



### Appendix 3 – Sandy Lane Rec Development – Cabinet 18 March 2026 - Equalities Impact Assessment

591

<b>Service Area:</b> Economy, Regen and Sustainability	<b>Section:</b> Affordable Housing Supply	<b>Date of Initial assessment:</b> 12/01/2026	<b>Key Person responsible for assessment:</b> D. Scholes		<b>Date assessment commenced:</b> 12/01/2026
<b>Name of Policy to be assessed:</b>		Sandy Lane Recreation Grounds affordable housing development			
<b>1. In what area are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact</b>		<i>Race</i>		<i>Disability</i>	<i>Age</i>
		<i>Gender reassignment</i>		<i>Religion or Belief</i>	<i>Sexual Orientation</i>
		<i>Sex</i>		<i>Pregnancy and Maternity</i>	<i>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</i>
<b>Other strategic/ equalities considerations</b>		<i>Safeguarding/ Welfare of Children and vulnerable adults</i>		<i>Mental Wellbeing/ Community Resilience</i>	
<b>2. Background:</b>  Give the background information to the policy and the perceived problems with the policy which are the reason for the Impact Assessment.		<p>The Sandy Lane Recreation Ground scheme forms part of Oxford City Council’s Affordable Housing Supply Programme, which aims to deliver over 1,600 new affordable homes between April 2025 and March 2029, with at least 850 at Social Rent levels. This programme supports the Council’s corporate priorities of delivering more affordable housing and supporting thriving communities.</p> <p>The Sandy Lane site is allocated for residential development in the current Local Plan 2036 and the emerging Local Plan 2045, with a minimum of 300 homes proposed. The scheme will deliver 100% affordable housing, comprising 331 homes (79% Social Rent and 21% Shared Ownership), alongside high-quality public open space, biodiversity improvements, and sustainable transport connections. The development responds to the</p>			

