to community facilities and internet access. Policies ESBG 1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/16	Positive
Accommodate and encourage organic growth of the parish and the evolving needs of residents by encouraging the development of a modest number of extra homes that are affordable and suited to different stages of individual and family life. Policies ESBG 1/2/3/4/5/6/7/9/10/14/16	Positive
Ensure the parish is fit for a low/zero-carbon future. Policies ESBG 5/6/10/11/16/17	Positive
Enhance the environment, biodiversity, landscape, and access to the countryside and green spaces via clear policies and an alliance between parish residents and landowners. Policies 2/3/5/12/13/14	Positive
Ensure our heritage assets, key views and the rural character of settlements are retained and enhanced by good stewardship and that design policies ensure new development and refurbishments are in keeping with existing housing character. Policies ESBG 5/6/7/13/14/15	Neutral
Strengthen the community and reduce the need for travel outside the parish by development of employment opportunities and community facilities suited and scaled not only to our rural environment but also the needs/wishes of residents. Policies 7/8/9/10	Positive
Reduce concerns over road safety and help community health and well-being by improvements to road layout, parking and traffic management hardware and by actions to encourage more walking and cycling. Policies ESBG 5/6/8/18	Positive
Underpin delivery of the Vision and Objectives by establishing and progressing community-led programmes in Transport, Socio-Economic Development and Facilities/Services.	Positive

European Convention on Human Rights

The vision, objectives and policies of the ES&BG NP have been formulated in response to the community's views and needs through consultation and evidence gathering in the Parish. The overall purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to improve the quality of life for all people living and working in the Parish from an environmental, social and economic point of view.

The Parish Council has been mindful of the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights in the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.

During the Equalities Impact Assessment outlined above the policies were also reviewed for compliance with the Human rights Act. The Parish Council considers that the Neighbourhood Plan, its vision, objectives and policies comply with the Human Rights Act.

Marian Dain

**Chair – Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green Parish Council
October 2022**