



Equality Impact Assessment:

East Herts District Plan
2011-2033

March 2017



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The term 'equality' means to ensure that different groups or individuals are treated fairly and in a manner specific to their needs. As such, it is about adapting services where possible or appropriate in such a way as to meet the needs of diverse communities and make certain that outcomes and opportunities are the same for all.
- 1.2 The concept of 'diversity' aims to understand, respect and value people's differences, and in doing so foster an inclusive environment and culture for everybody.
- 1.3 East Herts Council aims to provide efficient and effective public services that are inclusive of all those living and working in the district. We want 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.
- 1.4 A more detailed account of the Council's actions to improve equality in the district can be found in the East Herts Comprehensive Corporate Equality Policy, Scheme and Action Plan 2016-2019. This sets out the Council's objectives for the next three years and ensures that the principles of equality influence service provision and staff employment. It is followed by all officers as they carry out their duties.
- 1.5 Further key actions taken by the council include:
 - Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) when appropriate to inform planning and decision making, to ensure that policies do not disadvantage any group or individual, and to make sure there is fair and reasonable access to services for all.
 - Promoting equality of opportunity as an employer, in part through supporting the two ticks disability symbol awarded by Jobcentre Plus to employers who have a positive attitude towards job applications from disabled people. For further details, please see the Council's Equality and Diversity Report.
 - Actively working in partnership with the local voluntary and community sector to support those organisations to meet the diverse needs of the communities in East Herts.
- 1.6 Section 149 of the Equality Act is the Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force in April 2011. It requires all public bodies, such as councils, to meet the needs of *all* individuals in day-to-day working operations. This includes when shaping policy, when delivering services and in relation to the Council's own employees.
- 1.7 In particular, it requires that public bodies:

1. Have 'due regard' to the importance of eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other such prohibited conduct;
2. Advance the equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic* and those who do not share it;
3. Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

* The protected characteristics, as set out in the Act, are:

- Age
- Being/becoming a transsexual person
- Being married/in a civil partnership
- Being pregnant/having a child
- Having a disability (defined as: if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative impact on your ability to do normal activities)
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- Sex
- For more information, see The Equality Framework for Local Government.

- 1.8 East Herts Council recognises that discrimination does not need to be intentional for unfair treatment or adverse impact to occur. The Council's approach to equality recognises that there is a range of different groups in the District who may have different needs and therefore the Council's services should be fairly and equitably provided to the whole community.
- 1.9 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.
- 1.10 The District Plan, together with the Minerals and Waste Local Plans for Hertfordshire and any adopted Neighbourhood Plans, form the Development Plan for the district. The Development Plan is the basis upon which planning applications must be determined, unless there are material planning considerations that indicate otherwise. The policies of the Development Plan should be read as a whole.

- 1.11 The District Plan is a long-term document which provides certainty to communities and businesses as to where development will be provided and, likewise, where development will be restricted. It also allows infrastructure providers to plan effectively for the future.
- 1.12 Whilst there is not a statutory requirement to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment of the East Herts District Plan, it is essential that a strategic document like the District Plan fully considers the legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. The purpose of carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment of the District Plan is to ensure that the Council has had due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people by reason of their protected characteristics; that steps are taken to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from those of other people; and to encourage people from these protected groups to participate in public life or other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- 1.13 This Equality Impact Assessment therefore considers not only the District Plan as a whole, but also the consultation processes involved in the development of the Plan itself.

