



**CONSULTATION DRAFT BLUNSDON - EAST
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (BENP)
2019**

APPENDIX B

Equality Assessment

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Equality Assessment

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Section 1: Introduction to Equality Impact Assessment

Aims of Equality Analysis

The Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”) 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.

‘*Protected characteristics*’ are defined in the Act as age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Equality Impact Assessment (“EqIA”) is the review and analysis of a policy or policies, in order to identify the potential for an adverse impact on a particular group or community, in particularly those with a protected characteristic. It is a method of assessing and recording the likely differential and/or adverse impact of a policy on people from different groups so that if a policy results in unfairness or discrimination then changes to eliminate or lessen the impact be considered.

This document presents the results of the assessment of the Blunsdon St Andrew – East Neighbourhood Plan (“BENP”) to ensure that the plan is satisfying the required statutory duties in this regard. The report builds on work undertaken throughout the process of developing the Neighbourhood Plan and includes evidence from a wide range of sources.

1.1 The aims of the Equality Analysis

The purpose of the analysis is to increase participation and inclusion, to change the culture of public decision making and to nurture a more proactive approach to the promotion of equality and fairness at the heart of public policy. The aim in conducting the analysis is the promotion of fairness and equality of opportunity and thus it is the outcomes that are of primary concern. The sections below consider the goals and objectives of the BENP and then assess the impact of policies and proposals on groups with protected characteristics.

1.2 Methodology

An assessment has been made on whether the BENP has a positive, negative or neutral impact on each of the protected characteristics, in so far as data is available. A brief justification of the policies and proposals in the BENP and notes of any mitigation have been provided. If the impact is negative, this

is given a high, medium or low assessment. It is important to rate the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

- **High impact:** a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place, etc.
- **Medium impact:** some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence.
- **Low impact:** almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation-led.

Section 2: Baseline Data

Data for Blunsdon St Andrew (“BSA”)¹ is available for the following protected characteristics: age, disability (economically inactive: sick or disabled) and sex.

Data is not readily available for the following protected characteristics: gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and sexual orientation. The data source is the 2011 Census obtained from the Swindon Borough Council and information from the internet generally either for the SN26 postcode or for Blunsdon St Andrew.

- In 2011 there were 1,716 people living in BENP.
- 49.4% of these were male, and 51.6% were female.
- Comparable figures for the Swindon were 50.0% and 50% respectively. At a national level were 49.2% male and 50.8% female.

Overall BENP has very similar proportions of people to both Swindon and the rest of England.

Age

Population Data 2011 Census								
Age	SN26		Swindon		South West		England	
0-15	270	16%	41,382	20%	929,678	18%	10,022,836	19%
16-19	85	5%	9,831	5%	264,074	5%	2,689,439	5%
20-65	999	58%	129,089	62%	3,059,739	58%	31,639,652	60%
65+	362	21%	28,854	14%	1,036,444	20%	8,660,529	16%
Total	1,716	100%	209,156	100%	5,289,935	100%	53,012,456	100%
Of working age	1,038	60%	133,779	64%	3,194,878	60%	33,014,967	62%
Mean	44.8		38.1		41.6		39.3	
Median	48		38		42		39	

¹ Since the inception of the BENP realignment of parish boundaries has occurred. Some of the data used relates to the old Blunsdon St Andrew parish as no separate data is available solely for the new parish of Blunsdon.

Overall, the population in the plan area is marginally older than both Swindon and England. This is not seen as significant in terms of development of policies within the BENP.

Economic Activity

BENP has a lower proportion of people (2.1%) who are designated as ‘economically inactive: long-term sick or disabled’ compared to the national average (2.4%). It also has a slightly lower proportion of people in receipt of benefits.

Benefits	BENP	England
Jobseekers Allowance (only)	3%	3.30%
Incapacity Benefits (IB or ESA)	2.10%	2.40%
Any Benefit (includes in work benefits)	11.90%	13.50%

Ethnic Origin

In terms of immigration BENP has marginally less residents born outside the UK and marginally more born within the UK and an identical mix of EU origins (Republic of Ireland and Other EU countries) as follows:

Country of Origin	BENP	England
United Kingdom	87.10%	86.20%
Republic of Ireland	0.70%	0.70%
Other EU Countries	3.70%	3.70%
Outside the EU	8.40%	9.40%

Gender reassignment and sexual orientation are generally invisible characteristics for which little reliable data exists at local level.

In summary, BSA has a:

- Lower proportion of young people (0-15) than the national average;
- Higher proportion of older people (65+);

- Lower proportion of persons designated as long-term sick or disabled;
- Broadly the same mix of ethnic origins as the rest of England.

Section 3: Objectives of the Blunsdon St Andrew – East Neighbourhood Plan

The BENP will provide a framework of policies and proposals for the development of the village to 2026. The Local Plan for Swindon Borough allocates only a very small proportion of the total housing allocation to Blunsdon over the plan period. Reference is made in the Local Plan to rural villages taking a share of 100 houses (see Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 – Policy SD2 section c and section e Table 1). However, Policy NC5: Kingsdown of the Local Plan does allocation 1,650 houses as an urban extension within the BENP area.

