

EQUALITY SCREENING

Equality Impact Assessment guidance should be considered when completing this form.

POLICY/FUNCTION/ACTIVITY	LEAD OFFICER
Green and Blue Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	John Devonshire

A. What is the aim of this policy, function or activity? Why is it needed? What is it hoped to achieve and how will it be ensured it works as intended? Does it affect service users, employees or the wider community?

The aim of the Green and Blue Infrastructure SPD ("SPD") is to set out the Council's expectations in respect of the provision of green & blue infrastructure within development including guidance on the typology, and design of green & blue infrastructure as well as how developers can incorporate biodiversity net gain, climate change mitigation/adaptation, local landscape and network connectivity and accessibility within green & blue infrastructure assets. This is intended to bring a range of social well-being and long-term economic benefits to the borough.

The SPD builds upon the principles set out in the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan (notably, Policies SD7: Sustainable Design, EE1: Townscape and Landscape Quality; EE9: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature; EE11: Green Infrastructure; and EE12: Blue Infrastructure as well as the site allocation policies and as such, it is a fundamental part of the planning policy 'toolkit'.

The SPD has been subject to public consultation and sets out in detail, considerations associated with new development, including residential and commercial development. The SPD offers best practice examples and guidance for a range of applicants from householders aiming to alter their properties to large-scale developers.

When finalised with the modifications proposed following public consultation, the document will be adopted as a supplementary planning document and will be an important material consideration during the determination of planning applications.

The SPD with the proposed modifications, will not affect any employees or service users on the basis of protected characteristic(s) they have. Any effects it has on the wider Borough community, including those groups with protected characteristics is likely to be beneficial through the more careful and detailed consideration applicants will give towards ensuring higher quality development in the future.

B. Is this policy, function or activity relevant to equality? Does the policy, function or activity relate to an area in which there are known inequalities, or where different groups have different needs or experience? Remember, it may be relevant because there are opportunities to promote equality and greater access, not just potential on the basis of adverse impacts or unlawful discrimination. The Protected Characteristics are: Sex, Age, Disability, Race, Religion and Beliefs, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity.

It is not considered that there will be any potential negative impacts on any protected characteristics if the Green and Blue Infrastructure SPD as modified were to be adopted. The SPD makes reference to best practice guidance on delivering accessible greenspaces as well as creating spaces for those with mobility, sensory and intellectual impairments. As such, this is likely to bring positive impacts to those with the protected characteristics of disability and age. None of the modifications to the SPD change this emphasis. Consultation on the draft SPD did not reveal any unforeseen negative impacts on protected characteristics.

It is however, anticipated that there will be positive impacts for all parts of the community as a result of securing high quality green & blue infrastructure within new development. The Green and Blue Infrastructure SPD as modified, continues to incorporate 5 overarching principles to secure green & blue infrastructure assets within development which will help to create better connected accessible green & blue spaces likely to have a positive impact on health and well-being, including mental health and well-being of all Runnymede residents and those who work in the Borough.

Continued monitoring of the Green and Blue Infrastructure SPD will take place after it is adopted which may reveal any positive or negative impacts that exist and will assist officers in providing measures that seek to mitigate any negative impacts on any of the protected characteristics. In this respect the SPD would be reviewed within 5 years of adoption if monitoring reveals any negative impacts on protected characteristics.

If the policy, function or activity is considered to be relevant to equality then a full Equality Impact Assessment may need to be carried out. If the policy function or activity does not engage any protected characteristics then you should complete Part C below. Where Protected Characteristics are engaged, but Full Impact Assessment is not required because measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented that would mitigate the impact on those affected or would provide an opportunity to promote equalities please complete Part C.

C. If the policy, function or activity is not considered to be relevant to equality, what are the reasons for this conclusion? Alternatively, if there it is considered that there is an impact on any Protected Characteristics but that measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented please state those measures and how it/they are expected to have the desired result. What evidence has been used to make this decision? A simple statement of 'no relevance' or 'no data' is not sufficient.

It is not considered that a full EqIA is required for the following reasons:

- **It is not anticipated that the implementation of the SPD with the modifications proposed following public consultation will have a negative impact on any of the nine protected characteristics. No unforeseen negative impacts were revealed through the 7-week public consultation.**
- **The SPD as modified, is likely to have positive impacts on the protected characteristics of disability and age, by ensuring future developments will make provision for accessible green and blue spaces within the locality of the development, referring to best practice guidance and those with mobility, sensory or intellectual impairment as well as benefiting the wider community by encouraging community cohesion and interaction. The provision of green/blue infrastructure is also likely to facilitate opportunities for learning through biodiversity net gain, opportunities for increased participation in sport and positive benefits for health and well-being including mental health and well-being through opportunities for greening the local environment and recreation in general.**
- **The SPD as modified, will provide detailed guidance and advice associated with the design of new green & blue infrastructure within development. It is fully consistent and complementary to the emerging Runnymede 2030 Local Plan, which has had a detailed EqIA undertaken at each stage of Plan preparation. The Green and Blue Infrastructure SPD provides detailed guidance to help implement the requirements of Policies SD7, EE1, EE11, EE12 and the site allocation policies of the Runnymede Local Plan which has already been assessed under EqIA to have either positive or neutral impacts on protected characteristics of the population.**

Date completed: 06/11/2021

Sign-off by senior manager: Rachel Raynaud