2. East Herts Diversity Profile

Race

- 2.1 East Herts District has a limited diversity in terms of ethnic origin compared to the eastern region and the country as a whole. Census 2011 data indicates that 90% of the District's residents are White British, compared to 85% and 80% in the region and country respectively (figures are rounded).
- 2.2 The next largest ethnic groups in East Herts are White Other (4.04%) and White Irish (1.14%), meaning that the remaining ethnic groups constitute just 4.57% of the population. Of this 4.57%, the largest ethnic groups are Asian/Asian British; Indian (0.73%) and Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; White and Asian (0.62%).
- 2.3 Whilst the level of diversity in East Herts is low, it is clear that the ethnicity of the District has changed since the 2001 Census, where 93.32% stated they were White British, 2.66% were White Other and 1.14% were White Irish. Similarly in 2001, the other largest ethnic groups were Asian British (0.93%), Mixed (0.91%), Chinese or Other Ethnic Group (0.66%) and Asian or Asian British: Indian (0.56%).
- 2.4 The East Herts Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment Update 2016 indicates that there are 8 Gypsy and Traveller households that meet the Government's 2015 definition, with the majority being Irish Travellers. The households comprised 33 residents – 16 adults and 17 children and teenagers under 18 (52% adults and 48% children and teenagers). There are a further 26 households who do not meet the new definition. However, six of these households have been

identified as Romany Gypsy or Irish Travellers who may be covered by equalities legislation. There are 16 Travelling Showperson households which meet the new definition, 13 of which have children.

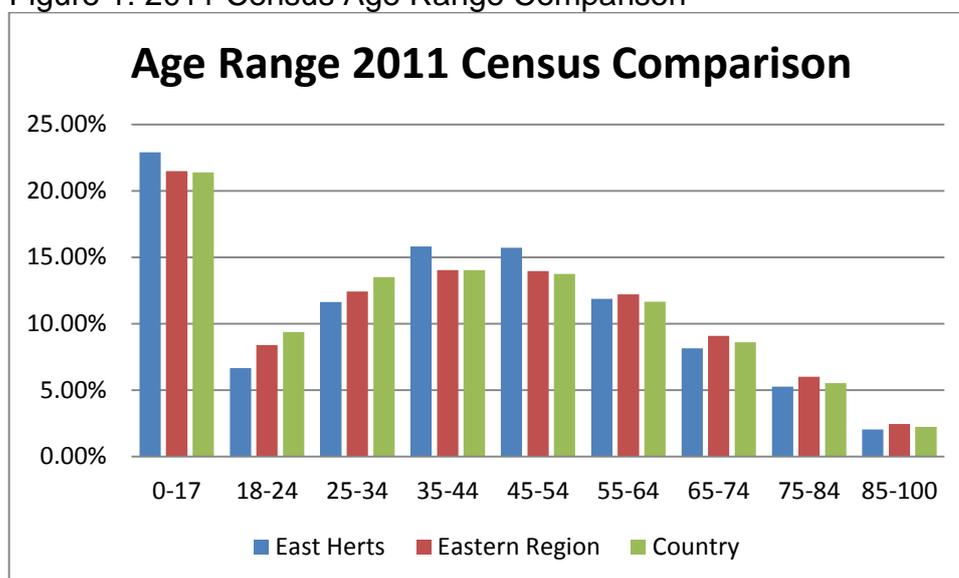
Disability

- 2.5 Statistics from the 2011 Census indicate that 20.6% of the District's population consider they have a long-term health problem or disability, compared to 24.6% in the East of England Region and 25.6% in the country as a whole.