The BENP suggests that applications for development in the village will be dealt with on their merits but, based on the housing allocation from the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 and the level of planning applications already granted (e.g. land at the rear of Ermin Street – 138 houses), will be limited to small scale developments on sites identified during preparation of the plan and extensions of existing property. The BENP contains series of objectives under the following headings which it seeks to attain either through specify policies as set out in the BENP or through the adoption of named policies detailed in the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026.

These are:

Built Environment:

1. Support occasional new build where this is merited, using appropriate materials, and only when it will respect or improve the village environment.
2. Support the redevelopment/re-use/extension of buildings outside the village, which improve their appearance and enhance the environment.

Commercial Activity:

3. Support economic prosperity.
4. Encourage businesses that residents can run from home.
5. Provide support to the farming community through diversification.

Transport and Getting Around:

6. Maintain, revise and where necessary upgrade, transport and accessibility to and from the village.

Community Life:

7. Maintain and where necessary upgrade current amenities to ensure that residents can continue to benefit from local amenities.

Environment and Design Quality:

8. Maintain an Area of Separation between the village and urban developments to the south.
9. Retain the character of the village and parish and the things we value about it.
10. Ensure that the development within NC5: Kingsdown contains a mix of housing suitable for all potential residents.

Objectives 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9 impinge no differently upon persons with a protected characteristic than anyone else in the BENP Area; each objective seeks to achieve environmental benefits for all residents in the community.

Objectives 1, 5, 8 and 10 support policies and proposals which have the potential to affect persons with certain protected characteristics differently than they might affect the general population. For each of these objectives the BENP attempts to create an environment which would benefit persons with protected characteristics by providing appropriate housing types, by improving connectivity with other areas within the Borough, by creating the possibility to work from home and by making village activities, including health, education and social life, more accessible to residents.

Overall, the BENP is intended, in conjunction with the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026, to support the needs of persons with protected characteristics by seeking to:

- Provide a range of accommodation, mainly within the NC5: Kingsdown development suitable for all needs.
- Assist with modifications to existing properties through extensions which may be of particular benefit to older people, the disabled and those with limited mobility
- Encourage and support home working, which will be of particular benefit for disabled persons and persons with limited mobility.
- Support young families by encouraging home working and access to village activities and maintenance and improvement of village facilities.

Section 4: Impact of Policies on Groups with Protected Characteristics

It is the intention that, through deployment of specific policies set out in the BENP and through adoption of specific policies from the Local Plan, the BENP will create benefits for everyone who lives, works, shops, or spends leisure time in the village. This will be achieved by influencing the design and spatial layout at NC5: Kingsdown, permitting only limited development in keeping with the village character, enhancing the opportunity for local employment development particularly home working, preserving social, community and leisure facilities, and enhancing the quality of the environment. Groups with the various protected characteristics may be affected in different ways by the BENP and it is important for the community to recognise this. This section of the assessment attempts to highlight how various groups might be affected and whether the proposals and policies in the BENP including those adopted from the Local Plan could disproportionately and adversely affect those in the groups with protected characteristics. It is the intention that, where policies in the BENP do have an impact on groups with protected characteristics, the policy has a positive impact and not a negative one.

4.1 Age

BENP Policy	Conforming to Local Plan policy
<p>P4: Early community engagement with developers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensures that the community has input into planning applications to encourage developers to meet the needs of those with protected characteristics 	<p>SD3: Managing Development; DE1: High Quality Design; HA1: Mix, type and density;</p>
<p>P1: Allocation of sites for housing and P2: Housing development on non-allocated sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited development, especially modification of existing property, will be examined in a positive manner related to particular individual needs and circumstances. <p>P5: Village Design Statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Through the Village Design statement and conformation to Local Plan policies a mix of housing development will be provided in the NC5: Kingsdown area. 	<p>SD3: Managing Development; DE1: High Quality Design; HA1: Mix, type and density; HA5: Rural Exception sites; NC5: Kingsdown; LN1: Local and Neighbourhood planning.</p>
<p>P9: Employment and P8 Community facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supports the opportunity for increased levels of home working ▪ Provides limited scope for enhancement of employment areas along Kingsdown Lane ▪ Recognises the possibility of sustainable small-scale development 	<p>Policy EC4: Conversion of buildings to employment use in the countryside; Policy EC5: Farm diversification; IN3: ICT & telecommunications</p>
<p>P10: Funding for Community Projects & P6:</p>	

