

North Somerset Council  
Local Development Framework

# **Core Strategy Publication Version**

## **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)**

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Background to the Equality Impact Assessment**

This report sets out the results of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) of the North Somerset Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD). The purpose of the EqIA is to highlight the likely impact of the Core Strategy policies on different community groups, and how the needs of such groups have been taken into account in relation to the development of the policies.

The need for an EqIA to be undertaken stems from the duty placed on public authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination in carrying out its functions, and promote equality of opportunity between men and women, different racial groups, and other equality groups.

Public authorities are specifically required to undertake an EqIA under:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000.
- The Disability Discriminations Act 2005.
- The Sex and Discrimination Act 2007.

The Council's Equalities Scheme also highlights the importance of equality to be maintained in the delivery of services.

### **The Core Strategy Development Plan Document**

The Core Strategy is one of the key documents forming the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF). The Core Strategy contains a set of overarching policies for the District focusing in broad strategic terms on what development will be delivered in North Somerset over the period to 2026, when it will be delivered and how it will be delivered through both the Strategy and other related documents, as well as through programmes within and outside the LDF.

The Core Strategy has been produced following considerable community consultation, the collection of evidence and working with key partners including community groups, local agencies and developers/ agents. Community engagement has taken place at the following stages in the preparation of the Core Strategy:

- Pre-production Brief: March 2007
- Issues and Options: October 2007
- Participation Stage: Summer 2009
- Consultation Draft: November 2009
- Key Changes: October 2010
- Publication Version: January 2011

Full details and outcomes of these consultations are set out in the Consultation Statement (Feb 2011) which accompanies the Core Strategy Publication Version.

The Core Strategy will be formally submitted to Government in **XX** and the 'soundness' of the document will be considered by a Government appointed independent Inspector at an Examination in **XX**. This EqIA will be submitted alongside the Core Strategy at that stage.

## The Structure of this Report

Following this Introduction, Chapter 2 sets out the approach that has been taken in preparing this report. This Chapter outlines which key equality groups have been focused upon when considering the impacts that the policies within the Core Strategy may have.

Chapter 3 sets out the initial screening matrix of the individual policies within the Core Strategy to ascertain whether they are likely to have an adverse impact on any of the equality groups which are being considered.

Chapter 4 analyses the outcomes of the screening matrix and whether any of the policies need to be assessed further.

Chapter 5 sets out the consultation process undertaken in preparing the Core Strategy and highlights the various organisations which have been consulted that represent the diversity of groups within the District.

Within the final chapter (Chapter 6), recommendations have been made for monitoring the impacts of the Core Strategy policies on different equality groups. This chapter also identifies lessons learnt from developing the Core Strategy which should be carried forward when preparing other Development Plan Documents (DPDs) to ensure that unlawful discrimination is eliminated and equality is promoted.

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## **Chapter 2: The Approach to the Equality Impact Assessment**

This EqIA follows the structure as set out in the Councils guidance as well as drawing on guidance from the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (IDeA).

Consideration has also been given to guidance from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) - 'Equality and Diversity: Improving planning outcomes for the whole of the community' (September 2008).

### **Initial Screening**

IDeA recommends that initial screening needs to take place for all policies, strategies, procedures and functions. This will determine whether or not it is necessary to carry out a full Equality Impact Assessment for this area of work with the key question being '*does the Core Strategy have the potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?*'

To help answer this key question it is important to understand the overall scope of the Core Strategy. This is best set out within the Core Strategies 'Vision' for the District:

*By 2026 North Somerset will be a more prosperous district, with reduced inequalities throughout. Its coastal and rural setting, underpinned by a rich heritage will strongly influence new development. Development will respond to the challenge of climate change, the move to more sustainable energy use and be characterised by high-quality design that contributes to creating successful, thriving places.*

*Weston-super-Mare will be established as a major economic centre catering for the employment, retail, social and leisure needs of its population whilst attracting visitors to support this role. New development areas will be established, creating mixed-use communities with a distinct sense of place valued for their high standards of sustainability, quality of life and inspired design.*

*Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead will increasingly support their populations and play less of a dormitory role. The villages will cater for rural needs with their character and that of the open countryside protected from intrusive development.*

*The future planning of Royal Portbury Dock and Bristol Airport will be guided by the need to balance the advantages of economic growth with the need to control the impacts on those who live nearby and on the natural environment.*

Due to the broad scope of the Core Strategy, as set out in the Vision above, there may be potential for the Core Strategy to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community. It is therefore considered appropriate for an EqIA of the Core Strategy to be carried out.