Age

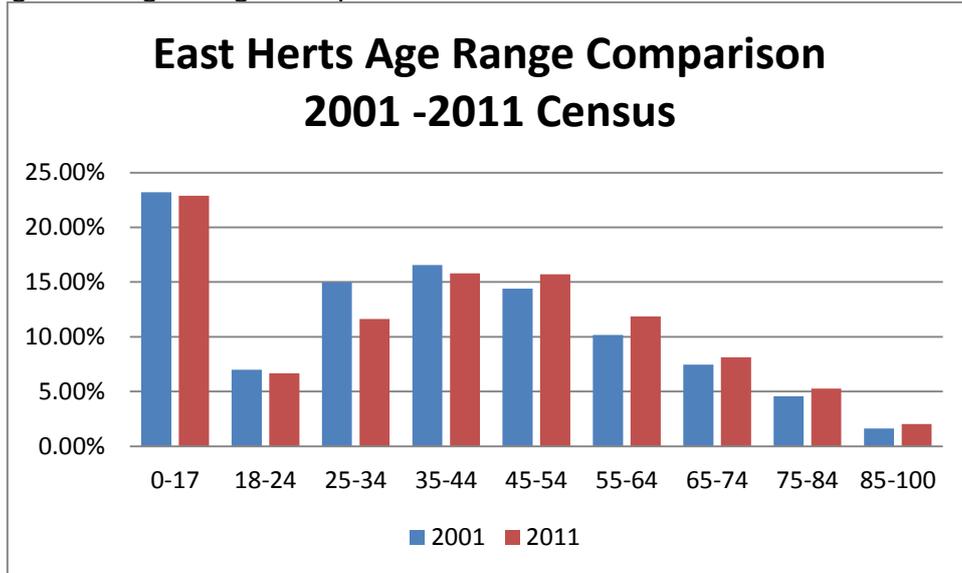
- 2.6 The 2011 Census records the East Herts population as 137,687 individuals. Figure 1 below illustrates the comparison between East Herts and the Eastern Region and country as a whole in terms of age ranges. East Herts has a slightly higher proportion of residents age 17 and under (22.90%) compared to the region (21.49%) and country as a whole (21.39%). However, there are fewer residents aged 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 in East Herts. East Herts has a higher proportion of residents aged between 35 and 44 (15.81%) and between 45 and 54 (15.70%) compared to the region (14.03% and 14.03%) and the country as a whole (14.03% and 13.73%), but there are fewer residents aged over 65 than the region and country as a whole (15.44% compared to 17.52% and 16.34% respectively).

Figure 1: 2011 Census Age Range Comparison



- 2.7 A comparison between the 2001 and 2011 Census in Figure 2 below illustrates that the population of East Herts is gradually getting older, with a greater proportion of the population older than 45 years of age compared to ten years ago. The 2015 Mid-Year Estimates indicate that this trend is continuing.

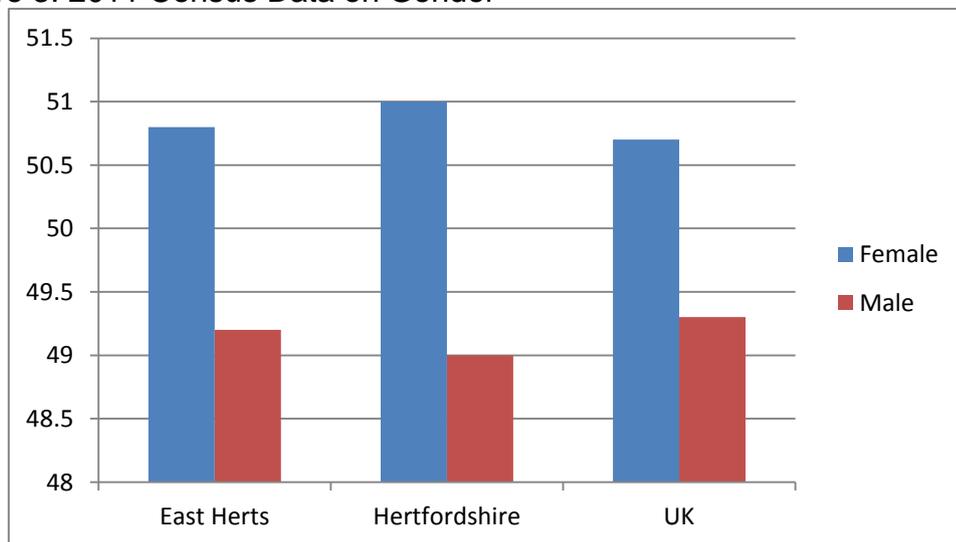
Figure 2: Age range comparison between the 2001 and 2011 Census



Gender

2.8 The 2011 census indicates that East Herts’ gender balance is in line with the county wide statistics. 49.2% of East Herts residents are male, and 50.8% of East Herts residents are female. Hertfordshire’s 2011 statistics indicate 49% of Hertfordshire’s residents are male and 51% of Hertfordshire residents are female. These statistics are also in line with national data where 50.7% of the population are female, and 49.3% of the population are male.

