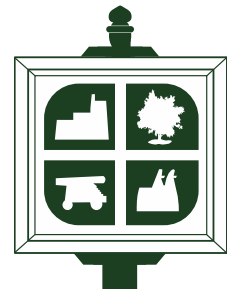


Horsmonden Neighbourhood Plan



2022-2038

Equalities Impact Assessment

Horsmonden Parish Council with the
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

December 2021

<http://horsmondennp.co.uk/>

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Equalities Act places a duty on 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. There are nine 'protected characteristics', which are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage and civil partnership
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
- 1.3. It is important to consider, when writing planning policies, how those policies might impact those with protected characteristics. This will help to ensure that the policies are carefully thought through, with a view to increasing participation and inclusion, changing the culture of public decision-making, and placing a more proactive approach to the promotion of equality and fairness at the heart of public policy.
- 1.4. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is a tool used to systematically assess a policy or policies, to explore whether there might be an adverse impact on a one or more of the groups with protected characteristics. It is a method of assessing and recording the likely differential and/or adverse impact of a policy on people from the different groups. This helps to identify any unintended consequences that a policy might have. If a policy is found to result in unfairness or discrimination, then changes to eliminate or lessen the impact should be considered.
- 1.5. This document presents the EqIA that has been prepared to accompany the Submission version of the Horsmonden Neighbourhood Plan (the HNP). It presents the baseline data on the parish and then assesses the objectives and policies of the HNP to ensure that Horsmonden Parish Council (as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the HNP) is satisfying its statutory duties in this regard.

2. Baseline data

2.1. In preparing the EqIA, 2011 Census data has been examined to compile a brief profile of each equality grouping. Data for Horsmonden Parish is available for the following protected characteristics: age, disability, race, religious belief, sex, and, in part, sexual orientation. Data relating to gender reassignment and pregnancy/maternity is unavailable at Parish level.

Age profile

2.2. In 2011 the population of Horsmonden Parish was 2,435 people. The following table indicates that the age profiles of those living in the Parish largely mirror those of the Borough and England as a whole. There was a slightly higher than average number of children and teenagers living the Parish at the time of census, when compared to broader geographies.

	Horsmonden	Tunbridge Wells Borough	England
Aged 17 or less	27.8%	23.4%	21.4%
Aged 18 to 64	54.9%	60.1%	62.3%
Aged 65 +	17.2%	16.6%	16.3%

Gender

2.3. The figures mirror those of the wider population. Other gender categories are not recorded.

	Horsmonden	Tunbridge Wells Borough	England
Male	48.7%	49.1%	49.2%
Female	51.3%	50.9%	50.8%

Disability

2.4. The number of residents with a disability that limits activity is lower in the Parish than across the borough and country.

	Horsmonden	Tunbridge Wells Borough	England
Day-to-day activities limited a lot	4.97%	6.06%	8.31%
Day-to-day activities limited a little	7.06%	8.17%	9.33%
Day-to-day activities not limited	87.97%	85.77%	82.36%

Race

2.5. The majority of residents in the Parish are white, mirroring the borough figure. Other ethnicities are significantly lower than across the country as a whole.

	Horsmonden	Tunbridge Wells Borough	England
White	98.40%	94.95%	85.42%
Mixed	0.99%	1.65%	2.25%
Asian	0.37%	2.52%	7.82%
Black	0.00%	0.55%	3.48%
Other	0.25%	0.33%	1.03%

Religion or belief

2.6. The dominant faith group within Horsmonden Parish and across England as a whole is Christian. Approximately 1% of the population of Horsmonden follow a different religion, compared to the 8.2% across the country. Approximately 30% of respondents either do not have a religion or declined to state it.

	Horsmonden	Tunbridge Wells Borough	England
Christian	68.21%	62.93%	59.38%
Buddhist	0.04%	0.39%	0.45%
Hindu	0.21%	0.40%	1.52%
Jewish	0.33%	0.20%	0.49%
Muslim	0.16%	1.08%	5.02%
Sikh	0.00%	0.05%	0.79%
Other religion	0.25%	0.38%	0.43%
No religion	22.79%	26.62%	24.74%
Religion not stated	8.01%	7.95%	7.18%

Sexual orientation

2.7. There is very limited data in the 2011 Census relating to the sexual orientation of the population. There were no residents in the Parish recorded as living in a household as part of a same-sex couple. This compares with a figure of 0.14% for the Borough and 0.23% for England as a whole.

