

# **Equalities Impact Assessment**

## **Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan**

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**November 2018**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Equality Act (2010) places a duty on all public authorities in the exercise of their functions to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between persons who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not.
- 1.2. ‘Protected characteristics’ are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 1.3. This report assesses the Submission Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan (NP) to ensure that Slaugham Parish Council (as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the Slaugham NP) is satisfying its statutory duties in this regard. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a systematic analysis of a policy or policies, in order to explore the potential for an adverse impact on a particular group or community. It is a method of assessing and recording the likely differential and/or adverse impact of a policy on people from different groups. If a policy results in unfairness or discrimination then changes to eliminate or lessen the impact should be considered.
- 1.4. The purpose of the analysis is to increase participation and inclusion, to change the culture of public decision-making and to place a more proactive approach to the promotion of equality and fairness at the heart of public policy. The processes involved in conducting the analysis should not be looked on as an end in themselves. Instead, it should be borne in mind that the aim is the promotion of fairness and equality of opportunity and thus it is the outcomes that are of primary concern. In undertaking the EIA, it is important to keep in mind why the Slaugham NP is needed, what the intended outcomes are, and how it will be ensured that the policies will work as intended.

## **2. Methodology**

- 2.1. An assessment has been made on whether the Slaugham NP has a positive, negative or neutral impact on each of the protected characteristics (in so far as data is available). The vision and objectives of the NP have been assessed, and individual policies are highlighted where they are considered likely to have a negative impact.

## **3. Baseline data**

- 3.1. Data for the Parish of Slaugham is available from the 2011 Census for the following protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, marriage and civil partnership, race and religious belief.
- 3.2. No data is available for the following protected characteristics: gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation.

### **Slaugham neighbourhood area – population characteristics**

**Total Population:** 2,769.

**Age:** 24.2% of the population are children aged 17 or less, 61.1% are in the working age groups (ages 18-64), with 14.6% in the older age groups. The mean age is 38.6 years which is notably lower than the Mid Sussex and national average.

**Sex:** 1,399 males; 1,370 females.

**Main language:** English is the main language in 97.1% of households.

**Country of birth:** 91.9% of residents were born in the UK; 3.9% were born elsewhere in the EU and 4.1% were born in other countries.

**Ethnic group:** 96.8% of residents are White; 1.6% of residents are Mixed/multiple ethnic groups.

**Religion:** 62.9% of residents are Christian; 29.5% of residents do not have a religion; 6.1% of residents did not state their religion in the 2011 Census.

**Marriage and Civil Partnership:** 52.4% of residents are married; 0.4% are in a registered same-sex civil partnership; 10.9% are divorced; 5.8% are widowed.

**Health:** The local community is generally healthy, with 86.4% reporting 'Very good' or 'Good' health at the time of the 2011 Census. Nevertheless, 33 individuals reported long-term sick or a disability.

Source: ONS - 2011 Census

#### **4. Process of Community Consultation**

- 4.1. All written communications were in English and it was not considered necessary to translate them into any other language.
- 4.2. A previous Slaugham NDP failed at Examination in 2013. Following this the Parish Council resolved to prepare anew Neighbourhood Plan. Throughout the preparation of the revised Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan, Slaugham Parish Council has tried to promote the widest possible engagement of the local community in planning for the future development of the Parish and for the process to be as transparent and inclusive.
- 4.3. Widespread consultation was carried out during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Steering Group made effort, using a variety of methods, to reach all of the Parish community. To ensure the Steering Group was representative of the Parish population it comprised six members from Handcross, four from Pease Pottage and two each from Warninglid and Slaugham.
- 4.4. Public exhibitions were initially held at The Pavillion, Handcross, on 29 September 2014 and 3 November 2014. The purpose of the exhibitions was to raise awareness of the Parish Council's intent to prepare a NP.

- 4.5. A further public consultation event, held in The Sports Pavilion in Handcross on 7 April 2017 and 8 April 2017, took place to enable local stakeholders to 'Have Your Say on Selection of Housing Sites.' All sites received during consultation were displayed at the exhibition; attendees were asked to identify the site order for preference housing development. The event was widely publicised locally: flyers were hand delivered to all residents; the event was advertised in the local newspaper (Mid Sussex Times); the community column of the papers advertised the event; banners were displayed in all four villages; posters were placed in the notice boards; the event was also promoted online.
- 4.6. A six week Regulation 16 consultation was undertaken on the draft NP in line with neighbourhood planning regulations from 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and extended until 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018. This included publicising the consultation and draft document online with a flyer hand delivered to every household within the Parish. The Plan was also advertised in the Local Newspaper, Notice boards, banners, Council website and issued to Resident Associations and Local Action Groups. The Pre-submission NDP was then amended in response to the consultation responses received.