Figure 3: 2011 Census Data on Gender



Religion and belief

2.9 The 2011 census indicates that the highest proportion of East Herts residents are Christian (62.75%), this is slightly higher than the national average (59.38%). There are slightly more East Herts residents of no religion (27.75%), than the national average (24.74%). The other religious groups are

Hindu (0.45%) which is quite a lot lower than the national average (1.52%); Buddhist (0.32%) which is slightly lower than the national average (0.45%); Jewish (0.33%) which is also slightly lower than the national average (0.49%); Muslim (0.72%) which is substantially lower than the national average (5.02%); Sikh (0.12%) which is slightly lower than the national average (0.79%), and Other (0.32%) which is slightly lower than the national average (0.43%).

Sexual orientation

- 2.10 There is no current data available.

Transgender

- 2.11 There is no current data available.

Being married or in a Civil Partnership

- 2.12 East Herts currently has a slightly higher percentage of people living as a couple who are married or in a registered same-sex civil partnership than the East of England Region and England (52% compared to 49.4% and 45.9%).

Being pregnant or having a child

- 2.13 There is no data for pregnancy, only number of dependent children.
- 2.14 2011 Census data indicates that there are 17,778 dependent children in East Hertfordshire which is towards the top end of the county in terms of its number of dependent children. Only Dacorum and St Albans have slightly more dependent children, with 18,661 and 18,714 dependent children respectively. East Herts has more dependent children than Broxbourne with 12,371 dependent children; Hertsmere 13,059 dependent children; North Hertfordshire with 16,134 dependent children; Stevenage with 11,284 dependent children; Three Rivers with 11,358 dependent children; Watford with 11,930 dependent children; and Welwyn Hatfield with 13,186 dependent children.

Other Characteristics

- 2.15 In addition to the above protected characteristics, it is important to consider the issues that are distinct to East Herts. Therefore this assessment also considers the impact of the District Plan on those who are limited by socio-economic factors and those who live in rural areas.

People who are disadvantaged by socio-economic factors such as low incomes, skill or living in a deprived area, including homelessness

- 2.16 The most up to date information is from 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation data. East Herts' income deprivation is lower than that of Hertfordshire (6.9% compared to 9.7%). There is no data available for national income deprivation.

- 2.17 Child poverty is also low in East Herts compared to county and national averages. East Herts has 9.2% child poverty, compared to 13.2% county wide, and 20.1% nationally.
- 2.18 East Herts is substantially lower than the county wide figures in the 2015 Multiple Deprivation Indices for Education Skills and Training (10.0092 compared to 14.093). There is currently no national data available for this index.

Those who live in the rural area of East Herts

- 2.19 East Herts has a high number of residents who live in rural areas according to 2011 data. 29.5% of East Herts residents live in rural areas. This is much higher than the national average (17.6%), and the County average (11.5%).

Summary

- 2.20 The population of East Herts is distinctive and in some ways quite diverse. Unfortunately, the level of information available for each of the protected characteristic groups is currently not considered consistent or accurate.
- 2.21 However, it is important to consider if consultations carried out through the Plan-making process have engaged with the wide variety of people within the District, and then consider how the District Plan policies are likely to impact on these different parts of the East Herts community.