In summary

2.8. In summary, Horsmonden, when compared to the borough and to the national level has a:

- slightly higher than average number of children and teenagers as well as older people, aged 65+;
- similar percentage of males and females;
- lower percentage of the population with a health problem or disability that has lasted, or was expected to last, at least 12 months and limits daily activity either a lot or a little;
- significantly lower proportion of non-white persons;
- significantly lower percentage of people who follow a religion other than Christianity; and
- lower proportion of the population living in a household as part of a same-sex couple.

2.9. The release of the Census 2021 data should be reviewed when available so that the baseline profile can be updated.

3. Community involvement

- 3.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out Government planning policy, states that the planning system should play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating inclusive communities. It highlights the need to create a shared vision with communities of the residential environment and facilities they wish to see. This should be through the involvement of all sections of the community in the development of plans and the need to plan for a mix of housing to meet the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes).
- 3.2. Throughout the plan preparation process, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has sought to ensure that residents, their representatives, local businesses, interest groups and wider interested parties, including statutory and regulatory bodies, have been actively consulted and their views sought. The overarching principles of the stakeholder engagement process has been to engage in a manner that is extensive, effective, inclusive, fair, transparent, and proportionate.
- 3.3. A full description of the community involvement is contained in the Consultation Statement which accompanies the Submission Plan. In summary:
 - All written communications were in English, and it was not considered necessary to translate them into any other language.
 - Agendas, key reports, and updates have been regularly provided online on the Horsmonden Neighbourhood Plan website¹.
 - A series of events and workshops on various topics relating to the HNP have taken place throughout the process, including a visioning event, development exhibition, themed workshops, and summer festival presence.
 - A questionnaire was delivered to all households.
 - A Housing Needs Survey was undertaken to understand local housing needs.
 - Master planning and design work has been commissioned for the Parish.
 - Meetings with developers have taken place.
 - Screening for SEA / HRA purposes was undertaken by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, including consultation with the statutory consultees.
- 3.4. Other means of communication for sharing information on the HNP have included the use of noticeboards around the parish, displays, presentations and Q&A sessions at the Annual Parish Meeting, articles and updates published in local newsletters.
- 3.5. Consideration has been given to all comments and responses made in the preparation of the HNP. In particular, the responses to the visioning event and survey in the early stages of the plan-making process were used to shape the vision and objectives for the HNP.

¹ <http://horsmondennp.co.uk/>

4. Likely impact on groups with protected characteristics

4.1. The vision for the HNP is as follows:

“In 15 years’ time, Horsmonden will be a village that has retained its character, community spirit and rurality but that has embraced new technologies and social and economic opportunities. It will have diversified to allow improvements in transport, housing, and leisure, to cater for all members of the community.”

4.2. The vision is expected to have a positive likely impact on those with protected characteristics. It recognises and supports access for the whole community to local social, employment, leisure, and environmental amenities. It also supports improvements to housing choice and provision and transport options.

4.3. The HNP contains six objectives that set out how the Parish Council proposes to deliver its vision for Horsmonden to 2038. Delivery of the objectives will be through a combination of planning policies, projects, and community actions. Table 1 reviews each objective to assess its likely impact on groups with protected characteristics within the Parish:

Table 1: Review of likely impact of the HNP objectives

Objective	Likely impact	Commentary
To improve access and movement across the parish, to create a ‘walkable village’ for all, including residents of new developments.	Positive	This objective promotes active and sustainable travel measures and improvements to public transport for all residents. It is therefore deemed to have a positive impact on those with protected characteristics, notably the young, older residents and those with disabilities.
Provision should be made for businesses to expand and flourish.	Positive	The objective seeks to promote opportunities for locally based work, including homeworking, which could have a positive impact on a number of those with protected characteristics in addition to the wider population.
New development should bring with it the opportunity to provide improved community, health and leisure facilities to existing and new residents of the parish.	Positive	The objective supports several initiatives that are likely to have a positive impact, including the provision of a medical centre within a possible new community hall space. Also, the provision of parking at local venues, which could assist those who are less mobile.
To provide design policies that can be applied to any new development proposals in the parish to help ensure that they are sustainable and in keeping with local character.	Neutral	Whilst there is no clear impact or focus on residents with protected characteristics, high quality design is an important development aspiration that will ease living conditions. This objective will have a neutral impact.
New homes and development should meet the needs of the	Positive	This objective promotes high quality housing, which is affordable, walkable to the key facilities, and

local community, particularly for smaller new homes, should regenerate previously developed land, be affordable and within walking distance of village facilities.		suited to the needs identified in the community. It is anticipated to have a positive impact on residents with protected characteristics.
To retain the distinctive agricultural heritage of the parish, protect views, enhance biodiversity, protect ancient woodland and green spaces and retain dark night skies.	Neutral	This is an important objective and will benefit residents in terms of preserving the rural and tranquil nature of the Parish. There is no particular focus on those with protected characteristics hence the impact is anticipated to be neutral.

