

# Appendix 3

## Initial Equalities Impact Assessment screening form

*Prior to making the decision, the Council's decision makers considered the following: guide to decision making under the Equality Act 2010:*

*The Council is a public authority. All public authorities when exercising public functions are caught by the Equality Act 2010 which became law in December 2011. In making any decisions and proposals, the Council - specifically members and officers - are required to have **due regard** to the **9** protected characteristics defined under the Act. These protected characteristics are: **age, disability, race, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage & civil partnership***

*The decision maker(s) must specifically consider those protected by the above characteristics:*

- (a) To seek to ensure equality of treatment towards service users and employees;*
- (b) To identify the potential impact of the proposal or decision upon them.*

*The Council will also ask that officers specifically consider whether:*

- (A) The policy, strategy or spending decisions could have an impact on safeguarding and / or the welfare of children and vulnerable adults*
- (B) The proposed policy / service is likely to have any significant impact on mental wellbeing / community resilience (staff or residents)*

*If the Council fails to give 'due regard', the Council is likely to face a Court challenge. This will either be through a judicial review of its decision making, the decision may be quashed and/or returned for it to have to be made again, which can be costly and time-consuming diversion for the Council. When considering 'due regard', decision makers must consider the following principles:*

- 1. **The decision maker is responsible for identifying whether there is an issue and discharging it.** The threshold for one of the duties to be triggered is low and will be triggered where there is any issue which needs at least to be addressed.*
- 2. **The duties arise before the decision or proposal is made, and not after and are ongoing.** They require **advance** consideration by the policy decision maker with conscientiousness, rigour and an open mind. The duty is similar to an open consultation process.*
- 3. The decision maker must be **aware of the needs of the duty.***
- 4. The **impact of the proposal or decision must be properly understood first.** The amount of regard due will depend on the individual circumstances of each case. The greater the potential impact, the greater the regard.*
- 5. **Get your facts straight first!** There will be no due regard at all if the decision maker or those advising it make a fundamental error of fact (e.g. because of failing to properly inform yourself about the impact of a particular decision).*
- 6. What does 'due regard' entail?
  - a. **Collection and consideration of data and information;***
  - b. **Ensuring data is sufficient to assess the decision/any potential discrimination/ensure equality of opportunity;***
  - c. **Proper appreciation of the extent, nature and duration of the proposal or decision.****

7. **Responsibility** for discharging can't be delegated or sub-contracted (although an equality impact assessment ("EIA") can be undertaken by officers, decision makers must be sufficiently aware of the outcome).
  8. **Document the process** of having due regard! Keep records and make it transparent! If in any doubt carry out an equality impact assessment ("EIA"), to test whether a policy will impact differentially or not. Evidentially an EIA will be the best way of defending a legal challenge. See hyperlink for the questions you should consider <http://occweb/files/seealsodocs/93561/Equalities%20-%20Initial%20Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20screening%20template.doc>
1. Within the aims and objectives of the policy or strategy which group (s) of people has been identified as being potentially disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

The intention of the Urban Forest strategy is to promote and seek opportunities to plant the right tree in the right place. The preparation of the strategy has highlighted that in areas of deprivation across the city there is less tree cover. This study provides the evidence base and hence the narrative as to why we need to maximise opportunities for tree planting in such areas when it is appropriate to do so. Residents and other landowners will be encouraged to increase tree-planting on their own land. However that option will not be available to some - typically lower income – households who lack a garden. So we will also seek to connect individuals with community-based tree-planting initiatives. Officers can seek external funding opportunities and work with external partners to bid for funding for tree planting when it appropriate to do so. Officers at the City council and ODS are already seeking out opportunities to develop tree planting schemes where appropriate to do so on council-owned land.

2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts?

Please provide further details of the proposed actions, timetable for making the changes and the person(s) responsible for making the changes on the resultant action plan

The strategy contains an action plan and officers will work both internally and externally with relevant partners to bid for appropriate money to implement the strategy.

3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in

decisions that impact on them

The strategy has been out to consultation and a summary of responses is found in Appendix 4. As the implementation of strategy can only be achieved through working with local groups and external stakeholders that very process ensures a high level of consultation and interaction with groups to ensure we achieve the appropriate type and scale of planting across the city. The following lists the organisations we would expect to consult and work with as outlined in the UFS:

- Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project
- Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)
- Wild Oxfordshire
- Oxford Direct Services
- Oxford Green and Blue Spaces Network (GBSN) members
- Oxford Preservation Trust
- Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre
- Community Action Groups (CAG) Network
- Environmental Change Institute
- Oxford Civic Society
- Earthwatch Institute Europe

4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service?

Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments

N/A

5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.

Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place

The UFS outlines the monitoring and review processes.

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA: Amanda Ford

Role: Head of Corporate Strategy

Date: 27 August 2021

Note, please consider & include the following areas:

- Summary of the impacts of any individual policies
- Specific impact tests (e.g. statutory equality duties, social, regeneration and sustainability)
- Consultation
- Post implementation review plan (consider the basis for the review, objectives and how these will be measured, impacts and outcomes including the “unknown”)
- Potential data sources (attach hyperlinks including Government impact assessments or Oxfordshire data observatory information where relevant)