

## EAST HERTS COUNCIL

### DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 9 MARCH 2017

#### REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

#### EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE EAST HERTS DISTRICT PLAN, MARCH 2017

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WARD(S) AFFECTED:     ALL

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#### **Purpose/Summary of Report**

The purpose of this report is:

- To present to Members an Equality Impact Assessment of the East Herts District Plan.

<b><u>RECOMMENDATION FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL:</u> That Council, via the Executive, be advised that:</b>	
<b>(A)</b>	<b>the Equality Impact Assessment, March 2017, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ to this report, be agreed.</b>

#### 1.0     Background

1.1     East Herts Council aims to provide efficient and effective public services that are inclusive of all those living and working in the district. The Council wants to ensure that policies and services improve quality of life for all residents and employees, in ways that are both appropriate and accessible to the needs of different groups and individuals.

1.2     The District Plan sets out the Council’s planning framework to guide future development and the use of land in the district. It identifies how East Herts will grow and develop whilst at the same time maintaining its attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit. The Plan covers the period 2011–2033. Once adopted, the policies in the District Plan will replace the policies in the Local Plan 2007.

1.3     In line with the Council’s commitment to ensuring that its policies

improve the quality of life within East Herts and that the District Plan policies are inclusive, meet the needs of diverse communities and have outcomes and opportunities that are the same for all, an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) of the Plan has been undertaken. The full EQIA is included as **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**.

## 2.0 Report

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2010 contains a Public Sector Equality Duty which requires bodies such as local authorities to have 'due regard' to the importance of eliminating discrimination, advancing the equality of opportunity between those with identified characteristics and to foster good relations between those who have these 'protected characteristics' and those who do not. Protected characteristics include age, being or becoming a transsexual person, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or having a child, having a disability, race, religion or belief, and gender.
- 2.2 Whilst there is no statutory requirement to undertake an EQIA of the District Plan, it is essential that a strategic document like the Plan fully considers the legal duties of the Equality act 2010. The EQIA also considers the consultation processes involved in the development of the Plan.
- 2.3 Part 1 of the EQIA provides the introduction of the assessment, while Part 2 provides a brief diversity profile of residents in East Herts, using data from the Office of National Statistics. The profile looks only at the identified 'protected characteristics' as set out above, and is not intended to be read as a full profile of the District.
- 2.4 Part 3 of the EQIA contains the assessment of the consultation processes used during the preparation of the District Plan. Part 4 of the EQIA contains the assessment of the Plan itself against each protected characteristic and those characteristics that are of importance in East Herts such as those who suffer from socio-economic disadvantages and those who live in the rural area.
- 2.5 Part 5 of the EQIA summarises and concludes the assessment. The assessment has shown that the District Plan will generally benefit all people who live, work and visit East Herts to some degree. While the Plan will have no impact on certain groups, there will be positive impacts for particular sections of the

community as defined in the Equality Act 2010, specifically for race, disability, age, religion or belief, being pregnant or having a child. In addition, the Plan will have positive impacts on those disadvantaged by socio-economic factors, and some residents who live in the rural area of East Herts. Where potential negative impacts are identified, these are considered to affect those who oppose or have pre-conceived ideas regarding the impact of development. These negative impacts are outweighed by the wider community benefits identified in this assessment.

### 3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

### Background Papers

- More information on the Equality Act 2010 and the East Herts Comprehensive Corporate Equality Policy, Scheme and Action Plan is available at: <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/article/9365/Equalities-Policy>
- Source data is from the 2011 Census  
<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>

Contact Member: Cllr Linda Haysey – Leader of the Council  
[linda.haysey@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:linda.haysey@eastherts.gov.uk)

Contact Officer: Kevin Steptoe – Head of Planning and Building Control  
01992 531407  
[kevin.steptoe@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:kevin.steptoe@eastherts.gov.uk)

Report Author: Jenny Pierce – Principal Planning Policy Officer  
[jenny.pierce@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:jenny.pierce@eastherts.gov.uk)