	<p>site's strategic location near the future Cowley Branch Line station, creating a gateway role and promoting active travel.</p> <p>The site is currently held within the Council's General Fund for recreation purposes and accommodates three football pitches and a pavilion. To enable housing delivery, these pitches will be relocated to Herschel Crescent Recreation Ground, supported by a new pavilion, ensuring continuity of sports provision and compliance with planning policy and Sport England guidance. This relocation is a key requirement before land appropriation and development can proceed.</p> <p>The need for this Equalities Impact Assessment arises primarily because the scheme involves changing the use of land currently serving as a community recreation facility, which may affect existing users and local residents. The Council is committed to mitigating these impacts through re-provision of sports facilities, community engagement, and design measures that enhance accessibility and inclusivity. The development will also contribute positively by providing high-quality, affordable homes to meet housing need, improving sustainability, and supporting the Council's Climate Emergency objectives.</p>
<p><b>3. Methodology and Sources of Data:</b></p> <p>The methods used to collect data and what sources of data</p>	<p>To inform the Sandy Lane Recreation Ground development and its Equalities Impact Assessment, the Council has adopted a multi-faceted approach to data collection and engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community Engagement:</b> The Council has undertaken extensive consultation with local residents, sports clubs, and stakeholders. This includes discussions with ward members, Sport England, and local football clubs to shape the pitch relocation strategy. Engagement has focused on ensuring continuity of sports provision and addressing community concerns about the loss of recreation space.</li> <li>• <b>Reference Groups and Stakeholder Meetings:</b> Regular meetings have been held with key stakeholders, including community representatives and relevant Council teams. These meetings have provided a forum for feedback on design proposals, site strategy, and mitigation measures. Minutes of these meetings have been recorded and shared.</li> <li>• <b>Needs Analysis and Policy Review:</b> A thorough needs analysis has been conducted to assess housing demand and community facility requirements. This analysis draws on the Council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2023–2028), Local Plan allocations, and Sport England guidance.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Site Visits and Best Practice Research:</b> Officers have undertaken site visits to Sandy Lane and Herschel Crescent to assess existing conditions and inform design decisions. Comparative research on similar schemes has been used to identify best practice in delivering housing alongside community and sports facilities.</li> <li>• <b>Consultation History:</b> The Sandy Lane site has been subject to significant consultation during the Local Plan process and through pre-application engagement, including two pre-application submissions and three Oxford Design Review Panel sessions. Public consultation has informed the conceptual scheme and design principles.</li> <li>• <b>Technical Data Sources:</b> Data has been gathered from feasibility studies, QS cost advice, valuation reports, and environmental assessments. These sources underpin decisions on land appropriation, financial viability, and sustainability measures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Consultation</b></p> <p>This section should outline all the consultation that has taken place on the EIA. It should include the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why you carried out the consultation.</li> <li>• Details about how you went about it.</li> <li>• A summary of the replies you received from people you consulted.</li> <li>• An assessment of your proposed policy (or policy options) in the light of the responses you received.</li> </ul>	<p>Consultation was undertaken to ensure that the proposed development at Sandy Lane Recreation Ground reflects community needs, mitigates potential adverse impacts, and complies with planning and equality requirements. The relocation of football pitches and the change of land use from recreation to housing necessitated engagement with affected stakeholders to maintain inclusivity and fairness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Local Plan Process:</b> The Sandy Lane site has been subject to statutory consultation during the development of the Local Plan 2036 and the emerging Local Plan 2045, which allocates the site for residential development.</li> <li>• <b>Community and Stakeholder Engagement:</b> The Council has consulted with local residents, sports clubs, ward members, and Sport England. Engagement has included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Meetings with football clubs and community representatives to agree on pitch relocation strategy.</li> <li>○ Discussions with Littlemore Parish Council regarding surrender of the Herschel Crescent lease for re-provision.</li> <li>○ Pre-application engagement, including two pre-application submissions and three Oxford Design Review Panel (DRP) reviews.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A statement of what you plan to do next</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Consultation: Public consultation has informed the conceptual scheme, design principles, and sustainability measures. Feedback was sought on priorities such as housing mix, green space, and active travel infrastructure.</li> </ul> <p>Summary of responses received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong support for affordable housing delivery, particularly social rent homes.</li> <li>Concerns about loss of recreation space mitigated by commitment to re-provision pitches and changing facilities at Herschel Crescent.</li> <li>Positive feedback on sustainability measures, biodiversity enhancements, and active travel routes.</li> <li>Requests for clear communication on timescales and continuity of sports provision.</li> </ul> <p>Assessment of proposed policy in light of responses: The scheme has been refined to address concerns by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring full re-provision of football pitches before development begins.</li> <li>Incorporating high-quality public open space and biodiversity net gain.</li> <li>Designing a low-car development with strong connectivity to the future Cowley Branch Line station.</li> </ul> <p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue engagement with local clubs and Sport England during detailed design of re-provision facilities.</li> <li>Maintain dialogue with residents and stakeholders through planning and delivery stages.</li> <li>Update the Equalities Impact Assessment as the scheme progresses to ensure compliance and inclusivity.</li> </ul> <p>The consultation process actively promotes the three aims of the Equality Act 2010:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminating discrimination: By engaging with diverse stakeholders, including sports clubs and community groups, the Council ensures that no group is disproportionately disadvantaged by the change of land use.</li> <li>Advancing equality of opportunity: The scheme prioritises affordable housing and accessible design, creating opportunities for those in housing need and ensuring inclusive sports provision.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fostering good relations: Ongoing dialogue with the community helps build trust, address concerns collaboratively, and maintain positive relationships between the Council and residents.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>5. Assessment of Impact:</b> Provide details of the assessment of the policy on the six primary equality strands. There may have been other groups or individuals that you considered. Please also consider whether the policy, strategy or spending decisions could have an impact on safeguarding and / or the welfare of children and vulnerable adults</p>	<p>Race Neutral</p>	<p>Disability Positive Impact</p>	<p>Age Positive Impact</p>
	<p>Gender reassignment Neutral</p>	<p>Religion or Belief Neutral</p>	<p>Sexual Orientation Neutral</p>
	<p>Sex Neutral</p>	<p>Pregnancy and Maternity Neutral</p>	<p>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership Neutral</p>
	<p>This is an initial assessment and will evolve as the project progresses. The current view is that the Sandy Lane development will have an overall positive impact, primarily by delivering high-quality, affordable housing and improving access to recreation facilities through the re-provision of football pitches and a new pavilion. Doing nothing would risk deterioration of the existing recreation ground and facilities, which could lead to eventual closure and loss of community benefit.</p> <p>Rationale for Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disability: The new housing and re-provisioned sports facilities will meet modern building standards, improving accessibility for people with physical impairments. Design will incorporate inclusive features such as step-free access and accessible toilets. Delivering 5% M4(3) units.</li> <li>Age: Positive impact through provision of family housing and improved recreational facilities for all age groups, supporting active lifestyles and community cohesion.</li> <li>Other Strands: No adverse impacts identified; the scheme is designed to be inclusive and accessible to all.</li> </ul>		

