

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

CORE STRATEGY – EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1.0 WHY IS AN EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?

1.1 As a local authority who provides services to the public, North West Leicestershire District Council has a legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that we can demonstrate that we have paid due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance Equality of Opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

1.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a method for assessing the potential impact of a policy, strategy or service in the District in terms of race, gender and disability; similarly, the consideration of religion, age and sexual orientation are also encouraged.

1.3 This EIA provides an assessment of the Core Strategy for the period up to 2013 in relation to:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation

1.4 Each policy in the Core Strategy is assessed in terms of whether its impact upon any particular group is judged as being likely to be positive, adverse or neutral.

2.0 WHAT IS THE CORE STRATEGY?

2.1 The Core Strategy is the first document to be produced as part of the North West Leicestershire Local Plan. The Local Plan will be a collection of documents which will set out a District Council's planning policies which will be used to consider proposals for development up to 2031. The Core Strategy provides a strategic framework which other parts of the Local Plan will have to conform to. As the Core Strategy is a strategic document, by its nature it does not set out a significant amount of detail; this will be dealt with in any subsequent documents which will be produced.

2.2 The Core Strategy consists of 44 policies, dealing with a wide range of issues that include:

- a development strategy to guide where new development should go and how much;
- the amount of new housing and employment development;
- the provision of affordable housing;
- support for town centres;

- protection of key environmental assets;
- reducing the need to travel by car; and
- climate change

3.0 HOW HAS THE CORE STRATEGY BEEN PREPARED?

3.1 Work on preparing the Core Strategy began in late 2005. Since then it has been the subject of various consultations which have sought the views of a wide range of stakeholders including local communities, landowners and developers, other public agencies and anyone with an interest in the future of North West Leicestershire.

3.2 The following table summarises the various consultation stages that the Core Strategy has been subject to.

Stage in Core Strategy	Date
Core Strategy and Policies Issues and Options Consultation Paper	11 th November 2005 to 23 rd December 2005
Core Strategy - Highway Agency Stakeholder Meeting	6 th October 2006
Core Strategy - Environment Stakeholder Meeting	12 th October 2006
Core Strategy – Economy Stakeholder Meeting	17 th October 2006
Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation Workshop	4 th December 2006
Core Strategy Additional Consultation	29 th June 2007 to 3 rd August 2007
Core Strategy Further Consultation – A Strategy for Growth and Change	10 November 2008 to 13 February 2009
Consultation on October 2009 Cabinet Report	10 th November to 7 th December 2009
Core Strategy Consultation: Our District – Our Future	31 May 2011 to 29 July 2011
Consultation on October 2011 Cabinet Report	28 October 2011

3.3 The Planning Policy Team holds a database of interested individuals and groups who are e-mailed or sent letters to inform them of any consultations. In this way stakeholders can be kept informed and involved in the preparation of the Core Strategy. The database is open to any individual or group to join and details of how this can be done are provided on a Planning newsletter published periodically on the Council's website.

3.4 In preparing the Core Strategy, the Council is required to have regard to national and regional planning policies. In addition, other assessments are also required to be undertaken, such as a Strategic Environmental Assessment and a Sustainability Appraisal. The latter consider the potential impact of policies from an economic, environmental and social point of view.

3.5 It is necessary to weigh all of these considerations, including the outcomes from any consultations, in determining the final Core Strategy.

4.0 HOW WAS THE EIA UNDERTAKEN?

- 4.1 The EIA was undertaken by the Planning Policy Team on 29th March 2012. The draft results of the EIA were then passed through to the Stronger and Safety Communities Team Manager (Karen Talbot) for individual verification. On the basis of comments received the EIA was then amended to reflect comments made.
- 4.2 In undertaking the initial EIA, it became apparent that there was a need to amend some of the draft policies to address equalities issues. For example, in respect of both policies CS5 and CS6, it was decided to include specific reference to Priority Neighbourhoods in terms of access by public transport.
- 4.3 Because of the strategic nature of the Core Strategy, it was difficult to predict impacts for specific groups. For example, Policy CS1 (housing provision) should benefit many people, but because there was no specific target for any one group the policy itself, from an equalities point of view, was judged to be neutral.
- 4.4 Following pre-submission consultation on the Core Strategy in May to July 2012, it was considered necessary to recommend to the Council a number of changes. The Core Strategy incorporating these suggested changes was subject to a re-appraisal by the Planning Policy team on 26th February 2013. The revised EIA was then submitted to the Stronger and Fairer Corporate Action Team for their comment and agreement.