3. Assessment of the East Herts District Plan Consultation Process

- 3.1 Full details of the various stages of consultation undertaken throughout the Plan-making process are detailed in the Council's Regulation 22 Consultation Statement. All consultations are carried out in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and include activities that go beyond the requirements of Planning regulations.
- 3.2 The SCI acknowledges that in East Herts, 'hard to reach' groups may include young people, students, the elderly, ethnic minorities, gypsies and travellers, homeless people, single parent families, and people with disabilities. They may also include whole sections of the community living in the rural areas or more deprived areas of the district. The SCI also considers the need to ensure that those who have difficulty accessing information and those with limited time are able to become involved. The SCI therefore sets out how the Council will engage with the local community both in terms of the preparation of the District Plan, but also in relation to planning applications and Neighbourhood Planning.
- 3.3 In preparing the East Herts District Plan, the Council has undertaken a series of consultation activities to involve key stakeholders and the community in

developing the approach to development and policies within the Plan. The main consultation stages have been:

- Issues and Options Consultation, 2010
- Preferred Options Consultation, 2014
- Pre-Submission Consultation, 2016

Engagement Activities

- 3.4 The consultation events have included ‘planning for real’ exercises involving large scale maps and Lego-style bricks, visits to schools, informal drop in roadshow style events on Saturdays, and presentations with question and answer sessions held in the evening. The format of each session was carefully chosen to ensure it contained easy to understand information, that large print formats were available on request and that Officers were available to answer questions. Events were held at a variety of times in order to ensure that people had a number of options available depending upon working patterns/childcare etc. This was important not only for the public but also for Officers and Members attending.
- 3.5 Events were organised through various means including through Community Voice a community engagement forum, youth councils and youth conference, Bishop’s Stortford Means Business and the Rural Conference. Events have also been organised directly with Town and Parish Councils.
- 3.6 There are a number of statutory stakeholders that need to be engaged in Plan-making. However, there is a wide range of other local groups that are regularly consulted, which include those representing disabilities and religious groups for example. There are 5,780 active contacts on this wider database which also includes individuals who are added to the database when they respond to the District Plan consultations to ensure they receive notifications of subsequent Plan-making stages. The database is also used to distribute the District Plan Bulletin, which provides updates of technical work and Plan-making activity.

Venues

- 3.7 Given the size of the district and the many different settlements, care has been taken to ensure that public events are held in local community halls in order to minimise the need for the public to travel and to ensure that they were already familiar to people. Each venue was chosen for their disabled access and availability of parking. Sound systems were provided where necessary, including hearing loops and a large screen projection system was used.

Published Material

- 3.8 In terms of published material, methods of engagement have included the distribution of leaflets, the delivery of a summary booklet to each household in the district, articles in the Council’s Link Magazine, which is delivered to every household, articles in local newspapers and magazines, posters displayed across the district and formal adverts placed in local newspapers. Copies of

all published materials are also sent to every Town and Parish Council, displayed in libraries and in the Hertford and Bishop's Stortford Council offices.

- 3.9 All published material was also displayed on the Council's web site, with links direct from the front page. During consultation events people could respond via letter, email, by comment form or by using the Council's online consultation portal. The Issues and Options consultation included questionnaires with a Freepost return service. Comment forms could be left at either of the Council offices for free. All comments received were uploaded or transcribed into the consultation portal so anybody can view them.
- 3.10 In addition to the consultation documents, at each stage a series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) were also prepared to assist in the understanding of the process. At the Preferred Options stage, a bespoke FAQ was prepared specifically for a younger audience.

Formal Engagement

- 3.11 There is also the formal democratic process where members of the public are able to attend the District Planning Executive Panel to hear Members and Officers discussing the evidence behind the District Plan. Each of these meetings are recorded and transmitted live via the Council's webcast facility, which are stored for at least six months for later perusal.

Consultation Feedback

- 3.12 Given the importance of providing feedback to those engaged in the Plan-making process, the results of consultation events are reported back to the District Planning Executive Panel. The Planning regulations require the Council to produce Consultation Statements which are produced following every stage of consultation.

