

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

Organisation prepared for	Somerset West and Taunton Council		
Version	0.1	Date Completed	10/05/2020

Description of what is being impact assessed

SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Draft Action Plan

The Action Plan describes, in high level terms, the activity that will take place, and the changes that will be delivered, as part of the Council’s response to addressing the Climate Emergency. Further detail regarding a number of these activities will be necessary in due course, and will be contained within various project plans that will flow from this Action Plan, but which do not exist at this point in time.

This EIA therefore identifies in general terms the likely impact of this work on different groups of people taken in the round, rather than on an action-by-action basis (although some of the actions will be referenced where appropriate). If necessary, depending upon the type of action proposed (specifically where an individual or group would see or experience a direct physical change as a result of an action with the Action Plan), specific EIAs will be necessary in order to help shape the relevant delivery plan for that action.

It also needs to be recognised that not all people sharing a protected characteristic within SWT will necessarily experience the same impact (be it positive or negative) from a particular action. For example, impacts from pedestrianisation initiatives in Taunton town centre will be directly felt by those living, working or visiting Taunton but not by those who do not.

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset’s Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

The Council’s draft Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Draft Action Plan has been reviewed.

As explained below, a review of data as well of wider consultation will be necessary at a later point when it comes to detailed design of actions that will have a direct physical impact on individuals and groups with protected characteristics.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

Officers within the Council with an overview of the Equalities function, who have experience of identifying impacts on those with protected characteristics have been consulted for this initial identification of potential impacts.

Wider external consultation will be necessary in relation to delivery plans of some of the actions within the Action Plan where an individual or group would see or experience a direct physical change as a result of an action

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	The factors that make people vulnerable to the impacts of climate change are most acute amongst particular groups; older people are one of these categories. Older people are physiologically at most risk of health impacts from extreme heat and	X		X

	<p>cold. This Action Plan aims to help mitigate the effect and risk of climate change on older people with this protected group and should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact.</p> <p>Additionally, those potentially most likely to gain from actions around improving energy efficiency within the home are people who traditionally suffer from fuel poverty, which includes a significant proportion of older people. However recouping any personal investment required in the form of energy bill savings is likely to be over the medium/long-term and, therefore, may be of disproportionately less benefit to older people.</p> <p>Particular care and attention should however be given to mitigate or eliminate any potential negative impacts for the group relating to the focus on active travel within the plan (e.g walking and cycling). Important to encouraging walking amongst older people in particular, is the provision of facilities such as toilets and benches. Installation of such amenities within the pedestrian environment should be a consideration if walking is to be maximised amongst all equality groups.</p>			
<p>Disability</p>	<p>The factors that make people vulnerable to the impacts of climate change are most acute amongst particular groups; people with disabilities are one of these categories. People with certain disabilities (particularly circulatory and respiratory conditions) are physiologically at most risk of health impacts from extreme heat and cold. This Action Plan aims to help mitigate the effect and risk of climate change so should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact.</p> <p>Air pollutants can worsen respiratory conditions such as asthma. This proposal will, over time, help improve air quality within the Taunton Town Centre and should therefore, have a particularly positive impact for those with such conditions.</p> <p>Additionally, those potentially most likely to gain from actions around improving energy efficiency within the home are people who traditionally suffer from fuel poverty, notably older and disabled groups.</p> <p>However, particular care and attention should be given to mitigate or eliminate any potential negative impacts for the group relating to the focus on active travel. As</p>	<p>X</p>		<p>X</p>

	<p>with older people, important to encouraging walking amongst people with disabilities, is the provision of facilities such as toilets and benches. Installation of such amenities within the pedestrian environment should be a consideration if walking is to be maximised amongst all equality groups.</p> <p>Closure of East Street and Hammet Street to private vehicles would almost certainly lead to the loss of dedicated parking bays for use of people with disabilities and would also prevent convenient on street parking adjacent to shops using the blue badge scheme. The ability for people with mobility disabilities to park near to key local amenities will be essential to ensure this group are not disproportionately impact by this proposed change and will need to be considered as part of the delivery plan for this action.</p> <p>Encouragement of electric modes of transport such as e-bikes and e-scooters have posed particular risks to people with visual impairment in other areas. Particularly short-term rentals of e-scooters. Their speed and almost silent operation are an issue as is inconsiderate parking , where there have been numerous examples of them being left dumped on pavements, creating a significant trip hazard for the visually impaired. Separation of pedestrians and e-scooter and bike riders within any pedestrianised space will help mitigate this risk together with dedicated parking bays / racks for these modes of transport.</p> <p>Action around producing visual aids to communicate what key and familiar locations throughout the district might look like in the future, with and without action, to help people visualise the risks and the solutions required as part of a carbon neutral future will not be accessible to people with visual impairments and could lead to that group being disproportionately negatively impacted. A way of ensuring this group have access to this information should be considered.</p>			
Gender reassignment	<p>Mitigating the impacts of climate change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No additional impacts, from the proposed Action Plan, have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.</p>			X

Marriage and civil partnership	Mitigating the impacts of climate change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No additional impacts, from the proposed Action Plan, have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Pregnancy and maternity	Air pollutants can cause respiratory illness in pregnant women and also lead to low birth weight or pre-term birth. This proposal will, over time, help improve local air quality and should have a positive impact on some pregnant women. No additional impacts, from the proposed Action Plan, have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Race and ethnicity	Mitigating the impacts of climate change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No additional impacts, from the proposed Action Plan, have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Religion or belief	Mitigating the impacts of climate change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No additional impacts, from the proposed Action Plan, have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Sex	Mitigating the impacts of climate change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for both men and women. No negative impacts, from the proposed Action Plan, have been identified that would disproportionately affect men or disproportionately affect women.			X
Sexual orientation	Mitigating the impacts of climate change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No negative impacts, from the proposed Action Plan, have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X

<p>Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</p>	<p><u>Low Income</u> - Mitigating the impacts of climate change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group</p> <p>Individuals and households on low incomes may be particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change during prolonged periods of hot or cold weather in particular; due to their inability to afford fuel for adequately heating or cooling their homes. This Action Plan aims to help mitigate the effect and risk of climate change so should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact. In particular the action around improving energy efficiency within the home will be particularly positive to low income households that experience fuel poverty. However this group may, by definition, be least likely to be able to find the resources to make the transition and may miss out on the opportunity, thereby being disadvantaged.</p> <p>However, it should be recognised that increasing car parking charges across the District, in order to discourage the use of the private car, are likely to disproportionately impact people on low incomes. Suitable affordable and realistic alternatives should be made available in order to mitigate this possible impact.</p> <p><u>Carers</u> - Mitigating the impacts of climate change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group.</p> <p>However, the possible negative impacts identified within the Disability group are also likely to apply to this group.</p> <p><u>Rural Isolation</u> - Mitigating the impacts of climate change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No negative impacts, from the proposed Action Plan, have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p>		<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>
--	--	-------------------	--	----------------------------