### **Scoping and Defining**

IDeA recommend that different perspectives and experiences are used in undertaking the EqIA. The ideal is that those responsible for delivering the strategy are involved and others with technical expertise or with specialist knowledge are involved where appropriate.

This EqIA and report has therefore been lead by officers from the Planning Policy Team who are responsible for preparing the Core Strategy. The specialist knowledge of the Councils Equality and Diversity Officer has also been utilised where appropriate.

## Information Gathering

### **WHAT INFORMATION DO YOU HAVE THAT DEMONSTRATES THIS IMPACT?**

It is necessary to identify sources of information which will be used to assist in the determination of whether the Core Strategy is likely to have an adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community. IDeA identifies that sources of information could include Census data and national and local statistics. Guidance from the PAS however, recognises that local authorities need to go beyond Census data as it does not capture recent demographic changes and sheds little light on the needs, experiences and aspirations of local groups in relation to the built environment.

In aiding the development of this report and undertaking of the assessment the following sources of information have therefore been used and are referred to where appropriate:

- Census data (2001)
- National and Local Statistics
- Mosaic data
- Customer Insight: A portrait of diversity in North Somerset 2010
- Indies of Multiple Deprivation 2007
- West of England Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2007)
- North Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 - 2026

Using the information gathered from the sources listed above, Table 1 provides some base-line information on the different groups focused upon in this assessment. These groups are identified in the Equality Act 2010. The groups and target areas include:

- Age
- Sex
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity

These groups are not homogeneous and people within these groups have different and individual needs. For this reason the assessment also focuses upon low income groups as it is known by the Council that there are certain groups within the District who experience relative levels of deprivation in comparison to other communities within North Somerset.

**Table 1: Baseline data for each equality group**

Equality Group	North Somerset Summary
<b>Age</b>	<p>The population of North Somerset at the 2001 Census was 188,564, an increase of 11,092 (6.3%) from the 1991 Census figure of 177,472. The latest Registrar General's Mid-year Population Estimate (2009) for North Somerset was 209,100.</p> <p>The age breakdowns from the Mid-year Estimate (2009) for North Somerset are 37,800 aged between 0-15 years, 121,300 people of working age and 49,900 older people (male 65+/female 60+).</p> <p>Currently older people make up 23.8% of North Somerset's population compared to 19.5% of the population nationally.</p>
<b>Disability</b>	<p>The 2001 census gives a headline figure of Disabled people<sup>1</sup> comprising 17.2% of the North Somerset population. Applying this percentage to the 2008 population size suggests that the disabled population in North Somerset in 2008 was 35,600 people. The percentage and numbers are almost certainly an under-estimate as they do not take into account the ageing population profile. The 'true' level of disability in North Somerset is probably closer to 20% and 40,000.</p>
<b>Sex</b>	<p>The 2001 Census identifies that within the district there are slightly more females (51% 96,933 people) than males (49% 91,623 people). This reflects the regional and national position.</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest a spatial variation within the district with regard to gender.</p>
<b>Race</b>	<p>North Somerset has a low proportion of people from black and other minority ethnic groups. At the 2001 Census the black and minority ethnic population made up only 1.4% of North Somerset's population compared to 4.5% of the West of England area and 9.1% of the population in England.</p> <p>Based on experimental statistics released by ONS, the 2007 mid-year estimate by ethnic group suggests the black and minority ethnic population of North Somerset has increased to make up 3.7% of the total population, compared to 4.7% in the South West area and 11.3% of the national population.</p> <p>In 2009 there were 39 Gypsy and Traveller families living in caravans that permanently reside in North Somerset. These are distributed between seven on council owned sites and thirty two on privately owned,</p>

<sup>1</sup> The definition of disability used here is the 2001 census question: "Do you have any long-term illness, health problem, or disability which limits your daily activities or the work you can do? Include problems which are due to old age."

