

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT



Date	November 2024
Name of person completing this form	James Gummery / Andrew Wright - Spatial Planning and Design Team

1. About the project, service or policy

Name of project, service or policy	Regulation 22 St Albans City and District Submission Local Plan
Why is this project needed?	<p>Preparation of a Local Plan is a statutory requirement for the Council. The Local Plan sets out the planning policies and proposals for the future development of the City and District of St Albans. It establishes the Council's long term spatial planning strategy for delivering and managing development and infrastructure, and for environmental protection and enhancement, to 2041. The Local Plan will have a material effect on the amount and type of housing (including affordable housing), the number and type of jobs, the location and nature of future development, and the protection of open space; across the District, among other aspects.</p> <p>The Local Plan is currently at 'Regulation 22' (Submission) stage as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012; having undergone Regulation 18 (Preparation) consultation in the Summer of 2023 and Regulation 19 (Publication) consultation in the Autumn of 2024. Regulation 22 sets out which documents and information must be submitted to the Secretary of State, including copies of any representations made in accordance with Regulation 20. Regulation 20 sets out that any person may make representations.</p> <p>The scope of the Local Plan and the 16.5 year time span mean that this document will have a significant impact on the lives of those who live and work in or visit the District. Important choices are made between competing demands and limited resources are allocated. The Draft Local Plan, paragraph 1.27 sets out that the Vision for St Albans is a succinct statement for the District through to 2041: 'A thriving, inclusive and sustainable community which is a great place to live and work and has a vibrant economy.'</p> <p>Objectives to achieve this, as set out in Table 1.2 of the Local Plan include, but are not restricted to: sufficient housing which meets the needs of all sections of society in sustainable locations; strong and resilient economic growth; support for town, village and neighbourhood centres; and sufficient provision for and access to community infrastructure in sustainable locations. Policies will, however, need to be assessed and monitored to ensure that no unintended consequences for equality issues occur.</p>

2. Community impact

What impacts will this project have on the community? The <i>Community Profile</i> highlights key demographic considerations for the District including our duty towards characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative
			What are the positive and negative impacts, and how will benefits be enhanced and negative impacts minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	X		<p>The Local Plan seeks to deliver specific types of development and at specific locations. As such, there is the potential for the policies to have differential impacts on different equalities groups. Development at any site could have equality implications for new residents and users/workers within the site, and also communities in adjacent areas. The thrust and ambition of the Local Plan includes the focus of development in locations where a range of services and facilities are relatively accessible by public transport and non-car modes to make developments more accessible to people of all abilities. The document works to provide better access to community and recreational facilities on site and in adjoining areas.</p> <p>More specifically, Strategic Policy SP7 - Community Infrastructure sets out support for protection and enhancement of Community Infrastructure, which includes healthcare, education, and all other types of community facilities.</p>
Age	X		<p>Strategic Policy SP4 – Housing seeks the provision of specialist housing to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities. Policy HOU4 specifically aims to provide housing for older people in both C2 and C3 form; with provision to be made for specialist housing to meet the needs of older people and / or people with disabilities within the Broad Locations and housing sites providing 250 dwellings or more. Policy HOU2 further identifies that affordable housing is required for both of these forms of accommodation, at 40% of units.</p>
Disability	X		<p>The thrust and ambition of the Local Plan includes the focus of development in locations where a range of services and facilities are relatively accessible by public transport and non-car modes to make developments more accessible to people of all abilities. Strategic Policy SP4 – Housing seeks the provision of specialist housing to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities. Policy HOU3 specifically aims to provide housing for older people in both C2 and C3 form; with provision to be made for specialist housing to meet the needs of older people and / or people with disabilities within the Broad Locations and housing sites providing 250 dwellings or more. Policy HOU2 further identifies that affordable housing is required for both of these forms of accommodation, at 40% of units. In addition, Policy HOU4 supports provision of M4(2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) and M4(3) (wheelchair user dwellings).</p>

