

SOMPTING PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) 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 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is the systematic analysis of a policy or policies, in order to identify the potential for an adverse impact on a particular group or community, in particular those with a protected characteristic. It is a method of assessing and recording the likely differential and/or adverse impact of a policy on people from different groups so that if a policy results in unfairness or discrimination then changes to eliminate or lessen the impact be considered.

“Protected characteristics” are defined in the Act as age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

It is no longer a legal requirement for public bodies to produce an Equality Impact Assessment to cover every policy document or project. However, this document forms part of the assessment of the Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan (SPNP) to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan does not have any equalities impacts and that it conforms to the requirements of the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans.

2. Aims of the Equality Analysis

2.1 The purpose of the analysis is to increase participation and inclusion, to change the culture of public decision-making and to nurture a more proactive approach to the promotion of equality and fairness at the heart of public policy. The aim in conducting the analysis is the promotion of fairness and equality of opportunity and thus it is the outcomes that are of primary concern.

2.2 The sections below consider the goals and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and then assess the impact of policies and proposals on groups with protected characteristics.

3. Methodology

3.1 An assessment has been made on whether the SPNP has a positive, negative or neutral impact on each of the protected characteristics (in so far as data is available). A brief justification and explanation of the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan are provided below. It is important to rate the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future)

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Negative and Positive impacts are weighted in relation to their significance.
 High impact - a significant potential impact or beneficial outcome.
 Medium impact - some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures may be necessary or limited benefits accrue
 Low impact - almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation-led or extremely low benefits.

4. Baseline Data

4.1 Data for Sompting is available for the following protected characteristics: ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religious belief. Data is not readily available for the following protected characteristics: gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation. Unless stated otherwise the data source is the 2011 Census, however, the disability is based on Adur as a whole.

Ethnicity: From the tables, the largest ethnic group in Sompting is “White; British” at 94.2%. Comparing to the England 79.8%, Sompting has a significant low non-white population.

4.2 **Gender:** In 2011 there were 8561 people living in Sompting. 49% of these were male, and 51% were female. Comparable UK figures were 49.3% male and 50.7% female. So Sompting is similar to the UK.

4.3 **Age:** However, when comparing the Age information

Sompting generally has a lesser proportion of people in the following ranges with the proportion of people of working age perhaps reflecting the lack of employment opportunities in Sompting and a significant higher proportion being 65 and older.

	Sompting %	England %
Aged 0-4	5.3	6.3
Aged 0-15	16	19
Aged 20-29	9.7	14
Of working age	61	65
Aged 65 and over	23	16

4.4 **Disability:** In Adur as a whole, 20.1% of adults have a long term illness or disability. That percentage is significantly worse than the England average and is on the increase.

4.5 **Religion:** West Sussex remains predominantly Christian by religion, with 61.8% of the population describing themselves as such. This is slightly higher than the proportion for the Southeast (59.8%) and England (59.3%).

In summary Sompting has:

A movement of population out of Sompting of the age range of 20-29 and a

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significantly larger percentage 65 and over indicating perhaps the lack of employment opportunities but a good place for the elderly.

5.0 Vision and Objectives for Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan

5.1 The Sompting Parish NP will provide a framework of policies and proposals for the development of the village to 2031. The Adur District Local Plan allocates two sites for housing development for 480 properties to accommodate growth to 2031. Currently the South Downs National Park Authority has not allocated any housing to Sompting.

5.2 Vision: The Sompting Parish NP will

“By 2031, to value, protect and promote the unique parish of Sompting, by respecting its heritage, appreciating its current community and achieving a balance between residential and South Downs needs. The development at West Sompting will have been successfully integrated with the rest of Sompting whilst improving access to the surrounding natural landscape, towards the coast, to Worthing for cyclists and pedestrians and to the South Downs National Park.

The parish will have retained its character, especially that of Sompting Village, and will have remained a vibrant, mixed community, with lots of activities and facilities. New developments will have widened the range of open market, affordable and self-build housing for local people and newcomers.

The shops in the Parish will remain viable and valued by the local community.

