

# **Equality Impact Assessment**

## **Draft Sandwell Local Plan (Regulation 18)**

**November 2023**

Title of proposal	Sandwell Development Plan – Regulation 18 draft for public consultation
Directorate and Service Area	Regeneration and Growth Planning and Development
Name and title of Lead Officer completing this EIA	██████████ – Senior Planning Policy Officer
Contact Details	██
Names and titles of other officers involved in completing this EIA	-
Partners involved with the EIA where jointly completed	N/A
Date EIA completed	27.09.2023
Date EIA signed off or agreed by Director or Executive Director	██ 02/10/2023
Name of Director or Executive Director signing off EIA	Tony McGovern -Director of Regeneration & Growth
Date EIA considered by Cabinet Member	

**1. The purpose of the proposal or decision required (Please provide as much information as possible)**

The planning system has the potential to affect everyone living and working in Sandwell. Communities, employers and interested bodies within and beyond Sandwell are being asked to contribute to the preparation of plans and policies in the new Sandwell Local Plan (SLP).

The first steps towards the preparation of a new local plan is to identify draft planning policies and proposals and to subsequently undertake further public consultation with both local people and the wider community, stakeholders and developers. This will enable their views to be included as necessary in the emerging document.

The decision required is that the draft SLP document be approved for consultation.

## **2. Evidence used / considered**

A significant part of the evidence used to inform this document has been taken from existing sources, such as the Council's Corporate Plan, the previous draft Black Country Plan (BCP), the Sandwell Site Allocations and Delivery Document (SADD) and from other strategies, documents and research undertaken across the Council. Where necessary, further research and evidence gathering will be undertaken to inform the development of policies.

Additional evidence has also been generated from previous relevant consultation processes, including those undertaken for the draft BCP, and from the BCP's evidence base.

National planning policy guidance has been revised (2023) and has been used to shape the SLP; it is a benchmark against which the contents of policies and proposals can be measured. In addition, since the last local plan for Sandwell was adopted, there has been additional information and requirements identified at a national level, such as for design, the environment and climate change, which have informed the emerging plan.

Additional work has also been commissioned specifically to inform the draft Local Plan – this includes reports on biodiversity, viability, infrastructure requirements and the Rowley Hills. Future work will include studies relating to flooding, transportation modelling, design codes and green infrastructure.

## **3. Consultation**

A public consultation process for the SDP issues and options work was undertaken in February - March 2023. The responses to that have been used in producing the subsequent draft policies.

A further public consultation is scheduled to begin in November 2023, the outcome of which will be used to finalise the draft plan for submission to the Planning Inspectorate in 2024.

#### **4. Assess likely impact**

The impact or likely impact of the emerging SLP and its issues and options work on specific groups (race, gender, disability, age, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy / maternity) has been considered. It is anticipated that all groups will experience positive benefits through the production of updated and locally focussed policies and proposals.

No significant negative impacts are anticipated, although where the SLP identifies sites for development, this will have some locally significant impacts on communities and individuals.

The Council's Statement of Community Involvement will help inform relevant stakeholders, how they can become involved in the plan making process, and the planning application process

**4a. Use the table to show:**

- Where you think that the strategy, project or policy could have a negative impact on any of the equality strands (protected characteristics), that is it could disadvantage them or if there is no impact, please note the evidence and/or reasons for this.
- Where you think that the strategy, project or policy could have a positive impact on any of the groups or contribute to promoting equality, equal opportunities or improving relationships within equality characteristics.