4.4. All the HNP objectives are considered to have either a positive or neutral likely impact on those with protected characteristics.

4.5. Table 2 lists the policies of the Submission version Plan. It identifies the outcomes that the successful application of the policies are expected to achieve and assesses the potential for the policies of the Plan to have an impact on each of the equality target groups with protected characteristics. There are no individual policies that are considered likely to have a negative impact.

Key to Table 2:

Symbol	Likely impact
+	Positive
0	Neutral
-	Negative
?	Uncertain

Table 2: Review of likely impact of the HNP policies

Policy	Expected outcome	Equality Target Groups with protected characteristics									Comments
		Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage/ civil partnership	Pregnancy/ maternity	Race	Religion/ belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	
Access and Movement											
Policy 2.1: Walkable village	Developments will be within walking distance of the village centre.	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	The policy is considered inclusive and will have a positive on those particularly with mobility issues or with young children.
Policy 2.2: Minimising traffic speeds	Traffic speed will be mitigated.	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is considered inclusive and will positively benefit those with mobility issues and by contributing to a safer environment for pedestrians.
Policy 2.3: Adequate pavements	The provision of pavements in line with the recommendations of the Manual for Streets	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is considered inclusive and will benefit those with mobility issues and by contributing to a safer environment for pedestrians.
Policy 2.4: Crossing patrol	Contributions to help fund a new pedestrian crossing	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is considered inclusive and will benefit those with mobility issues and by

Policy	Expected outcome	Equality Target Groups with protected characteristics									Comments
		Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage/ civil partnership	Pregnancy/ maternity	Race	Religion/ belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	
											contributing to a safer environment for pedestrians.
Policy 2.5: Public parking	Additional car parking provision to serve the village centre	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is considered inclusive and will benefit those with mobility issues by enabling access to the village centre.
Policy 2.6: New parking	Parking provided for residential developments must adhere to the requirements set out in the borough council's parking standards	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy will benefit those requiring access to car parking, for instance groups with disabilities.
Policy 2.7: Charging points	Additional electric car charging points provided	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is considered to be inclusive and unlikely to have a negative impact on equality target groups.

Policy	Expected outcome	Equality Target Groups with protected characteristics									Comments
		Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage/ civil partnership	Pregnancy/ maternity	Race	Religion/ belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	
Business and Employment											
Policy 3.1: Maintain existing employment land	Safeguarding of existing employment land	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is inclusive and will enable continued local employment opportunities. There are not anticipated to be negative impacts on equality target groups.
Policy 3.2: Broadband	The provision of broadband within new development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is inclusive and will enable continued local employment opportunities. There are not anticipated to be negative impacts on equality target groups.
Policy 3.3: Conversion of farm buildings	Additional employment space provided locally	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is inclusive and will enable continued local employment opportunities. There are not anticipated to be negative impacts on equality target groups.

Policy	Expected outcome	Equality Target Groups with protected characteristics									Comments
		Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage/ civil partnership	Pregnancy/ maternity	Race	Religion/ belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	
Policy 3.4: Business associated with vineyards and fruit growing	Provision of outlets, cafes and restaurants that support the local fruit industry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is inclusive and will enable continued local employment opportunities. There are not anticipated to be negative impacts on equality target groups.
Policy 3.5: Mobile phone and data transmission	Improved mobile networks across the parish	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is inclusive and will positively benefit those who may be more reliant on phone signal. There are not anticipated to be negative impacts on equality target groups.
Community infrastructure											
Policy 4.1: New medical facilities	Supports additional medical facilities in the village	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	This is an inclusive policy and will benefit a number of the equality target groups through the provision of access to more local health care.