The adverse impact of road traffic on Sompting has been lessened. The local people using footpaths and cycle paths that connect the green open spaces, like the orchard, the Cokeham Brook SNCI, the Local Green Gap towards Worthing and the South Downs National Park will have had a positive effect.”

Objectives: The Sompting Parish NP has the following 5 objectives:

1. Environment
2. Business
3. Community and young people
4. Transport
5. Housing

1. **Environment:** seeks to enhance and promote improvements to existing parks and open spaces and to use the green infrastructure to shape the future of Sompting. To have increased footpath and cycling network to reduce dependency on vehicles.

2. **Business:** Recognising the lack of employment opportunities, seeks to promote the inclusion of small businesses and to maintain retail employment by having a diverse and attractive parade of shops.

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3. **Community and young people:** seeks to widen the range of community facilities for the elderly and opportunities for children and youth club.
4. **Transport:** The Sompting Parish NP recognises the issues concerning the splitting of the Parish by the A 27 and the problems associated with its traffic impact on the village. It seeks solutions to the access across the A27 to reach the South Downs and allow north/south resident movement in Sompting to use the facilities especially those for the elderly, disabled etc. It also seeks to promote other uses of transport and give a healthier lifestyle to all.
5. **Housing:** seeks to have policies that manage the mix and style of properties to reflect the historical importance of Sompting and the nearby conservation area. It also seeks to make estate design safe, community orientated and to lessen the traffic impact on the village and its road network. The facility for a new community building and shop is sought to be integrated with the main housing estate.

6 Impact of Policies on Groups with Protected Characteristics

6.1 The Sompting Parish NP aims to create benefits for everyone who lives, works, shops, or spends leisure time in the village. This will be achieved by developing new and better housing, particularly affordable housing and smaller housing, enhancing the prospects for local employment development, preserving and improving health, social, community and leisure facilities, improving access to local services and facilities, and preserving and enhancing the quality of the environment.

6.2 Groups with the various protected characteristics will be affected in different ways by the Neighbourhood Plan and the purpose of the analysis in this section of the assessment is to identify how various groups will be affected and whether the proposals and policies in the Sompting Parish NP will adversely affect disproportionately those in the groups with protected characteristics. Without exception where policies in the Neighbourhood Plan do have an impact on groups with protected characteristics, it is a positive impact and not a negative one.

6.3 AGE: OVERALL - MEDIUM POSITIVE IMPACTS

The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the need to provide and protect play facilities for children when new development is being considered. Policy SPNP. P2 and SPNP. P5 seek to retain and create areas of open space within the village particularly recreation grounds which have existing play facilities for all young people and any new sports and leisure facilities to be developed within the main development site. Allotment land is to be created, if the need is proven, as allotments tend to be cultivated by more elderly people and can help to maintain mobility and health in advancing years. Policy SPNP.P2 supports the need to provide local affordable housing (30% or equivalent future policy level) on site or off-site contributions and this Policy specifically links to local need which would allow for young people to access housing when they leave home and for downsizing properties for the elderly. These policies requires developers to

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consider contributions towards community facilities and prioritises young people's facilities and giving the opportunity for the Parish Council to manage them in its own right or through other approved management.

With regard to older people the housing policies within SPNP.P2 and P3 recognise and seek to meet their needs: These Policies seek to require development to consider adaptability of buildings and giving older people an opportunity to live in their homes for longer. A greater proportion of smaller houses which needs to be provided in line with the Housing Needs Survey will provide the opportunity for older people to purchase market housing to downsize and stay in the village.

The Neighbourhood Plan also contains policies which seek to improve and retain key facilities and services used by older people: Policy SPNP.P4 provides a mechanism to resist proposals which would result in the loss of the existing retail and service provision within the village centre such as the Chemist, and convenience shops which will be relied on proportionally more by older people. SPNP.P2 also supports the provision of additional community facilities and services in the village which will be of benefit to older people who may not be able to drive and provide an outlet facility for younger group. Policy SPNP.P2 requires developers to consider contributions towards community facilities and identifies allotments and a new community hall as priorities which elderly people would benefit from.