	usually owner occupied, pitches.
<b>Religion and Belief</b>	There is very little information available relating to the religions and beliefs of the North Somerset population. The 2001 census says that 1% of North Somerset positively profess a religion other than Christianity – lower than the figure for the south west and far lower than the English average.
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	There is limited data relating to the sexual orientation of the North Somerset population. The 2001 census reveals that some 250 people aged 16 or over lived in same-sex couple households in North Somerset, amounting to 0.2% of the North Somerset population. This is the same as the percentage for England and for the South west. This percentage, applied to the 2008 North Somerset population would amount to around 400 people.
<b>Income and deprivation</b>	<p>As a whole North Somerset is a relatively affluent area. However, around 10% of North Somerset's population live in areas that are amongst the most deprived 20% of areas in the country. All of the 19,467 people affected live in Weston-super-Mare.</p> <p>North Somerset has the 11<sup>th</sup> largest range of inequality in terms of deprivation. This means that North Somerset has areas that are very deprived (in the bottom 2% of areas nationally) as well as areas that are very prosperous (in the top 2% of areas nationally).</p> <p>The unemployment rate as a percentage of the 16+ population in North Somerset was 5.7% for the period January 2009 to December 2009. This is a 2.1% rise on last year's figure, but still lower than the unemployment rate of 6.2% in the South West and 7.7% across England and Wales.</p>
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	There is very limited data relating to Gender Reassignment in North Somerset.
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>	<p>The Census shows that 57 % (84820 people) of people in North Somerset were married or re-married in 2001. This was higher than the South West (54%) and England (51%).</p> <p>There is no Census data on Civil Partnerships as they weren't recognised until 2004. The 2001 Census does identify that there were 252 households in North Somerset living in a same sex couple which is 0.1% of all households in the district. The only data available on civil partnerships is the number of civil partnership ceremonies that took place in North Somerset between 2007-2009 which were 58. However, this doesn't</p>



	necessarily mean that the couples live in the district.
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	ONS mid-year statistics recorded 2,300 live births in 2008-2009 in North Somerset. The ONS collates information on the country of origin of women giving birth in England. This data from 2007 shows that 9.2% of births in North Somerset were by mothers born outside the UK. This is lower than the figure for the South west (12.6%) and far lower than for England (24%).

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The following section of this report (Chapter 3) screens each of the Core Strategy policies against the groups identified in Table 1. If it is identified through the screening exercise that a policy may adversely impact upon a particular equality group a full assessment would be required. This has been considered in Chapter 4 of this report.

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## **Chapter 3: Screening the Core Strategy Policies**

### **WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON DIVERSE GROUPS?**

The Core Strategy contains a strategic vision, objectives and policies. The vision and objectives are quite broad, and therefore this assessment focuses on the policies themselves.

Table 2 outlines the key characteristics of each individual policy within the Core Strategy and considers whether there is the potential for the policy to have an impact on each of the groups identified in Chapter 2.

The key below identifies the symbols used to summarise the impact on a group it is considered each policy will have.

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Likely Impact</b>
+	Positive
0	Neutral
-	Negative
N/I	Not Identifiable

Core Strategy Policy	Equalities Group										Impact
	Race	Disability	Sex	Age	Religion and Belief	Sexual Orientation	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Income and Deprivation	
<b>CS1:</b> Addressing climate change and carbon reduction	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	Reducing the impacts of climate change and the resultant risks to communities could benefit all groups, but it is those on low incomes, the elderly, and disabled people who will benefit the most. Evidence shows that the impacts of climate change disproportionately effect the most vulnerable.
<b>CS2:</b> Delivering sustainable design and construction	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	In the long term the increased use of sustainable construction methods could decrease the cost of heating and servicing to home. This will particularly benefit the elderly and those on low incomes who are more likely to suffer from fuel poverty.
<b>CS3:</b> Environmental impacts and flood risk management	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	By mitigating against environmental pollution and flood risk this policy safeguards the health and safety of residents in North Somerset which is beneficial to all groups but it is those on low incomes, the elderly, young persons and disabled people who will benefit the most. Evidence shows that the impacts of climate change disproportionately effect the most vulnerable.
<b>CS4:</b> Nature	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	At this stage it is not possible

Core Strategy Policy	Equalities Group										Impact
	Race	Disability	Sex	Age	Religion and Belief	Sexual Orientation	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Income and Deprivation	
conservation											to identify a direct impact on any of the equality groups. Further EqlAs maybe necessary for more detailed policies or at the implementation stage.
<b>CS5:</b> Landscape and historic environment	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	At this stage it is not possible to identify a direct impact on any of the equality groups. Further EqlAs maybe necessary for more detailed policies or at the implementation stage.
<b>CS6:</b> North Somerset's green belt	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	No change is planned for North Somerset's Green Belt. Further possible amendments to the Green Belt at Bristol Airport have yet to be determined and an EqlA should be undertaken separately once the details of this amendment are known.
<b>CS7:</b> Planning for waste	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	At this stage it is not possible to identify a direct impact on any of the equality groups. Further EqlAs maybe necessary for more detailed policies or at the implementation stage.
<b>CS8:</b> Minerals and waste planning	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	At this stage it is not possible to identify a direct impact on any of the equality groups. Further EqlAs maybe necessary for more detailed policies or at the

