

Equality and Rurality Impact Assessment Form

When completing this form you will need to provide evidence that you have considered how the ‘protected characteristics’ may be impacted upon by this decision. In line with the General Equality Duty the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard for the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This form should be completed in conjunction with the guidance document available on the Intranet

Once completed a copy should be emailed to cheryl.sloan@publicagroup.uk to be signed off by an equalities officer before being published.

1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

Names: Lisa-Marie Robson (Planning Policy and Ecology Manager)	
Date of assessment: July 2025	Telephone: 01594 812499 Email: Lisa-Marie@Robson@fdean.gov.uk

2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function:

Forest of Dean District Local Plan 2021-2043 Local Plan Options to Deliver the Additional Housing Requirement July 2025
Is this a new or existing one? New

3. Briefly describe it aims and objectives

<p>The emerging Local Plan:</p> <p>The emerging Local Plan 2021-2043 for the Forest of Dean District will be a full Local Plan replacing the replacing the Core Strategy (CS) of 2012 and Allocations Plan (AP) 2018 as well as the Cinderford Northern Quarter Area Action Plan (AAP) of 2012. The purpose of the LP is to guide change over the period in a manner that best benefits the area whether by accommodating new development or applying measures to protect and enhance the environment. This must be achieved through promoting and achieving development that is sustainable, and a district, that whilst it meets the needs of the present does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In practice this means finding, enabling, promoting and supporting new solutions which achieve net zero carbon emissions alongside measures to protect and support the environment. The Plan must deliver appropriate local solutions for the FoDD and consequently contains policies and proposals covering a comprehensive range of planning issues which reflect local circumstances. In order to fulfil its role, the LP needs to be able to pass successfully through the examination process bringing an appropriate strategy and set of policies that comply with national guidance, which is supported by appropriate evidence.</p>

Forest Of Dean Local Plan Vision is as follows:

- The district is actively engaged in pursuing a low carbon future and new development is designed to enable this while being able to adapt to climate change.
- In 2041 younger people are more likely to want to stay in the district with good access to education, employment and housing.
- The needs of an ageing population have also been incorporated into the design of new development.
- It is a place where healthy lifestyles are an everyday part of living and working in the district.
- The implementation of sustainable development enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.
- The diverse landscapes and heritage of the area is so distinctive that it is nationally and internationally recognised.
- A thriving tourism market is underpinned by a high quality natural and built environment.
- The lack of affordable housing has been addressed through imaginative and sustainable ways providing an appropriate range of tenures which support local communities, services and facilities.
- The area has resilient and diverse employment opportunities with strong links to good local schools embracing, in particular, industries of the future.
- The district is better connected through improved transport, digital and mobile data connections which reduce the need to travel and provide a distinctive local offer.
- The Forest of Dean is known as an amazing place to start and grow business.

Local Plan Options to Deliver the Additional Housing Requirement July 2025 paper, which is the subject of the public consultation July-September 2025:

In December 2024 a revised National Planning Policy Framework was published introducing changes to national planning policy aimed at tackling the country's acute housing crisis and to stimulate economic growth and thereby imposing new housing targets. The most notable change to the revised framework is the way in which the local housing need is calculated and as a result of this, the amount of housing the FOD District is required to plan for through the Local Plan has increased significantly – an uplift of 82%, from 330 new homes per year to 600 new homes per year. Over a twenty-year period this would equate to over 12,000 new homes.

Given the scale of change, it is unlikely that the current agreed strategy is capable of delivering a housing requirement to meet this revised need. However, this doesn't mean starting again; the work that has been completed to date and the responses received to the Draft Local Plan 2024 consultation are still relevant. However, in April 2025 the Council agreed it is necessary to review the current development strategy and explore what other potential strategic options may exist so that the district may meet its housing need.

This Options consultation is a chance for different policy approaches to be appraised and commented on before setting the strategic approach for the Plan. Suggestions of new or amended approaches to those suggested through the consultation are welcomed. It is acknowledged that further evidence work will be required to support the final plan, including a housing needs assessment and infrastructure delivery plan.