6.4 Disability: OVERALL - LOW POSITIVE IMPACTS

The needs of persons who are disabled or who have limited mobility are recognised in Policy SPNP.P3 seeks to have housing and the estate of a high quality of design. Policy SPNP.P7 seeks to have high speed broadband available throughout the Parish which will assist those with a disability.

6.5 Maternity and Pregnancy: OVERALL – MEDIUM POSITIVE IMPACTS

Key issues for women who are pregnant or who have young children are access to appropriate housing, flexible employment, and access to facilities including health, developmental play, and recreational facilities. The Neighbourhood Plan has policies which help meet all of these needs: Policies that seek all new development will provide the appropriate level of affordable housing, which will help people starting a family to get a house of their own. The Neighbourhood Plan also contains policies which aim to retain, and improve access to, key facilities and services used by young mothers and their children: Policies providing a mechanism to resist proposals which would result in the loss of the existing retail and service provision within the village centre such as the Chemist and convenience shops which will be utilised more heavily by mothers with young children. Policies that support the potential location for additional community facilities alongside new sports and leisure provision which are likely to be used by groups supporting mothers with young children and policy. Policy SPNP.P2 requires new pedestrian and cycling links from the proposed new development which will make access to the village centre more direct and safe for mothers with young children and give alternative routes to schools and work areas inside and outside of Sompting. Policy SPNP.P5 provides for the safeguarding and creation of open space and recreation

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grounds within the village which are likely to be more heavily used by mothers and fathers with young children.

6.6 Race: OVERALL – LOW POSITIVE IMPACTS

Non-white ethnic groups are a small proportion of the population in Sompting Parish – in 2011 only 5.8% of the population was non-white and within this there are several groups with different ethnic origins. Non-white ethnic groups can experience difficulties around discrimination (sometimes leading to hate crime), language, health and well-being, deprivation and culture. A public realm designed with safety in mind will minimise opportunities for hate crime. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that new development follows good urban design principles and provides safe and inclusive public environments. Policy SPNP.P3 requires that high quality design and layout is achieved in all new development and that it includes the need to consider designing out crime and the accreditation of 'Secured by Design' where possible to demonstrate that new housing development will be safe and a sustainable community is maintained.

6.7 OVERALL – NEUTRAL IMPACT

Sex:

The Neighbourhood Plan contains no specific policies or proposals for any particular gender. The Neighbourhood Plan has been written to provide equal opportunity to both sexes in respect of the provision of development and access to facilities.

Neither sex is disadvantaged by any of the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan; on the contrary both sexes will benefit equally from the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

6.8 Religion, Gender re-assignment, Sexual orientation:

Key issues for religious groups are discrimination relating to employment, housing and the provision of services, and their portrayal in the media. Key issues for gender re-assigned people, gays and lesbians are personal relationships, transphobia and/or discrimination, and hate crime. The Neighbourhood Plan does not and cannot directly address the social attitudes that are involved in these issues. However, it does seek to provide a built environment which is open to all, with a safe public realm which all social groups can access and use equally.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 The Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan provides a strategy for the development of the village, and a range of policies and proposals, which will result in positive benefits for many parts of the local community with protected characteristics: older people, young people, mothers to be and with young children, disabled people and those with limited mobility.

7.2 The Sompting Parish NP does not explicitly address the needs of racial or religious groups, or transgender, gay or lesbian groups, or women. The Neighbourhood Plan does make equal provision for affordable housing and for a range of housing, and seeks to provide additional social,

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community and leisure facilities which will benefit these groups equally. It also seeks to provide a safer environment, particularly a safer public realm, where people with protected characteristics will be less liable to be subject to hate crime.

7.3

The Sompting Parish NP Steering Group does not consider that there is any negative equality impacts that arise from the policies or proposals contained within the Neighbourhood Plan or that it raises any issues in relation to any of the convention rights in the Human Rights Act 1998. These rights are defined as;

- Right to Life
- Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment
- Right to liberty and security
- Right from slavery and forced labour
- Right to a fair trial
- No punishment with law
- Respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence
- Freedom of thought, belief and religion
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of assembly and association
- Right to marry and start a family
- Protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms
- Right to peaceful enjoyment of your property
- Right to education
- Right to participate in free elections

The plan either helps to reinforce these rights or is neutral in relation to them