

Equality Impact Assessments Toolkit EqIA Template

Sandwell Local Plan – Regulation 19 version for public
consultation / submission



Section 1.

The purpose of the project, proposal or decision required

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 next steps towards the adoption of a new local plan following the identification of draft planning policies and proposals (at the previous stage, known as Regulation 18) was to undertake further public consultation on what was referred to as the Regulation 19 version of the SLP. This was undertaken with local people and the wider community, stakeholders and developers. It focussed on the version of the plan proposed for submission to the Secretary of State for DLUHC. This allowed interested parties an opportunity to consider the final draft of the plan and to comment on its soundness prior to it being formally submitted to the independent planning inspector appointed to consider it.

The consultation ran from the 23rd September to the 11th November 2024.

Section 2.

Evidence used and considered. Include analysis of any missing data

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 has been undertaken to inform the development of policies (e.g., monitoring visits to establish how many new houses have been built over the last year, how many vacant shop units stand within Sandwell's centres).

Additional evidence has also been obtained 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 (December 2023) and has been used to shape the SLP; it is a benchmark against which the contents of policies and proposals must be measured. In addition, since the last local plan for Sandwell was adopted (in 2011), there have been additional information and requirements identified at a national level, such as for design, the natural environment and climate change, which have also been addressed in the emerging plan.

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

Section 3.

Consultation

The public consultation process for the SLP started with the preparation of an issues and options report, which was consulted on in February - March 2023. The responses to that were used in producing the subsequent draft policies.

A further public consultation on the draft SLP (the Regulation 18 version) ran between November and December 2023. Comments received from members of the public, stakeholders and landowners / developers were used to finalise the draft plan for submission to the Planning Inspectorate (the Regulation 19 version). Submission of the SLP to the Secretary of State is planned for December 2024.

Section 4.

Summary assessment of the analysis at section 4a and the likely impact on each of the protected characteristics (if any)

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, individuals and the local environment.

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.

Section 4a - What are the potential / actual impacts of the proposal on the protected characteristics?

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
Age	P	<p>The document aims to cater for the needs of all age groups by 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. The plan policies will also address the need for adaptable housing and the provision of specialist accommodation for the elderly in Sandwell.</p> <p>It also contains a suite of policies designed to reflect the need to incorporate health considerations into planning decisions, including the provision of additional health infrastructure and the promotion of climate change adaptation and mitigation.</p>		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
Disability	P	<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. The draft plan incorporates policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on making sure new houses are accessible for people with disabilities, • on providing 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>It also contains a suite of policies designed to reflect the need to incorporate health considerations into planning decisions, including the provision of additional health infrastructure and the promotion of climate change adaptation and mitigation.</p>		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
Gender Reassignment	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.		
Marriage and civil partnership	Ne	-		
Pregnancy and maternity	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 conditions, including pregnancy and maternity. It also contains draft policies on health and wellbeing, including healthcare infrastructure, and on the educational requirements generated by additional housing provision.		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
Race	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, and which reduce the potential for abusive or threatening behaviour. It considers the need to design out opportunities for anti-social behaviours and instead seek to create spaces where people can interact positively.		
Religion or belief	P	The draft plan includes policies addressing 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 and also seek to protect and enhance historic and other environments where such buildings often form a focal point.		
Sex	Ne	-		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
Sexual Orientation	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 and which reduce the potential for abusive or threatening behaviour. It considers the need to design out opportunities for anti-social behaviours and instead seek to create spaces where people can interact positively.		
Could other socio-economic groups be affected?				
Carer Low income groups Veterans / Armed Forces Community Other	P	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 will enable the Council to address some of the systemic problems around inequality in the built and natural environment. It will also specifically promote and support the delivery of jobs and affordable housing opportunities that will in turn benefit returning military personnel seeking new employment.		

If there are no adverse impacts or any issues of concern or you can adequately explain or justify them, then please move to Sections 6.

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

No adverse impacts have been identified. On this basis, it is considered that specific 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 by analysing and using the responses to public consultation as part of an iterative approach to delivering the draft SLP.

6. Section 6: Decision or actions proposed

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7. Monitoring arrangements

The emerging Sandwell Local Plan contains a full set of monitoring targets for use once it has been adopted, which will measure the success of policies and proposals over the 15-year lifespan of the plan (to 2041).

Section 8 Action planning (if required)

Question no. (ref)	Action required	Lead officer/ person responsible	Target date	Progress