4. Are there any external considerations? (e.g. Legislation/government directives)

The Local Plan Options to Deliver the Additional Housing Requirement document is prepared in the light of government guidance which prescribes the general scope and content and also sets the general approach which it must follow.

5. What evidence has helped to inform this assessment?

Source	✓	If ticked please explain what
Demographic data and other statistics, including census findings	✓	Local Plan Key Notes/Evidence (Evidence gathering ranging from population data, settlement data, housing figures (including tenure), deprivation, education data, employment data, annual Authorities Monitoring Reports, Sustainability Appraisal)
Recent research findings including studies of deprivation	✓	As summarised in Key Notes/Evidence, annual Authorities Monitoring Reports.
Results of recent consultations and surveys	✓	Issues and Options Consultation 2019, Preferred Option Consultation 2020, Second Preferred Option Consultation 2022, Draft Local Plan Consultation 2024, Sustainability Appraisal.
Results of ethnic monitoring data and any equalities data	✓	Collection of data regarding housing need, employment data, deprivation data and other evidence gathering.
Anecdotal information from groups and agencies within Gloucestershire	✓	Through active public consultation processes.
Comparisons between similar functions / policies elsewhere	✓	Through public consultation and evidence gathering.
Analysis of audit reports and reviews	✓	Through evidence data gathering.
Other:	✓	Technical material covering a wide range of subjects, such as housing need, Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment, employment need, Sustainability Appraisal, etc.

6. Please specify how intend to gather evidence to fill any gaps identified above:

Additional evidence gathering and public consultation.

7. Has any consultation been carried out?

Yes

Details of Consultation

Public consultations at the following stages of the plan:

Issues and Options Consultation 2019

Preferred Option Consultation 2020

Second Preferred Option Consultation 2022

Draft Local Plan Consultation July 2024

Local Plan Options to Deliver the Additional Housing Requirement – due to start July 31st 2025

If NO please outline any planned activities

8. What level of impact either directly or indirectly will the proposal have upon the general public / staff? (Please quantify where possible)

Level of impact	Response
NO IMPACT – The proposal has no impact upon the general public/staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
LOW – Few members of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEDIUM – A large group of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIGH – The proposal will have an impact upon the whole community/all staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Comments: e.g. Who will this specifically impact?	

All members of the Forest of Dean District community

9. Considering the available evidence, what type of impact could this function have on any of the protected characteristics?

Negative – it could disadvantage and therefore potentially not meet the General Equality duty;

Positive – it could benefit and help meet the General Equality duty;

Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact / Not sure

	Potential Negative	Potential Positive	Neutral	Reasons	Options for mitigating adverse impacts
Age – Young People		✓		Many younger people are less able to afford to buy their own home or rent housing. The average age of first time buyers has gone up nationally and house prices in the District are higher. Younger people are also often reliant on public transport to access education, employment and training opportunities, as well as for social and leisure activities. The barriers for mobility for young people include cost and availability of public transport, especially in rural areas. The Local Plan seeks to improve this situation through providing a range of housing including affordable housing, improved transport networks/active travel, local employment offers and education, as well as improved local community facilities/recreation.	
Age – Old People		✓		Older people may require different types of housing or adjustments to their accommodation to enable them to live independently because they are more likely to live on their own, suffer from long term illness or disability. As a result they tend to require greater access to health services. Older people are more likely to have lower incomes and are more likely to suffer from fuel poverty.	