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Safeguarding and Welfare Considerations:</b></p> <p>The project will consider safeguarding throughout delivery, particularly during the relocation of pitches and construction phases. Measures will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe access routes for children and vulnerable adults.</li> <li>• Secure design principles for public spaces.</li> <li>• Engagement with local schools and community groups to ensure continuity of sports provision.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Community Involvement:</b></p> <p>The user brief incorporates feedback from consultation and will continue to involve the community and reference groups during design development.</p> <p>This policy supports the aims of the Equality Act 2010 by eliminating discrimination through inclusive design and ensuring equal access to housing and recreation. It advances equality of opportunity by providing affordable homes and accessible sports facilities for diverse groups and fosters good relations by maintaining ongoing dialogue with stakeholders and mitigating the impacts of land-use change through the reprovision of community and recreational facilities</p>
<p><b>6. Consideration of Measures:</b></p> <p>This section should explain in detail all the consideration of alternative approaches/mitigation of adverse impact of the policy</p>	<p>The Council has carefully considered alternative approaches and mitigation measures to address potential adverse impacts of the scheme. A range of development options for the Sandy Lane site were explored during feasibility and design stages, including variations in housing numbers, tenure mix, and retention of some recreation space.</p> <p>However, retaining pitches on-site would not meet Sport England requirements and would significantly reduce the affordable housing delivery needed to meet local demand and to meet the emerging Local Plan allocation.</p> <p>To mitigate impacts, the Council has committed to full reprovision of football pitches and associated facilities at Herschel Crescent before development begins. This approach ensures continuity of sports provision and aligns with community feedback. Additional measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early and ongoing engagement with local clubs, Sport England and residents to shape the reprovision strategy.</li> <li>• Incorporation of high-quality public open space and biodiversity enhancements within the housing scheme to maintain community amenity.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design principles that prioritise accessibility, safety, and inclusivity, ensuring compliance with modern standards.</li> <li>• Relocation of the pitches prior to construction to minimise disruption.</li> <li>• Consideration of an optional fourth pitch to enhance provision and support more intensive use.</li> </ul> <p>These measures aim to balance the delivery of much-needed affordable housing with the protection and enhancement of community and recreational facilities, ensuring that equality and safeguarding considerations are fully addressed.</p>
<p><b>6a. Monitoring Arrangements:</b></p> <p>Outline systems which will be put in place to monitor for adverse impact in the future and this should include all relevant timetables. In addition it could include a summary and assessment of your monitoring, making clear whether you found any evidence of discrimination.</p>	<p>To ensure that the Sandy Lane development does not result in adverse equality impacts, robust monitoring systems will be implemented throughout the project lifecycle. These include:</p> <p><b>Project Governance:</b> An internal officer project group will oversee delivery and monitor equality considerations at each stage. This group will review progress against the Equalities Impact Assessment and ensure compliance with statutory obligations.</p> <p><b>Community Reference Group:</b> The established reference group, comprising local stakeholders and community representatives, will continue to meet regularly to provide feedback and raise concerns. Minutes will be recorded and shared to maintain transparency.</p> <p><b>Formal Reporting:</b> Equality impacts will be reviewed at key milestones, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-application stage (design finalisation and pitch relocation strategy)</li> <li>• Planning submission and determination</li> <li>• Post-completion evaluation</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment and Evidence:</b> Monitoring will include tracking complaints, feedback, and engagement outcomes to identify any</p>

	<p>evidence of discrimination or disproportionate impact. If issues arise, mitigation measures will be implemented promptly.</p> <p>Continuous <span style="float: right;">Review:</span>  The Equalities Impact Assessment will be updated as the project evolves, ensuring that new risks or opportunities are addressed. Findings will be reported through governance channels and shared with stakeholders.  These arrangements aim to safeguard equality, maintain accountability, and ensure that the project delivers positive outcomes for all groups.</p>				
<b>7. Date reported and signed off by Cabinet:</b>	18 March 2026 (pending)				
<b>8. Conclusions:</b>  What are your conclusions drawn from the results in terms of the policy impact	<p>The assessment concludes that the proposed Sandy Lane development represents a positive and inclusive policy intervention. By delivering 100% affordable housing alongside the re-provision of high-quality sports facilities, the scheme will address housing need while safeguarding community recreation. The project will improve accessibility through compliance with modern building standards, create flexible and sustainable spaces, and enhance the overall quality of the environment for current and future generations.</p> <p>The proposed development supports the Council's corporate priorities of delivering more affordable housing and supporting thriving communities, while embedding sustainability and equality considerations throughout.</p> <p>This Equalities Impact Assessment will continue to evolve as the project progresses, with ongoing input from the community and stakeholders to ensure that the scheme remains inclusive, responsive, and aligned with the Equality Act 2010 objectives.</p>				
<b>9. Are there implications for the Service Plans?</b>	No	<b>10. Date the Service Plans will be updated</b>	N/A	<b>11. Date copy sent to Equalities</b>	26/01/26

				<b>s Lead Officer</b>	
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Signed (completing officer)

Signed (Lead Officer)

**Dave Scholes (initial assessment)**

599

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