Conclusions on Consultation Processes

- 3.13 Throughout the Plan-making process, the Council has engaged with or received responses from thousands of organisations/individuals. The Council has used a wide variety of consultation activities and events and has produced a range of publication materials from posters, leaflets and full documents. The high level of responses received indicates that consultation methods have been successful and inclusive. Although the Council aims to collect equalities data during each stage of consultation, this information is entirely voluntary, so it is not clear if all sections of the community have actively participated. We do know however, that people who respond to District Plan consultations are from a wide geographical area, with a large proportion of respondents from both rural and urban areas in and beyond East Herts.
- 3.14 It is considered that the consultation processes used throughout the Plan-making process has used all reasonable endeavours to be inclusive and to

engage with different sections of the East Herts community as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

4. Equality Impact Assessment of the East Herts District Plan

4.1 The District Plan is underpinned by a Vision and nine Strategic Objectives.

East Herts in 2033

1. The high quality environment of East Herts, its distinctive character and its economic prosperity will have been maintained.
2. New homes and jobs will have been provided through well designed and sustainable development. Local communities will have embraced Neighbourhood Planning to deliver their local objectives.
3. A range of sizes, types and tenure of new housing and accommodation will have been provided; including the provision of accessible and adaptable dwellings to meet the changing needs of occupants over their lifetime. There will be an increase in the overall stock of affordable housing including starter homes.
4. Working in partnership with other service providers, essential new and improved infrastructure to support the increased population of the District will have been delivered. Support will have been given to the retention of existing facilities and the provision of new facilities for leisure, recreation and cultural needs of the community. New development will have supported improved sustainable travel, including initiatives contained in Hertfordshire's 2050 Transport Vision. Mitigating measures will have helped ameliorate congestion, particularly on the A414.
5. The local economy in the District will have been supported, with provision having been made for the accommodation requirements of existing and new businesses. Important employment assets will have been retained. The emphasis will have been on sustainable economic development, of the right type and in the right place to meet employment needs both within the towns and in the rural areas.
6. The vitality and viability of the main towns of Bishop's Stortford, Buntingford, Hertford, Sawbridgeworth and Ware will have been safeguarded in a way that takes account of their distinctive roles. This will have been achieved through carefully planned development, which meets the needs of these centres, whilst recognising the importance of preserving and enhancing their historic character. In local and village centres shopping facilities that meet local needs will have been supported.
7. Outside of the main settlements, strategic development will have been accommodated to the east of Stevenage, east of Welwyn Garden City and in

the Gilston Area. These areas will have provided a range of homes, schools, facilities and services for the benefit of East Herts residents.

8. The rich heritage of historic buildings, features and archaeology in the District will have been protected and enhanced. The attractive landscape of East Herts, which contributes to its distinctive character, will have been conserved and enhanced.
9. New building will have contributed to the creation of sustainable communities, which are safe, attractive and inclusive and where the design of new development makes a positive contribution to the area in which it is located.
10. The rich biodiversity of East Herts will have been protected and enhanced. Where new development could potentially have an adverse effect on biodiversity and the ecological network of the District, measures will have been taken to ensure that the impact was either avoided or mitigated.
11. The District's rich and varied green infrastructure centred in the river valleys will have been re-connected and enhanced and its multi-functionality protected providing increased resilience to changing climates, improved ecological connectivity and new spaces for recreation and leisure.
12. East Herts will be more sustainable through measures to combat the effects of climate change. This will have been achieved by locating new buildings in the most sustainable locations so as to reduce car dependency and by ensuring through their design and construction, new buildings produce lower carbon emissions.
13. Measures will have been taken to adapt to the effects of climate change, which will have included steps to minimise the risk of flooding and reduce the demand for water as well as supporting the adaptation of buildings to cope with extremes of heat and cold in an energy efficient manner.

- 4.2 The following strategic objectives are the stepping stones to deliver the vision and form the basis of the policies contained in the District Plan:

Strategic Objectives

1. To mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing carbon dioxide emissions, supporting decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy and reducing the risk of flooding.
2. To encourage safe and vibrant mixed communities that provide for the needs of all East Herts residents including the young, the elderly and vulnerable people.