Protected Characteristic	Positive Impact ✓	Negative Impact ✓	No Impact ✓	Reason and evidence (Provide details of specific groups affected even for no impact and where negative impact has been identified what mitigating actions can we take?)
<b>Age</b>	✓			<p>The document aims to cater for the needs of all age groups by starting the process of identifying the amount and location of sites suitable for housing, community facilities and services (including medical), transportation links and open space, all of which contribute towards the creation of an environment suitable for the elderly and other vulnerable sections of the community.</p> <p>The draft plan policies will also address the need for adaptable housing and the provision of specialist accommodation for the elderly in Sandwell.</p>

Protected Characteristic	Positive Impact ✓	Negative Impact ✓	No Impact ✓	Reason and evidence (Provide details of specific groups affected even for no impact and where negative impact has been identified what mitigating actions can we take?)
<b>Disability</b>	✓			<p>The draft plan policies seek to identify opportunities for improving design in the built environment and the protection of the natural environment through developing policies that are supportive of the needs of all sections of the community. This will include through promoting clean air, accessibility and the provision of user-friendly spaces and designs.</p> <p>The draft plan incorporates policies on making sure new houses are accessible for people with disabilities and wheelchair users, on a mix of housing types suitable for all members of the community and on the provision of housing suitable for subsequent adaptation as necessary.</p>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	✓			<p>The draft plan policies seek to identify opportunities for improving design in the built environment. This will include supporting the creation of public places and infrastructure with layouts that are safe and welcoming for all members of the community, and which reduce the potential for abusive or threatening behaviour.</p>
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>			✓	



Protected Characteristic	Positive Impact ✓	Negative Impact ✓	No Impact ✓	Reason and evidence (Provide details of specific groups affected even for no impact and where negative impact has been identified what mitigating actions can we take?)
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	✓			<p>The draft plan identifies the need for suitable sites for general healthcare provision, as part of creating sustainable communities. This will benefit people with various health-related issues, including pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>It also contains draft policies on health and wellbeing, including healthcare infrastructure, and on the educational requirements generated by additional housing provision.</p>
<b>Race</b>	✓			<p>The draft plan contains several policies relating to the need for good design, including around the design and creation of safe and welcoming spaces, communities and recreation, where all sections of the community can feel comfortable. It considers the need to design out opportunities for anti-social behaviours and instead seek to create spaces where people can interact positively.</p>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	✓			<p>The draft plan includes policies about the need to support new and existing community spaces, such as churches, mosques and other places of worship. The draft policies look at where such uses should best be located.</p>

Protected Characteristic	Positive Impact ✓	Negative Impact ✓	No Impact ✓	Reason and evidence (Provide details of specific groups affected even for no impact and where negative impact has been identified what mitigating actions can we take?)
<b>Sex</b>			✓	
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	✓			The draft plan contains several policies relating to the need for good design, including around the design and creation of safe and welcoming spaces, communities and recreation, where all sections of the community can feel comfortable. It considers the need to design out opportunities for anti-social behaviours and instead seek to create spaces where people can interact positively.
<b>Other</b>	✓			The aim of the SDP is to support and deliver a safe, supportive and attractive living and working environment for all sections of the community. The draft plan will help to identify what matters to those local communities and should enable the Council to address some of the systemic problems around inequality in the built and natural environment.

Does this EIA require a full impact assessment? Yes  No



If there are no adverse impacts or any issues of concern or you can adequately explain or justify them, then you do not need to go any further. You have completed the screening stage. You must, however, complete sections 7 and 9 and publish the EIA as it stands.

If you have answered yes to the above, please complete the questions below referring to the guidance document.

**5. What actions can be taken to mitigate any adverse impacts?**

No adverse impacts have been identified. On this basis, it is considered that mitigation measures are not required. We will continue to mainstream the need for good design, the creation of accessible and safe environments and opportunities for all sections of the community to benefit from their environments through ongoing public consultation and an iterative approach to the policies we include in the draft plan.

**6. As a result of the EIA what decision or actions are being proposed in relation to the original proposals?****7. Monitoring arrangements**

The emerging Sandwell Local Plan will have a full set of monitoring targets once it has been adopted, which will be used to measure the success of policies based on the outcome of the issues and options work.

**8. Action planning****9. Publish the EIA**

EIA report to be published on SLP web page