

Equality Impact Assessment / Equality Analysis

(Version 4)

Item name	Details
Title of service or policy	Somer Valley Enterprise Zone
Name of directorate and service	Corporate Estate & Development, Sustainable Communities
Name and role of officers completing the EqlA	Angharad Jones – Development Officer
Date of assessment	25/03/25

Equality Impact Assessment (or 'Equality Analysis') is a process of systematically analysing a new or existing policy or service to identify what impact or likely impact it will have on people and different groups within our community. The main aim is to identify any adverse impacts (i.e. discriminatory or negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community, and to identify areas where equality can be better promoted). Equality impact Assessments (EqIAs) can be carried out in relation to services provided to customers and residents as well as employment policies/strategies that relate to staffing matters.

This toolkit has been developed to use as a framework when carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) or Equality Analysis. **Not all sections will be relevant – so mark N/A any that are not applicable.** It is intended that this is used as a working document throughout the process, and a final version will be published on the Council's website following relevant service lead approval.

1.1 Identify the aims of the policy or service and how it is implemented

Key questions	Answers / notes
<p>1.1 Briefly describe purpose of the service/policy e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the service/policy is delivered and by whom • If responsibility for its implementation is shared with other departments or organisations • Intended outcomes 	<p>The overall objective of the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (SVEZ) project is to provide a highly sustainable and attractive new location for businesses, drawing in new employers and skills, and reducing the need for commuting by local people.</p> <p>The SVEZ will provide circa 38,500 square meters of commercial floorspace, along with the provision of 1,300 new jobs. The project is currently seeking to acquire the land required for the SVEZ and the associated infrastructure works, either via negotiations or a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO).</p>
<p>1.2 Provide brief details of the scope of the policy or service being reviewed, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it a new service/policy or review of an existing one? • Is it a national requirement?). • How much room for review is there? 	<p>The site has been allocated for employment uses via the B&NES Development Plan since 2007, and the SVEZ project seeks to bring forward the delivery of the site.</p> <p>A Local Development Order (LDO) has been adopted as the planning mechanism for the site. The LDO will set the framework for how development on the site should come forward. An informal public engagement on the proposed masterplan took place in May and June</p>

	<p>2022, and the comments raised have been considered in the proposed designs of the site. An initial statutory consultation on the proposed LDO took place in January 2023, and a revised statutory consultation took place in September and October 2023, providing a further opportunity for the public to comment on the proposals.</p> <p>The Council has adopted compulsory purchase powers for the acquisition of the land required for the SVEZ and associated infrastructure works, although at the date of this assessment, the CPO is not yet published. The Council is also progressing a Side Roads Order (SRO), which will grant statutory permissions to carry out the required alterations to the highway network to support the delivery of the project in accordance with the LDO. The SRO does not itself consent to any additional works which are not permitted pursuant to the LDO.</p> <p>This assessment provides an update to the previous EqlA undertaken for the scheme.</p>
1.3 Do the aims of this policy link to or conflict with any other policies of the Council?	This is not a policy; however it does support the Council's core ambitions and priorities including more travel choices, delivering for our children and young people, healthy lives and places, good jobs and skills to thrive.

2. Consideration of available data, research and information

Key questions	Data, research and information that you can refer to
2.1 What equality focussed training have staff received to enable them to understand the needs of our diverse community?	<p>Staff have completed online training on diversity, inclusion and inclusive environments.</p> <p>General equalities awareness training is regularly undertaken by the Development team via the B&NES Corporate courses.</p>

<p>2.2 What is the equality profile of service users?</p>	<p>A 2021 profile of the Paulton Ward, in which the project area sits, provides a summary of demographic data. Whilst this gives an indication of the equality profiles of the project area, it should be noted that the project is a small area in the wider ward. The profile indicates that it has a higher proportion of economically active residents than B&NES as a whole, however, the proportion of those in senior positions such as managers and senior officials is lower than in the wider B&NES area. The proportion of those with Level 4 qualifications and above is lower than the wider B&NES area and the England and Wales average. Together, these factors suggest that the ward has a higher percentage of socio-economic disadvantage compared to B&NES as a whole. The proportion of residents that are retired is slightly higher than the B&NES average and there are fewer female residents than the rest of the authority area.</p>
<p>2.3 Are there any recent customer satisfaction surveys to refer to? What were the results? Are there any gaps? Or differences in experience/outcomes?</p>	<p>There are no known customer satisfaction surveys associated with the project.</p>
<p>2.4 What engagement or consultation has been undertaken as part of this EIA and with whom? What were the results?</p>	<p>The equalities team have been notified of an update to this document.</p> <p>In terms of public engagement on the project itself, an informal public engagement was conducted in May and June 2022. The engagement consisted of in-person and online events and information sources, designed to facilitate access by all residents. For example, access for those considered in digital poverty was considered and advertisements were placed in the local newspaper, hard-copy information was available in local libraries, and a public meeting was held in a local village hall. However, as it is not always easy for residents to access these public spaces, particularly in rural areas such as the Somer Valley, information about the project was also disseminated via a radio interview.</p> <p>An initial statutory consultation was held for 28 days in January 2023, hosted by the Local Planning Authority. This gave opportunity for the public and statutory consultees to comment on the LDO.</p>