Core Strategy Policy	Equalities Group										Impact
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											implementation stage.
<b>CS9:</b> Green infrastructure	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	At this stage it is not possible to identify a direct impact on any of the equality groups. Further EqlAs maybe necessary for more detailed policies or at the implementation stage.
<b>CS10:</b> Transportation and movement	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	The provision of increased transport options will benefit those with disabilities, people without access to a car, older and younger people and parents, and people on low incomes.
<b>CS11:</b> Parking	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	This policy states that adequate parking must meet the needs of anticipated users. This will include Disabled people and therefore, this policy benefits this group. Details of how this policy will be implemented will be set out in the Development Management DPD which will have a separate EqlA.
<b>CS12:</b> Achieving high quality design and place making	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	This policy requires development to undertake a rigorous design process in consultation with the local community which will ensure the needs of particular communities are considered. For example the needs of those with disabilities and the

Core Strategy Policy	Equalities Group										Impact
	Race	Disability	Sex	Age	Religion and Belief	Sexual Orientation	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Income and Deprivation	
											elderly. The policy also states that developments should demonstrate a commitment to designing our crime. This will benefit those living in deprived neighbourhoods where there maybe higher levels of crime.
<b>CS13:</b> Scale of new housing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This policy identifies the need for 13,400 new dwellings in North Somerset up until 2026. The provision of new housing will benefit all residents of North Somerset and therefore the impact on the identified equality groups is neutral.
<b>CS14:</b> Distribution of new housing	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	Concentrating development in more accessible locations close to facilities and services should reduce the need to travel and will particularly benefit those with disabilities and those without access to a car including older people, young people and people on low incomes.
<b>CS15:</b> Mixed and balanced communities	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	Additional housing which meets the needs of the whole community will have a significant beneficial impact. Provision of smaller properties, social rented housing, those built to Lifetime Homes standards and special needs housing

Core Strategy Policy	Equalities Group										Impact
	Race	Disability	Sex	Age	Religion and Belief	Sexual Orientation	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Income and Deprivation	
											will benefit those on lower incomes, people with disabilities and the elderly and first-time buyers.
<b>CS16:</b> Affordable housing	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	Additional affordable housing provision will benefit those on low incomes including those with disabilities and younger and older people as these groups tend to have a higher need for affordable housing as their needs are not met through the open market.
<b>CS17:</b> Rural exception schemes	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	This policy allows for affordable housing to be built in rural locations to meet an identified local need. This will benefit local residents who wish to remain living in their local area but are currently priced out of the property market. This applies particularly to low income households, the elderly, young people and disabled people.
<b>CS18:</b> Gypsies and travellers and travelling show people	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	+	Gypsies and Travellers are a recognised ethnic minority group and therefore this policy is beneficial in terms of 'race' as it recognises the accommodation needs of this particular group. The policy identifies that proximity of the site to local services and



Core Strategy Policy	Equalities Group										Impact
	Race	Disability	Sex	Age	Religion and Belief	Sexual Orientation	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Income and Deprivation	
											facilities will be a consideration when determining locations for sites. Having a permanent site will benefit younger residents of the travelling community as they will benefit from continued access to educational facilities. Access to health care facilities will also benefit the elderly, young and Disabled members of this group who tend to use these facilities more frequently.
<b>CS19:</b> Strategic gaps	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	At this stage it is not possible to identify a direct impact on any of the equality groups.
<b>CS20:</b> Supporting a successful economy	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	Additional job opportunities will benefit the wider community. The retention of existing employment sites in the most accessible locations may particularly benefit those without access to a car such as young people, the elderly and those on low incomes. Improving the skills base of local residents may also benefit particular ethnic groups who are shown not to perform as well at school, and those from deprived neighbourhoods.
<b>CS21:</b> Retail hierarchy	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	This policy advocates concentrating retail in town,

Core Strategy Policy	Equalities Group										Impact
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provision											district and local centres. This will ensure that a broad range of shops are provided in areas which are easily accessible by a variety of modes of transport which will benefit groups who may not have access to a private car, including young people, the elderly and low income groups.
<b>CS22:</b> Tourism Strategy	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	This policy states that new visitor facilities and accommodation should be accessible by means other than the car which will benefit groups who may not have access to a private car, including young people, the elderly and low income groups.
<b>CS23:</b> Bristol Airport	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	At this stage it is not possible to identify a direct impact on any of the equality groups. Further EqlAs maybe necessary for more detailed policies or at the implementation stage.
<b>CS24:</b> Royal Portbury Dock	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	At this stage it is not possible to identify a direct impact on any of the equality groups. Further EqlAs maybe necessary for more detailed policies or at the implementation stage.