## 5. Impact on Groups with Protected Characteristics

- 5.1. The Vision of Slaugham NP states that:
  - 5.1.1. *'The Parish will remain a beautiful part of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a pleasant and attractive area to live in and to visit. Its population will have grown sustainably, focussed in two of its four distinct villages.'*
  - 5.1.2. *'The historic environment and its setting will be protected and enhanced for the enjoyment of all. Development and change in the Parish will have avoided its most sensitive landscapes, habitats and cherished open spaces, which will have stronger protection for the enjoyment of the local community.'*
  - 5.1.3. *'The Parish will have retained its essential services and facilities to meet local needs. Handcross will remain the main service centre of the Parish, providing local shops and community facilities. Pease Pottage will have become a more self-sustaining community with a new community centre. Warninglid and Slaugham will retain their distinctive identities as small rural villages.'*
  - 5.1.4. *'The range of dwellings built over the Plan period will have significantly reduced the local housing need for affordable housing and met the local demand for the types of homes suited to older people and young families. The demand of local people to stay in the Parish will also have been met. The design of new buildings will have met the challenge of low carbon regulations, while being in keeping with the High Weald AONB character.'*
  - 5.1.5. *'Traffic calming measures will have addressed the impact of speed within the villages and enable residents to move around the villages safely and enjoyably on foot and bicycle as well as in cars.'*
- 5.2. The vision of the Slaugham NP is expected to have a **positive impact** on groups with protected characteristics. It recognises and supports the diversity of age, occupation and background of residents.

- 5.3. Slaugham NP contains a series of strategic objectives, these set out how the Parish proposes to deliver its vision for Slaugham up to 2031. Delivery of the objectives will be through both planning policies and community action. Each objective is reviewed to assess whether it is likely to have an impact on groups within the Parish with protected characteristics:

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Likely Impact</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
1. To preserve, protect and enhance the countryside including the High Weald AONB, open spaces, fields and hedgerow, ancient in the Parish.	Neutral	This objective protects the special qualities of the Mid Sussex countryside and High Weald AONB, which will be enjoyed by all, but is deemed to have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics.
2. To retain the geographic distinctiveness of the four villages and maintain the gaps both intra-parish between the four villages and between the Parish and surrounding built up areas.	Neutral	This objective protects the distinctiveness of Slaugham villages, which will be enjoyed by all, but is deemed to have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics.
3. To conserve and protect the architectural heritage of conservation areas and individual historic buildings and their setting.	Neutral	This objective protects the built heritage of the Parish, which will be enjoyed by all, but is deemed to have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics.
4. To ensure that the community has continuing access to adequate, high quality community facilities and recreational open space in each of the four villages.	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community and especially on those with protected characteristics.
5. To ensure that these community facilities allow residents of each of the four Villages to create a focal point for community activities and identity.	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community and especially on those with protected characteristics.
6. Support the provision of, and access to, high quality education facilities throughout the Parish for pre-school, primary and secondary aged pupils.	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community, especially younger residents.
7. To support the provision of access to high quality healthcare and opportunities for residents to maintain and enhance their health and well-being.	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community, especially older residents and those with underlying health issues and disabilities.
8. To ensure a supply of homes consistent with identified local housing need, including homes suitable for an aging population and those for younger people, comprising singles, couples and families.	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community and especially on those with protected characteristics.

9. To ensure that new homes are energy efficient and are built to a high standard of design at a suitable density, using local materials.	Neutral	This objective aims to improve the quality of housing in the Parish, which will be enjoyed by all, but is deemed to have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics.
10. To facilitate employment opportunities within the Parish; enabling the necessary infrastructure to encourage self-employment and working from home, and the associated reduction in commuting to work outside the Parish.	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community and especially on those with protected characteristics.
11. To support existing and new business activity in the Parish, including those associated with the visitor and tourism sector, in appropriate locations.	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community and especially on those with protected characteristics.
12. To maintain Handcross as the centre of economic activity in the Parish, while facilitating business growth in other areas currently in commercial/ retail use.	Neutral	This objective supports the economy of the Parish, which will be enjoyed by all, but is deemed to have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics.
13. To substantially reduce impact of the road congestion and pollution, and to improve sustainable transport within the Parish.	Positive	This objective is expected to have a positive impact on all sectors of the community, especially younger residents, older residents and those with mobility issues.

- 5.4. All of the Slaugham NP objectives are considered to have a positive or neutral impact on those with protected characteristics especially the objectives to improve community facilities, including education and healthcare facilities. There are no individual policies that are considered likely to have a negative impact. The objective of providing new dwellings to meet the local housing need is particularly positive for some groups with protected characteristics, as are the objectives that seek to facilitate employment opportunities and support business activity within the Parish.

## 6. Conclusion

- 6.1. The Slaugham NP provides a suite of objectives and policies to respond to the vision for the benefit of the local community as a whole including those with protected characteristics but perhaps most particularly younger and older residents, and those with underlying health issues and disabilities.
- 6.2. In preparing the Slaugham NP, Slaugham Parish Council and the NP Steering Group have sought to engage widely with the all of the local community. They have gone beyond minimum consultation requirements to gather the views of the community.
- 6.3. In conclusion, the assessment finds the Slaugham NP to be appropriate and that the duty of care prescribed by the Equalities Act (2010) is met.