	<p>The project team attended Farrington Gurney Parish Council on the 18th of September 2023 and the Somer Valley Forum on the 20th of September 2023.</p> <p>A revised statutory consultation was held from 22nd of September 2023 to 28th October 2023.</p> <p>The project team also engages in regular meeting with a local Key Stakeholder Group, consisting of local Ward, Parish and Town Councillors.</p>
2.5 If you are planning to undertake any consultation in the future regarding this service or policy, how will you include equality considerations within this?	The Council will be engaging with all persons directly affected by the CPO and if any matters come to light which may affect engagement with the CPO process due to any person's specific characteristics, then the Council will engage with them sensitively and assist their participation as needed.

3. Assessment of impact: 'Equality analysis'

Based upon any data you have considered, or the results of consultation or research, use the spaces below to demonstrate you have analysed how the service or policy:

- Meets any particular needs of equalities groups or could help promote equality in some way.
- Could have a negative or adverse impact for any of the equality groups

Key questions	Examples of what the service has done to promote equality	Examples of actual or potential negative or adverse impact and what steps have been or could be taken to address this
3.1 Issues relating to all groups and protected characteristics	<p>The SVEZ will deliver economic, environmental and transport benefits and aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Somer Valley to thrive and become more self-reliant by 	The SVEZ scheme is considered unlikely to have adverse impact on people with protected characteristics.

	<p>enabling economic growth through the creation of 1,300 new jobs for local people increasing prosperity for the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the need for local people to out-commute for work. • Diversify the type of employment available in the area, offering flexible space to accommodate new and expanding local businesses and creating circa 35,888sqm of new commercial space. • Deliver sustainable commercial and industrial space, helping to address business demand and employment land losses experienced in the Somer Valley. • Promote active and sustainable transport links through the development, including the provision of new and improved bus infrastructure and the construction of a new 	
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	walking and cycling link to the Norton Radstock Greenway.	
3.2 Sex – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on women and men.	There are no known examples.	The SVEZ is considered non-gender specific as the proposed development is based on providing new commercial floor space and employment opportunities.
3.3 Pregnancy and maternity	There are no known examples.	<p>The SVEZ is considered non-pregnancy or maternity specific as the proposed development is based on providing new commercial floor space and employment opportunities.</p> <p>The project is not yet in the delivery phase and the form and nature of the buildings to be constructed on the site will be determined by the developers of individual plots, in compliance with the requirements and conditions of the LDO. It is expected that ongoing due diligence will be given to this protected characteristic.</p>
3.4 Gender reassignment – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on transgender people	There are no known examples.	<p>The SVEZ is considered non-gender specific as the proposed development is based on providing new commercial floor space and employment opportunities.</p> <p>The project is not yet in the delivery phase and the form and nature of the buildings to be constructed on the site will be determined by the developers of individual plots, in compliance with the</p>

		requirements and conditions of the LDO. It is expected that ongoing due diligence will be given to this protected characteristic.
3.5 Disability – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on disabled people (ensure consideration of physical, sensory and mental health needs/differences)	The design guide forms part of the LDO adoption status and states how development should take place on the site. The design guide will consider site and building access for disabled people.	<p>Provision for disabled people is a paramount consideration of the scheme.</p> <p>All documents published as part of the CPO process will be subject to the public sector accessibility requirements.</p> <p>During the development of the scheme, any changes to the physical environment will be designed to improve access to disabled people. The Design and Access Statement for the LDO meets the statutory guidance.</p> <p>The technical design for the associated highways work which includes pedestrian crossings will comply with design standards and accessibility.</p>
3.6 Age – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on different age groups	<p>The Key Stakeholder Group represents a range of age groups.</p> <p>The SVEZ aims to improve access to the site for all age groups. Potential positive impacts include provision of level, hard surfacing to allow better access for pedestrians with pushchairs and/or leading young children and elderly citizens.</p>	<p>Both formal and informal public consultation engaged a range of age groups. During informal public consultation, hard copies of all consultation material were made available in public libraries for those who did not have access to the internet.</p> <p>During the CPO process, age has the potential to be relevant to landowners</p>