Gender reassignment		X	No equalities impacts identified.
Marriage and civil partnership		X	No equalities impacts identified.
Pregnancy and maternity		X	No equalities impacts identified.
Race		X	No equalities impacts identified.
Religion or belief		X	<p>It is considered that the Local Plan will have a neutral effect on people due to their religious beliefs.</p> <p>Strategic Policy SP7 - Community Infrastructure sets out support for protection and enhancement of Community Infrastructure, which includes places of worship. Policy COM1 relates to Community, Leisure and Sports facilities within the District. This policy sets out that the Council will encourage new and enhanced community, sport and recreational facilities in appropriate and sustainable locations. Furthermore, opportunities for new provision will be created as part of development of new Local Centres in Broad Locations, including in joint use community buildings.</p> <p>Beyond that, the Local Plan does not provide any greater benefit for any specific religion or for any beliefs system compared to none, so in this sense it is considered to be neutral.</p>
Sex		X	No equalities impacts identified.
Sexual orientation		X	No equalities impacts identified.
Any community issues identified for this location, if the project is based in a specific location – state if this is not applicable e.g. if there are no specific issues for this location or if the project is District-wide	X		<p>The project is District-wide. Overall, the Local Plan policies have been designed to attempt to improve the relevant equality strands where possible, and to otherwise have a neutral impact. It is not anticipated that there will be a direct impact on equality issues related to gender reassignment, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, or religion and beliefs as a result of the policies and development proposed in the Local Plan; whilst it is considered that the policies and resulting development patterns of the Local Plan are likely to have some positive effect on the age and disability equality strands.</p>
<p>What steps have you taken or plan to take to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the service or policy development e.g. on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups?</p>			

The consultation strategy for the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan and the Regulation 19 Publication Local Plan was developed with the intention to ensure all sectors of the community have the opportunity to have their say in how their community is planned and developed, irrespective of race; disability; age; religion or belief; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; sex and sexual orientation. Efforts have been made to ensure that the consultation process as a whole was an inclusive one that involved a wide range of community groups, in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010.

These community groups include ethnic minority groups, local Residents Associations, youth groups, schools, colleges, disability groups, older persons groups. The Council used a variety of methods to inform and engage communities in the planning process, as the Council understand that people with different needs and interests require different approaches. There was a focus on digital engagement, use of plain English and proactive engagement with community groups. The Council ensured that representations could be made online or in writing to the Council's offices and used new and innovative ways to engage with a wider range of people, especially focusing on electronic communication.

For the Regulation 18 and 19 Local Plan stages, the Council:

- Emailed consultation materials to community groups including those described above wherever possible
- Had some printed materials available for those without web access (on request)


At Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan stage, there was a paid campaign on social media centred on a new local plan animated video and a short survey. This was targeted at local people within 12km of central St Albans aged 16+ and from all sections of the community. The feedback received from this campaign, along with all the other Regulation 18 consultation feedback, was taken into account when updating the Draft Local Plan to create the Publication version and subsequent Submission version. Taking into account the more technical and limited nature of the feedback that can be taken into account at Regulation 19 stage (related to whether the Local Plan is legally compliant, sound or complies with the Duty to co-operate), it was not considered helpful to consultees to undertake a comparable exercise at Regulation 19 stage.

3. Action Plan

How you will review the impact once the service or policy has been implemented? These actions should be picked up in the departmental business plan		
Action	By when	By who
<p>The Council will monitor the implementation and impact of the Local Plan Policies through:</p> <p>the regular Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR) and 5 year review (5YR).</p> <p>In addition, on-going community engagement through the implementation of the Local Plan (e.g. through developer engagement at pre-application / application stages) will help to provide a greater understanding of the potential impacts on equalities</p>	<p>AMR: annually</p> <p>5YR: 5 years after Plan adoption (estimated 2031)</p> <p>(Ongoing)</p>	<p>Spatial Planning Team</p> <p>Spatial Planning Team liaising with a range of stakeholders</p> <p>Spatial Planning Team liaising with a range of stakeholders</p>

How you will review the impact once the service or policy has been implemented? These actions should be picked up in the departmental business plan		
groups, which may inform updated policies at review stage or additional planning guidance.		

4. Sign off

Name	Role (i.e. Project Sponsor, Service Manager)	Date
	Service Manager	27.11.24