Policy	Expected outcome	Equality Target Groups with protected characteristics									Comments
		Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage/ civil partnership	Pregnancy/ maternity	Race	Religion/ belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	
Policy 4.2: Allotments	Provision of new allotment space for the community	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is inclusive and will bring potential health and wellbeing benefits to some of the groups. It is not anticipated to negatively impact the groups with protected characteristics.
Policy 4.3: Facilities for children and young people	Additional playground space / facilities provided	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy will positively benefit residents of particular ages and potentially those with disabilities, depending on the equipment provided.
Policy 4.4: New village hall	Provision of a new community facility within walking distance of the village centre	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The facility will provide benefits through the provision of additional community space.
Design and style											
Policy 5.1: Design of new development	Developments that are of a high quality, based on the	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is inclusive and is not anticipated to negatively impact the target groups.

Policy	Expected outcome	Equality Target Groups with protected characteristics									Comments
		Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage/ civil partnership	Pregnancy/ maternity	Race	Religion/ belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	
	guidelines of the Horsmonden Design Guide										
Housing development											
Policy 6.1: Meeting housing need	Housing delivered that meets the particular needs identified at the community level	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is inclusive and bring positive benefits by targeting particular community needs, as evidenced in the local surveys.
Policy 6.2: Windfall residential development	Windfall homes directed to specific parts of the parish	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is considered inclusive and will not negatively impact those groups with protected characteristics.
Policy 6.3: Provision of sheltered housing	Provision of specialist housing	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy will benefit particularly those wishing to find local sheltered housing.
Policy 6.4: ?											
Policy 6.5: ?											

Policy	Expected outcome	Equality Target Groups with protected characteristics									Comments
		Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage/ civil partnership	Pregnancy/ maternity	Race	Religion/ belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	
Policy 6.6: Replacement dwellings	Safeguarding existing housing stock in terms of size and massing, where it is redeveloped.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is considered inclusive and will not negatively impact those groups with protected characteristics.
Landscape and environment											
Policy 7.1: Local Green Spaces	Protection of green spaces in the parish that are demonstrably special to the community from inappropriate development	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is considered inclusive and will not negatively impact those groups with protected characteristics. There will be likely benefits, including for health, wellbeing and recreation, to those in a range of age groups by protecting valued green spaces.
Policy 7.2: Protecting important views	Safeguarding views and viewpoints that are significant in the parish	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is considered inclusive and will not negatively impact those groups with protected characteristics.

Policy	Expected outcome	Equality Target Groups with protected characteristics									Comments
		Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage/ civil partnership	Pregnancy/ maternity	Race	Religion/ belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	
Policy 7.3: Biodiversity net gain	Protecting against loss of net gain in biodiversity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy will not negatively impact those groups with protected characteristics.
Policy 7.4: Trees and hedgerows	Trees and hedgerows retained	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy will not negatively impact those groups with protected characteristics.
Policy 7.5: New green spaces	Additional amenity green space provided	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy is considered inclusive and there will be likely benefits, including for health, wellbeing and recreation, to those in a range of age groups, by protecting additional amenity green space.
Policy 7.6: Retaining the best, most versatile and characteristic agricultural land	Grade 2 agricultural land retained	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy will not negatively impact those groups with protected characteristics.

Policy	Expected outcome	Equality Target Groups with protected characteristics									Comments
		Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage/ civil partnership	Pregnancy/ maternity	Race	Religion/ belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	
Policy 7.7: Light pollution	Light pollution mitigated in new developments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy will not negatively impact those groups with protected characteristics.
Policy 7.8: Development within the AONB	The High Weald AONB objectives supported	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy will not negatively impact those groups with protected characteristics.
Policy 7.9: Development adjacent to the AONB	The High Weald AONB objectives supported in areas considered to be part of the setting of the AONB	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy will not negatively impact those groups with protected characteristics.
Policy 7.10: Development adjacent to ancient woodland	Ancient woodland in the parish protected from the impacts of development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy will not negatively impact those groups with protected characteristics.
Policy 7.11: Flooding	Flooding incidents will have been mitigated against	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The policy will not negatively impact those groups with protected characteristics.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The HNP provides a suite of objectives and policies to respond to the vision for the benefit of the local community, including those with protected characteristics. None of the policies within the HNP are anticipated to have negative impacts on those with protected characteristics. In many cases, they will bring additional benefits to certain equality target groups.
- 5.2. In preparing the HNP, Horsmonden Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have sought to engage widely with the local community. They have gone beyond minimum consultation requirements to gather the views of the community.
- 5.3. In conclusion, the assessment finds the HNP to be appropriate and that the duty of care prescribed by the Equalities Act (2010) is met.