		<p>whose interests are proposed to be acquired. Any potential impact will be considered where identified.</p> <p>All documents that are posted online will comply with accessibility requirements. CPO and SRO documents will also be available in hard copy at the local library.</p>
3.7 Race – identify the impact/potential impact on across different ethnic groups	There are no known examples.	The SVEZ is considered non-race specific as the proposed development is based on providing new commercial floor space and employment opportunities.
3.8 Sexual orientation – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, questioning people	There are no known examples.	The SVEZ is considered non-sexual orientation specific as the proposed development is based on providing new commercial floor space and employment opportunities.
3.9 Marriage and civil partnership – does the policy/strategy treat married and civil partnered people equally?	There are no known examples.	The SVEZ is considered non-marriage and civil partnership specific as the proposed development is based on providing new commercial floor space and employment opportunities.
3.10 Religion/belief – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on people of different religious/faith groups and also upon those with no religion.	There are no known examples.	<p>The SVEZ is considered non-religion specific as the proposed development is based on providing new commercial floor space and employment opportunities.</p> <p>The consultation events related to the SVEZ were not held in religious buildings</p>

		and were therefore inclusive for people of all religion or belief.
<p>3.11 Socio-economically disadvantaged* – identify the impact on people who are disadvantaged due to factors like family background, educational attainment, neighbourhood, employment status can influence life chances (this is not a legal requirement, but is a local priority).</p>	<p>The informal engagement included events designed to engage socio-economically disadvantaged populations. For instance, consultation information was available via the local newspaper, local library, and the local radio station to reach those in digital poverty.</p> <p>Improved infrastructure for walking, wheeling and cycling in the Somer Valley area will support local people, who are socio-economically disadvantaged, to access employment opportunities, with low or no travel costs.</p>	<p>The SVEZ aims to provide new employment opportunities in the Somer Valley. The site will accommodate a wide range of uses and business types. It is anticipated that a broad range of employment with differing skill levels will be provided.</p>
<p>3.12 Rural communities* identify the impact / potential impact on people living in rural communities</p>	<p>The Key Stakeholder Group includes representatives/business owners who live in the Somer Valley,</p>	<p>The SVEZ is in a rural area and will therefore directly affect rural communities. The land concerned will be transformed from arable fields to mixed-use commercial development, providing 1,300 new jobs.</p> <p>The SVEZ is promoting active and sustainable transport links through the development, including the provision of new and improved bus infrastructure and the construction of a new walking and cycling link to the Norton Radstock Greenway.</p>

<p>3.13 Armed Forces Community ** serving members; reservists; veterans and their families, including the bereaved. Public services are required by law to pay due regard to the Armed Forces Community when developing policy, procedures and making decisions, particularly in the areas of public housing, education and healthcare (to remove disadvantage and consider special provision).</p>	<p>There are no known examples.</p>	<p>The SVEZ is not specific to the Armed Forces Community, however reservists, veterans and their family may wish to benefit from the new employment opportunities provided on site.</p>
<p>3.14 Care Experienced *** This working definition is currently under review and therefore subject to change:</p> <p>In B&NES, you are ‘care-experienced’ if you spent any time in your childhood in Local Authority care, living away from your parent(s) for example, you were adopted, lived in residential, foster care, kinship care, or a special guardianship arrangement.</p>	<p>Improved infrastructure for walking, wheeling and cycling in the Somer Valley area will support local care experienced people to access employment opportunities, with low or no travel costs.</p>	<p>The SVEZ is considered non-care experienced specific as the proposed development is based on providing new commercial floor space and employment opportunities, however, care experienced individuals may wish to benefit from the new employment opportunities provided on site.</p>

*There is no requirement within the public sector duty of the Equality Act to consider groups who may be disadvantaged due to socio economic status, or because of living in a rural area. However, these are significant issues within B&NES and have therefore been included here.

** The Equality Act does not cover armed forces community. However, the Armed Forces Bill (which came in on 22 Nov 2022) introduces a requirement to pay ‘due regard’ to make sure the Armed Forces Community are not disadvantaged when accessing public services.

***The Equality Act does not cover care experienced people. B&NES adopted this group as a protected characteristic in March 2024 alongside over 80 other Local Authorities. Although we have data for care leavers and children/young people who are currently in the care of B&NES we do not have wider data on disadvantage experienced through being in care.

4. Bath and North East Somerset Council Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan

Please list actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment/analysis. These actions should be based upon the analysis of data and engagement, any gaps in the data you have identified, and any steps you will be taking to address any negative impacts or remove barriers. The actions need to be built into your service planning framework. Actions/targets should be measurable, achievable, realistic and time framed.

Issues identified	Actions required	Progress milestones	Officer responsible	By when
Equalities training from members of the Development team.	Ensure that members of the SVEZ project team and the wider Development team have the opportunity to develop their awareness and responsibilities of issues relating to equalities by attending a B&NES corporate course and/or by inviting the B&NES Equalities Officer to brief the team at a future team meeting.	Dates diarised with the Equalities Team Training	Ella Thomas	01/02/2025
Review of EqIA	Review of the EqIA within a maximum 12 months and when relevant changes or updates are identified.	Revised EqIA available.	Angharad Jones	01/04/26

5. Sign off and publishing

Once you have completed this form, it needs to be 'approved' by your Divisional Director or their nominated officer. Following this sign off, send a copy to the Equality Team (equality@bathnes.gov.uk), who will publish it on the Council's website. Keep a copy for your own records.



Signed off by:

Simon Martin - Director Capital & Housing
(Divisional Director or nominated senior officer)

Date: 07/04/2025