3. To balance the housing market by delivering a mix of market, low cost, and affordable homes and accommodating the housing needs of an ageing population.
4. To protect the countryside from inappropriate development and to protect and enhance the historic environment of East Herts, promoting good design that creates a distinctive sense of place.
5. To foster entrepreneurial endeavour through educational attainment and encourage small and medium enterprises through maximising existing employment opportunities and clusters and supporting rural diversification.
6. To improve access opportunities, minimise the need to travel, and encourage necessary journeys to be made by sustainable means to ease congestion and help reduce East Herts' carbon footprint.
7. To meet the needs of all of East Herts' communities by maintaining and improving existing facilities and providing new facilities including for arts, culture, community, leisure, entertainment, recreation, faith and health.
8. To reduce water consumption, increase biodiversity and protect and enhance the quality of existing environmental assets by, inter alia, creating new green spaces and networks of high quality green space for both recreation and wildlife.
9. To ensure that development occurs in parallel with provision of the necessary infrastructure, including enhancement and provision of green infrastructure.

4.3 The Vision and Strategic Objectives reflect the Plan's role in providing for all future and existing residents in terms of new homes and community infrastructure including jobs and retail opportunities within easy reach and accessible by public transport. Developments at strategic sites are required to provide community facilities including schools and open spaces on site and to make contributions to improving or expanding existing infrastructure to ensure that needs arising from developments are met.

4.4 Table 1 below assesses the Pre-Submission District Plan in terms of its potential impact on the identified equality groups - race, disability, age, gender, religion and belief, sexual orientation and transgender. Furthermore, it also considers the potential impact of the Plan on those groups whose characteristics are relevant to East Herts.

Table 1: Equality Impact Assessment of the East Herts District Plan

Equality	Positive	Negative	No Impact	Explanatory Text
Race	✓	✓		<p>The District Plan seeks to ensure that a range of housing options are provided, including through the allocation of sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. In addition the Plan contains a criteria based policy for proposals for new park home sites for those who no longer fall within the Government’s definition of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. A full Accommodation Needs Assessment has been undertaken to identify the needs of these groups.</p> <p>There is the potential to strengthen the relationship between these groups and the settled community where sites are proposed as part of a wider development as issues such as access, privacy and security can be built in to the design of sites.</p> <p>However, there is also the potential that the ‘settled community’ feel disadvantaged or negatively affected by the proximity of such sites</p>
Disability	✓			<p>All new developments are designed to be compliant with the Building Regulations on disabled access. Policies HOU6 Specialist Housing for Older and Vulnerable People and HOU7 Accessible and Adaptable Homes both seek to ensure that new homes are provided which meet the needs of those who are less mobile or in need of specially adapted homes.</p> <p>Other policies within the Plan seek to ensure that new developments follow urban design principles, are designed to be easy to navigate, prioritise pedestrian movements and provide community facilities on site where necessary or make contributions to improving existing local community facilities where appropriate, including healthcare services.</p>
Age	✓			<p>The District Plan seeks to create communities that are inclusive for all ages, that comprise community facilities for young and old alike, provide schools and healthcare, provide a range of house type including family, adaptable or specialist</p>

Equality	Positive	Negative	No Impact	Explanatory Text
				<p>style homes. Affordable housing is important to younger and older people, and the Plan seeks to ensure a range of affordable homes are delivered as part of thriving mixed communities, in order to foster a sense of community and wellbeing.</p> <p>Open spaces provide space for play, sport and recreation and for gentle exercise and relaxation and these will be required as part of larger developments. Developments will also be expected to provide good pedestrian and cycle connections as well as improvements to public transport services, which are also of benefit to the young and old in particular. The creation of thriving communities will be of benefit to all age groups.</p>
Gender			✓	It is not considered that the Plan will have any impact on one gender or another. It is possible that the use of 'secured by design' standards could reduce the fear of crime, which tends to be higher in females, but any improvements in terms of creating safer neighbourhoods will be of benefit to the whole community.
Religion and Belief	✓			Facilities which enable the practice of faith and religious beliefs are covered within the community facilities section of the Plan and are supported by criteria based policy CFLR7 Community Facilities, and their loss is prevented through Policy CFLR8 Loss of Community facilities. The Plan seeks to encourage the integration of such groups through the sharing of facilities for multiple community uses.
Sexual Orientation			✓	It is not considered that the Plan has an impact on any particular sexual orientation.
Transgender			✓	It is not considered that the District Plan will have an impact on trans-gender issues.
Being married / in a civil partnership			✓	It is not considered that the District Plan will have an impact on those who are married or in a civil partnership any more so than any other individual or household.