Core Strategy Policy	Equalities Group										Impact
	Race	Disability	Sex	Age	Religion and Belief	Sexual Orientation	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Income and Deprivation	
<b>CS25:</b> Children, young people and higher education	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	This policy will directly benefit young people. It may also benefit particular ethnic groups who are shown not to perform as well at school, and those from deprived neighbourhoods.
<b>CS26:</b> Supporting healthy living and the provision of health care facilities	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	+	This policy aims to improve health services, promote healthier lifestyles and reduce health inequalities throughout the district. This policy will benefit all groups, but in particular the elderly and Disabled people who may require access to health care more frequently. It will also benefit deprived communities who tend to suffer from poor health more than affluent communities.
<b>CS27:</b> Sport, recreation and community facilities	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	+	Community facilities are facilities that provide for the health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community. Improved services and facilities will benefit all, but are likely to have particular beneficial effects on the lives of the equality groups identified.
<b>CS28:</b> Weston-super-Mare	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	Weston-super-Mare will be the primary focus for most

Core Strategy Policy	Equalities Group										Impact
	Race	Disability	Sex	Age	Religion and Belief	Sexual Orientation	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Income and Deprivation	
											new development in North Somerset over the plan period. Provision of enhanced facilities within easy walking distance of homes or public transport is likely to have significant beneficial effects on particular groups. It will help to reduce the need to travel, and assist those who do not have access to a car such as young people, the elderly, people with a disability, mothers or fathers in single car households and those on lower incomes. The policy specifically states that development proposals will be encouraged where they address issues of deprivation and inequality, particularly in South and Central Wards.
<b>CS29:</b> Weston-super-Mare town centre	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	Provision of enhanced facilities within easy walking distance of homes or public transport is likely to have significant beneficial effects on particular groups. It will help to reduce the need to travel, and assist those who do not have access to a car such as young people, the elderly, people with a disability, mothers or fathers in single car households and

Core Strategy Policy	Equalities Group										Impact
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											those on lower incomes.
<b>CS30:</b> Weston Villages	0	+	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	Seeks to provide more housing (market and affordable) to meet the housing need for the district. This is benefit all groups, as will the range of local facilities and services provided to serve these new communities. The policy proposes that community facilities are co-located. This will benefit Disabled people as it will reduce the number of trips needed to access services. Equally, the provision of new educational and health facilities will benefit all groups. This policy also advocates an employment-led approach to development at Weston Villages. This will be beneficial to low income and deprived communities through job generation.
<b>CS31:</b> Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	Provision of enhanced facilities within easy walking distance of homes or public transport is likely to have significant beneficial effects on particular groups. It will help to reduce the need to travel, and assist those who do not have access to a car

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											such as young people, the elderly, people with a disability and those on lower incomes.
<b>CS32:</b> Service Villages	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	Provision of enhanced facilities within easy walking distance of homes or public transport is likely to have significant beneficial effects on particular groups. It will help to reduce the need to travel, and assist those who do not have access to a car such as young people, the elderly, people with a disability, mothers or fathers in single car households and those on lower incomes.
<b>CS33:</b> Smaller settlements and Countryside	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	This policy has a neutral impact on most groups. It does allow small-scale employment development and affordable housing under circumstances which will benefit deprived rural areas.
<b>CS34:</b> Infrastructure delivery and Developer Contributions.	0	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	This policy seeks to ensure the timely delivery of infrastructure that is required from the demand from new developments. Improved services and facilities will benefit all, but are likely to have particular beneficial effects on the lives of various

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											groups. For example the provision of facilities such as doctors surgeries, schools and community centres could be provided if need is demonstrated. This will benefit those groups which use these facilities. Places of worship will also be retained and supported under this policy.

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## **Chapter 4: An Assessment of the Core Strategy Policies**

The screening of the Core Strategy policies in Chapter 3 has identified that the majority of the policies within the DPD are likely to have either a positive or neutral impact on the equality groups identified. The groups that benefit most from the Core Strategy policies are age, disability and low income groups. The policies tend to favour these groups due to the demographic of the district (as set out in table 1) and the evidence which supports the need to address the requirements of these groups. The positive impacts for these groups include:

### **Age:**

- Locating the majority of development towards areas where there are already a range of services and facilities – this will assist those without access to a car.
- Supporting development that can be designed to adapt to the changing needs of its occupants.
- Providing housing suitable for older people.
- Ensuring the effects on health are considered in new developments and that sites are made available for new health care provision.

### **Disability:**

- Locating the majority of development towards areas where there are already a range of services and facilities – this will assist non-car owners.
- Supporting development that can be designed to adapt to the changing needs of its occupants.
- Requiring development to have safe and satisfactory access for those with a disability.
- Ensuring the effects on health are considered in new developments and that sites are made available for new health care provision.

