

## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

### EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EQIA)

#### SOUTH WEST ALPHINGTON DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

## 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This EQIA relates to an emerging Development Brief for a site to the south west of Alphington. A draft Development Brief (hereafter referred to as the 'draft Brief') and this EQIA have been prepared by the Council's City Development Team.
- 1.2 Once adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), the Development Brief will amplify Policy CP19 of the Exeter Core Strategy (adopted February 2012), which designates land to the south west of Alphington as a Strategic Allocation; and Core Strategy Policy CP17 which sets out development principles for the Strategic Allocation. As such, it does not create its own policy framework.
- 1.3 The Core Strategy has been subject to its own EQIA<sup>1</sup>. This concluded that Policies CP17 and CP19 would not in themselves have either a positive or negative impact upon any of the equalities target groups.

## 2 CONTENT OF THE DRAFT BRIEF AND ITS IMPACTS ON PEOPLE

- 2.1 This EQIA focuses on the relevant paragraphs of Section 3 and Appendix A of the draft Brief, which contain the amplification to Core Strategy Policies CP17 and CP19. The following points are of particular relevance to equality issues.
- 2.2 **Para 3.2, bullet 1:** requires the provision of an allotment as part of the development of the SW Exeter site. Allotment gardening is a very rewarding pastime and can contribute greatly to the quality of peoples' lives, both mentally and physically. These benefits will be felt by anyone who is allocated one of the planned allotment plots, not just people in the identified equalities groups and therefore represents a **positive impact**. However, as currently worded, the draft Brief does not enable people with disabilities to access and use the allotments. This will be amended in the final version of the Brief.
- 2.3 **Para 3.2, bullet 2:** requires a community recycling facility to be provided, and land made available for the future provision of a doctor's surgery, as part of the development. The draft Brief therefore seeks to provide for, or enable the provision of, facilities that are required by the local community, within a convenient walking distance. This will have a **positive impact** upon all local residents, including all equalities groups. No **negative impacts** have been identified.
- 2.4 **Para 3.2, bullet 3:** requires the provision of level, useable, public open space as an integral element of the development's overall design. All new homes must be within easy walking distance of the public open space, which must include two equipped play areas for children. More specific design requirements for the children's play areas, including requirements relating to

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=12681&listid=9163>.

safety and access, are set out in Appendix A of the draft Brief. Provision of level, useable open space as part of the development will be of benefit to all occupants of the new homes, together with residents from the neighbouring area. Provision of safe and accessible children's play areas will have a **positive impact** upon all children in the local area. No **negative impacts** have been identified.

- 2.5 **Para 3.2, bullets 4-7:** requires the remaining site area to be developed for residential use and include a range of house sizes, including smaller units. It also requires the provision of 35% affordable housing, and that all homes must be built to Lifetime Homes Standard. It states that extra care housing for the elderly will be an appropriate form of development on part of the site. These requirements will be of potential benefit to anyone wanting/needing a new home in Exeter. They will have a **positive impact** upon equalities groups who may find it harder to access market housing due to lower household incomes (e.g. women, people with disabilities, younger people) and people with specific housing needs (e.g. older people, people with disabilities). No **negative impacts** have been identified.
- 2.7 **Para 3.2, bullets 9-15:** sets out the design requirements for the site, in the context of planning policies already adopted by the City Council including the Residential Design Guide SPD. In seeking a development of exceptional design, the brief will have a **positive impact** upon all members of the public and not just equalities groups. No **negative impacts** have been identified.
- 2.7 **Para 3.2, bullet 16:** states that any residential development of the site will be liable for the payment of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy). Further information about the CIL is provided in Appendix A of the draft Brief. CIL will be spent by the City Council on a wide range of community infrastructure projects listed in the CIL '123 List' published on the City Council's website (<http://www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=13995>). This includes projects to provide or improve existing public transport provision and pedestrian/cycle links, sports and cultural facilities, community buildings, school facilities, library facilities and strategic flood defences. The impact of CIL upon equalities groups will depend upon how the monies are spent. However, it is reasonable to conclude that the impacts will be **positive** and not **negative**.
- 2.8 **Para 3.3:** sets out the measures required to encourage new residents to travel by non-car modes of transport. This includes the preparation of an agreed Travel Plan; financial contributions towards (i) a traffic calming scheme through the centre of Alphington, (ii) a new cycle route and (iii) improvements to an existing bus service; the establishment of a car club; and the provision of new pedestrian and cycle links through the site. These measures will increase travel options for new and existing residents of Alphington and improve traffic safety through the Village, thereby having a **positive impact** on many members of society, including those with disabilities and those too old or young to drive a car. No **negative impacts** have been identified.
- 2.9 **Par 3.4:** sets out requirements for the development to use low and zero carbon energy and make efficient use of natural and local resources. This includes connection to a Decentralised Energy Network, which in itself is unlikely to have either a direct **positive** or **negative impact** upon equalities groups. However, incorporating low carbon technology into the design of new homes should help to reduce the cost of energy use for their occupants. This will have

a **positive impact** upon lower income households (e.g. women, people with disabilities, younger people).

### **3 THE PROCESS**

- 3.1 The current draft of the Development Brief has been produced in consultation with officers at the City Council, Ward Councillors, officers at Devon County Council and with input from the Alphington Village Forum and wider community of Alphington. This EQIA indicates that the SPD should have no **negative** equalities impacts. However, an amendment to paragraph 3.2 of the Brief, so that it requires the new allotments to be accessible to and useable by people with disabilities, would enhance the **positive impacts**.
- 3.2 The draft Development Brief was approved for public consultation by Executive on 4 February. As well as the public, those invited to comment on the draft Brief will include a wide variety of organisations representing people with different needs and characteristics, for example related to their age, faith or disability. In this way the document will be brought to the attention of as many people as possible, not limited to those having a protected characteristic under the Equality Act, but everyone for whom the Council's Comprehensive Equality Scheme seeks equal treatment.
- 3.3 Following that consultation, representations will be analysed and where appropriate acted upon by making amendments to the draft Development Brief, before a final version is approved for adoption by Planning Member Working Group and Executive. This process should identify any negative impacts not identified in this assessment, and provide an opportunity to amend the Development Brief where possible or take other steps to mitigate those impacts. This EQIA will be reviewed as part of the same process.

### **4 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 This assessment has identified **numerous positive impacts** arising or likely to arise from the content of the draft Development Brief. As a result of this EQIA, paragraph 3.2 of the draft Brief will be amended to take into account the requirements of disabled people in accessing and using allotments.
- 4.2 Further changes to the draft Development Brief are likely as a result of the public consultation. This EQIA will be reviewed at the same time.

Katharine Smith  
Forward Planning Officer

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