				Older people are generally more reliant on public transport to access essential services and facilities than those of working age. Population forecasts indicate that the number of older people in the District is set to increase. The Local Plan seeks to improve this situation through providing a range of housing including affordable housing, adaptable housing, improved transport networks, as well as improved local community facilities.	
Disability		✓		The term 'disabilities' covers a multitude of issues, such as physical mobility and sensory problems, as well as learning difficulties. Therefore the needs of people with disabilities are wide-ranging and solutions will be different for individuals. The LP aims to address this by providing suitable accommodation in appropriate locations, in accordance with the Housing Needs Assessment, and improving disabled access to public transport in accordance with the Local Transport Plan. People with disabilities may require specific adjustments to their accommodation to facilitate their lives, and the LP seeks to subscribe that new housing meets the Nationally Described Space Standards and improve the supply of adaptable housing. Disabled people also tend to have less accessibility as they tend to drive less and can also have problems using public transport. Disabled people can be more vulnerable in situations of flooding as such the LP also seeks resilience to flooding across the District The LP seeks to improve transport networks including public transport and active travel. It also seeks resilience to flooding across the District.	
Sex – Male		✓			

Sex – Female		✓		Evidence from national surveys indicates that women in general have less accessibility to private transport and are more likely to use public transport. The Council is committed to improving accessibility through its Local Transport Plan for all sectors of the community and to improve active travel. The LP also aims to improve accessibility for everyone by locating development where there is already good access to key services and facilities, safeguarding essential local services and facilities and by improving connections between communities and key services and facilities.	
Race including Gypsy and Travellers		✓		Gypsies & Travellers are an ethnic minority, whose rights are protected from discrimination by the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Human Rights Act 1998, together with all ethnic groups who have a particular culture, language or values. The accommodation requirements of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople also need to be specifically catered for. The LP aims to identify and support permanent and transit sites in a more focussed and detailed way and the Council is working towards identifying suitable sites and delivering new pitches, working with the local Gypsy and Traveller community.	
Religion or Belief			✓	There is no evidence available to suggest that planning or the LP impacts differently upon people according to their religion or belief.	
Sexual Orientation			✓	There is no evidence available to suggest that planning or the LP impacts differently upon people according to their sexual orientation.	
Gender Reassignment			✓	There is no evidence available to suggest that planning or the LP impacts differently upon people according to their gender reassignment.	

Pregnancy and maternity			✓	There is no evidence available to suggest that planning or the LP impacts differently upon people during pregnancy or maternity.	
Geographical impacts on one area		✓		<p>This Options paper seeks to gain views on a revised strategy for the additional housing requirement. The Options for development could result in development occurring in any of the following forms (depending on which becomes the agreed strategy):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected planned expansion of existing settlements (in particular the most sustainable settlements, such as towns and large villages) • Sharing of housing numbers across all settlements • Maximum incremental change to the extent of absolute constraints • Planned new settlement(s), • Negotiated agreement to pass some development to other adjoining authorities, • Combination of options (Selected planned expansion and new settlement(s)). 	
Other Groups					
Rural considerations: ie Access to services; leisure facilities, transport; education; employment; broadband.		✓		<p>The LP seeks to encourage development in the most sustainable locations where there are currently facilities and infrastructure. The LP seeks an improvement in general infrastructure, transport networks, including public transport and active travel links, an increase in employment opportunities, education and leisure community facilities. It also seeks to</p>	

				reduce carbon, which may impact on transport, as well as seek to help facilitate working from home. Rural housing may also be additionally considered acceptable via rural exception sites where local housing need is identified.	
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10. Action plan (add additional lines if necessary)

Action(s)	Lead Officer	Resource	Timescale

11. Is there is anything else that you wish to add?

Following this 'Local Plan Options to Deliver the Additional Housing Requirement July 2025' public consultation, it is anticipated that a revised 'Draft Local Plan' will be published for public consultation in Winter 2025/2026.

Declaration

I/We are satisfied that an equality impact assessment has been carried out on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function and where an negative impact has been identified actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact. We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the District Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment.

Completed By:	Anna Welsh (Planning Policy Officer)	Date:	09.07.2025
Line Manager:	Lisa Robson (Planning Policy and Ecology Manager) Signed by Philippa Lowe, Head of Place. <i>Philippa Lowe</i>	Date:	09.07.2025

Reviewed by Corporate Equality Officer:	Cheryl Sloan 	Date:	24/07/25
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