### **Low income and deprivation:**

- Locating the majority of development towards areas where there are already a range of services and facilities – this will assist non-car owners.
- Identifying villages that are capable of accommodating additional development – this will help to counteract rural deprivation.
- Encouraging employers and local training providers to develop the skills of the resident work force.
- Having an employment-led strategy for Weston-super-Mare which will generate more jobs.
- Providing more affordable housing which will benefit those on low incomes.
- Ensuring that affordable and market housing units are fully integrated in order to prevent undue segregation.

### **Race or Ethnicity:**

- Requiring the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople to be met.

All groups will benefit from the Core Strategy policies through the provision of more housing, more jobs and improved access to services and facilities. No adverse impacts have been identified so no further assessment is necessary at this stage. However, it is recognised that forthcoming Development Plan Documents which contain detailed policies will need an EqIA.



## **Chapter 5: Consultation**

### **HAVE THOSE AFFECTED BY THE CORE STRATEGY BEEN CONSULTED?**

The policies in the Core Strategy have been developed in partnership with a number of consultees and key stakeholders through consultation exercises and continued community involvement.

The Consultation Statement that accompanies the Publication Version of the Core Strategy sets out in full the consultation process that has been undertaken. The Statement includes information on those bodies and persons invited to make representations, how those bodies and persons were invited to make representations, a summary of the main issues raised, and how any representations made have been taken into account. This chapter does not therefore repeat this information.

The purpose of this chapter is to focus upon:

- how the Core Strategy has drawn upon other plans and strategies and background documents and how these take into consideration the particular needs of various equality groups within the District.
- how the consultation events undertaken were available / accessible to the various equality groups within the District (and all other consultees and key stakeholders),
- the various organisations which have been consulted that represent the various equality groups within the District.

The Consultation Statement (Feb 2011) can be viewed on the LDF pages of the Council's website ([www.n-somerset.gov.uk/ldf](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/ldf)), in the Council Office or local libraries.

#### **Drawing on Plans, Strategies and Other Background Evidence**

The Core Strategy draws on information contained within policies and strategies across a wide range of services. The policies are grouped together to reflect the themes set out in the North Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 - 2026. Developed by the North Somerset Partnership (NSP), the Community Strategy sets out the priorities for the District which have been developed through ongoing dialogue with the community and reflects their desires and wishes.

Members of the NSP include volunteers from the private, public and community sector with the Sustainable Community Strategy taking into consideration the priorities and strategies of these organisations where appropriate.

The Core Strategy has also been informed by other evidence and key data relating to particular community groups within the District. For example, the West of England Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) sets out statistical information and recommendations relating to the housing needs of various community groups in the West of England. This includes the housing needs of concealed households (which tend to be young adults); households with support needs; older person households; black and minority ethnic households; Gypsy and Traveller households; student households; and low economic households.

Additional information focusing on particular community groups within the District have also been provided via the Housing Strategy (2010-2015) and the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) (2006).

### Consulting on the Core Strategy

The Core Strategy has been available for comment on a number of opportunities as outlined below.

- Pre-production Brief: March 2007
- Issues and Options: October 2007
- Participation Stage: Summer 2009
- Consultation Draft: November 2009
- Key Changes: October 2010
- Publication Version: January 2011

Community engagement has been facilitated by a variety of methods including the distribution of letters, consultations papers, and meetings with key stakeholders and community groups including local residents associations and Parish Council's.

The full extent of the consultation methods used to engage the community is set out in the Consultation Statement. The table below however, provides a short summary of the consultation methods which were either directly targeted at individual groups or where a consultation method used to target the wider community may have indirectly benefited a particular equality group.

**TABLE 3: Consultation Methods used for each equality group.**

<b>Equality Group</b>	<b>Consultation Method</b>
Age	<p>All documents were made available on the website, in the Council offices and at local libraries. Younger and older person's who are less likely to have access to a vehicle were therefore able to obtain information at various sources.</p> <p>The council also made the Publication version of the Core Strategy available on facebook and twitter. It was hoped that this would encourage younger people to become more involved with consultation process.</p> <p>Equally, although promoting the e-consult system as the preferred method of response to the consultation, the Council also enabled people to respond by traditional paper methods. This would ensure that older people who didn't have access to a computer or weren't computer literate were able to respond.</p> <p>Public exhibitions were held around the district. A variety of locations were selected so as to be accessible to residents in both rural and urban parts of the district. Younger and older person's who are less likely to have access to a car were therefore potentially able to attend one of these exhibitions.</p> <p>The exhibitions were held on a variety of days and at different times, including the weekend, to ensure they were as accessible to as wide an audience as possible.</p>
Disability	<p>All documents were made available on the website, council offices and local libraries.</p>