Equality	Positive	Negative	No Impact	Explanatory Text
Being pregnant / having a child	✓			<p>The District Plan seeks to create communities that are inclusive for all individuals. Those who are pregnant or thinking of having children may have changing priorities in terms of looking for homes in the proximity of good schools and open spaces, and in locations where walking is deemed to be safer. The proximity of local shops and healthcare services may also become more important. Developments are required to provide local healthcare facilities and schools, play spaces and open spaces.</p> <p>Affordable housing is also important to those who need family sized homes and the Plan seeks to ensure a range of affordable homes and a mix of house sizes are provided.</p>
Those Disadvantaged by Socio-Economic Factors	✓			<p>The District Plan seeks to create mixed communities which provide a range of home options including affordable homes. Developments are also required to provide local services such as shops and healthcare facilities which are accessible within walking distance.</p> <p>New and/or improved public transport options will be provided through new development, connecting to town centres and other public transport options.</p> <p>The strategic development sites are required to provide land for employment generating activities. This can include traditional forms of business space, such as offices, light industrial or warehousing. But it can also include other employment generating activities such as in the care, education, retail or service industries.</p>
Those who live in the rural area	✓	✓		<p>The District Plan seeks to facilitate local decisions on the location and type of development through the Neighbourhood Planning process. This is seen as a positive by many communities.</p> <p>The village policies set out the approach to development in the rural area of East</p>

Equality	Positive	Negative	No Impact	Explanatory Text
				<p>Herts. New development in rural settlements can have many advantages; it can assist in creating thriving communities of a wider age ranges and life stages and can help to retain local services such as schools, community facilities and services, including public transport, local retail and commercial enterprises.</p> <p>The desire to maintain a rural idyll by restricting development make some villages a comparatively expensive and exclusive place to live. This lack of affordability is an issue for many who aspire to home ownership in the rural area and can cause issues with regards to the retention of those who work in the agricultural industry. Policy HOU4 Rural Exception Affordable Housing Sites provides the means to create affordable homes in the rural area which would otherwise be contrary to other policies within the Plan.</p> <p>However, those already within these settlements feel that the addition of new homes causes congestion and harms the character of settlements and can sometimes cause animosity between existing residents and those they see as ‘incomers’.</p> <p>As the quantum of development in the rural area is relatively small, compared to the overall distribution of development proposed across the District, individual development proposals do not lend themselves to the provision of new facilities on-site. Conversely, the proposed extensions to the District’s towns are large enough to be able to provide new facilities on site, and their proximity to existing services make them inherently more sustainable locations. This therefore means that in order to access some services, people who live in the rural area need to travel to their nearest town. However, rural public transport services are reducing in coverage and frequency and therefore this means that some rural residents will be disadvantaged by this approach.</p>

5. Summary and Conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 No specific impacts have been identified in relation to the equality groups defined by gender, sexual orientation, transgender or those who are married or in a civil partnership. This is not unexpected given the strategic nature of the Plan.
- 5.3 Where potential negative impacts have been 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.
- 5.4 Overall it is considered that no measures are felt to be required to mitigate the impacts that may arise as a result of the District Plan. However, the District Plan will be monitored regularly through the Authority Monitoring Report to measure whether and how well they deliver on their aims and whether changes are required through the District Plan review.