<p>Road Safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By seeking to use CIL funding to provide traffic calming measures roads through the village can become safer for residents which will include older people as they move around either for exercise or to use village amenities. 	<p>TR1: Sustainable Transport Networks; TR2: Transport and Development, para f; NC5 Kingsdown: para c; Policy NC4: Tadpole Farm, para c.</p>
<p>P11 – Green Infrastructure, open spaces and sports facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved mobility through better connections between different parts of the BENP area ▪ All new developments shall ensure a network of routes is established 	<p>TR1: Sustainable Transport Networks; TR2: Transport and Development, para f;</p>

4.2 Disability

BENP Policy	Conforming to Local Plan policy
<p>P1: Allocation of sites for housing and P2: Housing development on non-allocated sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited development, especially modification of existing property, will be examined in a positive manner related to particular individual needs and circumstances. <p>P5: Village Design Statement Through the Village Design Statement and conformation to Local Plan policies a mix of housing development will be provided in the NC5: Kingsdown area.</p>	<p>SD3: Managing Development; DE1: High Quality Design; HA1: Mix, type and density; HA5: Rural Exception sites; NC5: Kingsdown; LN1: Local and Neighbourhood planning.</p>
<p>P9: Employment and P8 Community facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supports the opportunity for increased levels of home working which is beneficial to people whose disability keeps them housebound to engage in economic activity. ▪ Provides limited scope for enhancement of employment areas along Kingsdown Lane ▪ Recognises the possibility of sustainable small-scale development. 	<p>Policy EC4: Conversion of buildings to employment use in the countryside; Policy EC5: Farm diversification;</p>
<p>P10: Funding for Community Projects & P6: Road Safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By seeking to use CIL funding to provide traffic calming measures roads through the village can become safer for 	<p>TR1: Sustainable Transport Networks; TR2: Transport and Development, para f; NC5 Kingsdown: para c;</p>

<p>residents which will include older people as they move around either for exercise or to use village amenities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supports the provision and maintenance of pedestrian routes around the BENP which should positively assist those with a disability. 	<p>Policy NC4: Tadpole Farm, para c.</p>
<p>P11 – Green Infrastructure, open spaces and sports facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved mobility through better connections between different parts of the BENP area ▪ All new developments shall ensure a network of routes is established. 	<p>TR1: Sustainable Transport Networks; TR2: Transport and Development, para f;</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ P11 – Green Infrastructure, open spaces and sports facilities Providing access to green areas for play and general enjoyment. 	<p>EN3: Open Space; CM2 Active, healthy & safe lifestyles; CM4: Maintaining & enhancing community facilities. Appendix 3: Open space standards</p>

4.2 Maternity and pregnancy/young families

BENP Policy	Local Plan adopted policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ P1: Allocation of sites for housing and P2: Housing development on non-allocated sites. Limited development, especially modification of existing property, will be examined in a positive manner related to particular individual needs and circumstances. ▪ P5: Village Design Statement ▪ Through the Village Design statement 	<p>SD3: Managing Development; DE1: High Quality Design; HA1: Mix, type and density; HA5: Rural Exception sites; NC5: Kingsdown; LN1: Local and Neighbourhood planning.</p>

<p>and conformation to Local Plan policies a mix of housing development will be provided in the NC5: Kingsdown area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ P11 – Green Infrastructure, open spaces and sports facilities. Supports the retention of the rural character of the village and its open spaces, and private outdoor garden amenity space, both of which are considered to be important for young families 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ P10: Funding for Community Projects, P9: Employment & P6: Road Safety. Supports the opportunity for increased levels of home working. This helps people wishing to continue work during pregnancy and maternity. ▪ Provides limited scope for enhancement of employment areas along Kingsdown Lane ▪ Recognises the possibility of sustainable small-scale development 	<p>Policy EC4: Conversion of buildings to employment use in the countryside; Policy EC5: Farm diversification;</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ P10: Funding for Community Projects & P6: Road Safety. By seeking to use CIL funding to provide traffic calming measures roads through the village can become safer for residents which will include those during pregnancy and those with young families as they move around either for exercise or to use village amenities. 	<p>TR1: Sustainable Transport Networks; TR2: Transport and Development, para f; NC5 Kingsdown: para c; Policy NC4: Tadpole Farm, para c.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ P11 – Green Infrastructure, open spaces and sports facilities. ▪ Improved mobility through better 	<p>TR1: Sustainable Transport Networks; TR2: Transport and Development, para f;</p>

<p>connections between different parts of the BENP area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ All new developments shall ensure a network of routes is established▪ Supports the provision and maintenance of pedestrian routes around the BENP which should positively assist new parents and young families.	
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5. Conclusion

The BENP, with adopted Local Plan policies, seeks to provide a strategy for the development of the area, and a range of policies and proposals that will result in positive benefits for many parts of the local community including those with protected characteristics: older people, young people, mothers to be and with young children, disabled people and those with limited mobility.

The BENP does make equal provision for a mix of housing suitable to all needs and seeks to maintain social, community and leisure facilities which will benefit these groups equally.

The BENP does not explicitly address the needs of racial or religious groups, or transgender, gay or lesbian groups, or women.