	<p>The council offers for all documents to be made available in large print, Braille or audio formats.</p> <p>Public exhibitions were held around the district at locations selected due to their accessibility to residents in both the urban and rural parts of the district. This should have benefitted those with a disability who may be restricted from travelling. All of the locations were accessible in terms of access to the building.</p> <p>These exhibitions were held on different days and at different times, including the weekend to ensure they were as accessible to as wide an audience as possible.</p>
Gender Reassignment	No specific consultation method was used to consult this equality group.
Sex	No specific consultation method was used to consult this equality group.
Income and Deprivation	<p>All documents were made available on the website, in the Council Offices and local libraries. Those less likely to have access to a vehicle were therefore able to obtain information at various sources. Through these measures the documents were freely available i.e. no charge was applied.</p> <p>Meetings with Housing Associations and the Councils Housing Strategy Team.</p> <p>Close working with the Councils Economic Development Team.</p> <p>Public exhibitions were held around the district. A variety of locations were selected so as to be accessible to residents in both rural and urban parts of the district. Those less likely to have access to a car were therefore potentially able to attend one of these exhibitions.</p> <p>The exhibitions were held on a variety of days and at different times, including the weekend, to ensure they were as accessible to as wide an audience as possible.</p> <p>Free summary leaflets were prepared identifying the main issues</p>
Race	<p>The council offers for all documents to be made available in languages other than English.</p> <p>Meetings were held with the North Somerset Council Corporate Gypsy &amp; Travellers Group.</p>
Religion or Belief	A presentation was given to Weston Churches Together on 18 <sup>th</sup> February 2010 as well as an individual meeting with leaders from Somerset Churches Together.
Sexual Orientation	No specific consultation method was uses to consult this equality group.

Marriage and Civil Partnership	No specific consultation method was uses to consult this equality group.
Pregnancy and Maternity	No specific consultation method was uses to consult this equality group.

As far as possible the Core Strategy document and all evidence base documents have been written in plain English, or where this is not possible, a glossary has been provided to explain the terms it contains.

Targeted consultation with key groups in the community

Various organisations have been consulted throughout the development of the Core Strategy representing a diverse range of groups within the district. Many of these organisations represent 'hard to reach' groups. This is in line with the councils Statement of Community Involvement (February 2007) which specifically identifies that the council will engage with these groups when undertaking any consultation. These organisations have been listed in table 4 below:

**TABLE 4: Organisations specific to the equality groups which have been consulted on the Core Strategy Publication Version.**

Equality Group	Organisation Consulted
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age Concern</li> <li>• Help the Aged</li> <li>• Children and Young Peoples Services</li> <li>• Department for Children, Schools and Families</li> <li>• Save the Children</li> <li>• Winscombe and Sandford Senior Citizens Forum</li> <li>• McCarthy and Stone Retirement Lifestyles Ltd</li> <li>• SWO for the Equality and Human Rights Commission</li> </ul>
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Somerset Disability Action Group</li> <li>• North Somerset Local Access Forum</li> <li>• Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership</li> <li>• Department of Health</li> <li>• North Somerset Primary Care Trust</li> <li>• Vision North Somerset</li> <li>• Crossroads Caring for Carers</li> <li>• SWO for the Equality and Human Rights Commission</li> </ul>
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woman's National Commission</li> <li>• SWO for the Equality and Human Rights Commission</li> </ul>
Income and Deprivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership</li> <li>• Hanover Housing Association</li> <li>• Guinness Trust</li> <li>• Raglan Housing Association</li> <li>• Sarsen Housing Association</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Grooms Housing Trust</li> <li>• SWO for the Equality and Human Rights Commission</li> </ul>
Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends, families and Traveller and Traveller Law Reform Project</li> <li>• National Gypsy Council</li> <li>• Somerset Race Equality Council</li> <li>• SWO for the Equality and Human Rights Commission</li> <li>• Bahai</li> <li>• Muslims (in North Somerset)</li> </ul>
Religion or Belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bath and Wells Diocesan Board of Finance</li> <li>• Weston Churches Together</li> <li>• Church Commissioners for England</li> <li>• National Church Institutions</li> <li>• Rev. Peter Lyncy</li> <li>• Rev. R Channon</li> <li>• Locking Deanery Synod</li> <li>• Bahai</li> <li>• Muslims (in North Somerset)</li> <li>• SWO for the Equality and Human Rights Commission</li> </ul>
Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH):</li> <li>• SWO for the Equality and Human Rights Commission</li> </ul>
Gender Reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWO for the Equality and Human Rights Commission</li> </ul>
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWO for the Equality and Human Rights Commission</li> </ul>
Pregnancy and Maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWO for the Equality and Human Rights Commission</li> </ul>

## **Chapter 6: Summary**

### **WHAT ARE THE KEY MESSAGES THAT YOU NEED TO COMMUNICATE ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE CORE STRATEGY POLICIES?**

This EqIA has examined whether the Core Strategy DPD and the associated consultation arrangements will / have caused adverse impact or discriminated against different groups in the community.

The assessment has revealed that the policies in the Core Strategy are likely to have a neutral or beneficial impact on the equality groups within the District. There are other policies which may appear to favour and target certain groups however, justification for this emanates from the Council's evidence base, the consultation undertaken and the framework provided by Government guidance. As identified as part of this EqIA process, these policies aim to take positive action in targeting and meeting local needs and creating a 'level playing field' in the access to services.

Indeed, the overall Strategy will contribute directly and indirectly to the delivery and accessibility of new homes, schools, employment opportunities and infrastructure facilities.

### **WHAT COURSE OF ACTION COULD WE TAKE TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT IDENTIFIED? IS THE COURSE OF ACTION JUSTIFIABLE?**

Based on the judgements made it is not considered that any measures are required to mitigate against any impact a policy may have. The Core Strategy sets out strategic policies and therefore it is difficult to assess at this level the potential impacts that may emerge as the policies are implemented. However, EqIAs will be carried out on future DPDs which will contain more detailed policies to ensure that impacts are assessed at each stage of the policy making process.

### **ARE THERE PLANS TO MONITOR THE IMPACT OF THE CORE STRATEGY POLICIES?**

As part of the Local Development Framework, the council is required to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) each year and submit it to the Secretary of State on or before 31 December. One of the key functions of the AMR is to monitor policies contained within local development documents and to report on their performance. To assess the performance of the Core Strategy, a monitoring framework has been prepared, which sets out the key indicators. Where policies are not performing as intended, the AMR will suggest the actions that need to be taken to address the issues. These can, if necessary, include a formal review and subsequent amendment to the policy.

### **LESSONS LEARNT**

In preparing future Development Plan Documents (DPDs) the lessons learnt from preparing the Core Strategy and this EqIA should be used taken into consideration. It is therefore advised that:

- The EqIA is started at the beginning of the DPD production process to ensure the impacts on equality groups are considered through-out policy formulation and consultation.
- Consultation is undertaken in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement and Regulations, ensuring that all residents who wish to be involved in the preparation of a DPD can express their views. More imaginative consultation techniques should be used to access and consult with the groups identified in the Equality Act 2010 to ensure a inclusive and robust consultation and assessment of the polices.
- Ensure that alternative formats of the document are readily available and clearly promoted. This could be done by setting out at the start of the document that it is available in large print, Braille, audio formats and languages other than English. This should also be included in all consultation correspondence.
- The EqIA is reviewed by a number of relevant officers within the Council who have specialist knowledge or who can provide an overview of the EqIA procedure.

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## Links to documents which have been referred to in this assessment.

North Somerset Council Core Strategy – Publication Version (Jan 2011):

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/Environment/Planning+policy/Local+Development+Framework/Core+Strategy.htm>

North Somerset Council Equality Scheme:

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/4AE3C821-89C5-45A3-A734-C347237A6FFE/0/SingleEqualitySchemeFinal.pdf>

North Somerset Council Housing Strategies:

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/Housing/strategiesandpolicies/>

North Somerset Core Strategy Consultation Statement (Feb 2011)

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/EB68E0FF-E672-4FC7-9974-5D80B71EAA22/0/CoreStrategyConsultationStatementPublicationVersion2011.pdf>

North Somerset Core Strategy Evidence Base:

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F1B1791E-96D4-4FB2-9D86-DD3FF0031419/0/CoreStrategyPublicationVersionevidencebase.pdf>

Core Strategy Monitoring Framework:

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F5AE09F4-9382-4291-BCCA-D96B8C39BD0F/0/CoreStrategyMonitoringFrameworkFebruary2011.pdf>

West of England Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment:

[http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F0172C9E-4416-4058-A4E3-25F242291FF1/0/Report\\_20071008\\_WestofEnglandGTAA.pdf](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F0172C9E-4416-4058-A4E3-25F242291FF1/0/Report_20071008_WestofEnglandGTAA.pdf)

West of England Housing Market Assessment:

<http://www.westofengland.org/planning--housing/housing-market-partnership/strategic-housing-market-assessment>

Improvement and Development Agency:

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=8017247>

Planning Advisory Service:

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelid=111416>





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