

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Assessing the impact of the South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (The Village Clusters Plan) upon different sections of the community.

Introduction

This EqIA reviews the Pre-submission Draft version of The Village Clusters Housing Allocation Plan (VCHAP), (the Regulation 19 version), in order to assess any potential impacts on equalities resulting from the Objectives of the VCHAP and its site-specific housing allocations.

The South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan aims to deliver sustainable growth within the more rural parts of South Norfolk. The Village Clusters Plan is being developed alongside the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) and in accordance with Government's national planning policies and guidance (the GNLP has prepared its own EqIA). The main aim of the Plan is to allocate a series of smaller sites, 12 to 50 homes, across the 48 Village Clusters in South Norfolk, to accommodate at least 1,200 new homes in total. The Plan also defines the Settlement Limits for the villages within these clusters, making provision for further, smaller sites of up to 11 dwellings.

The Regulation 19 version of the VCHAP sets out the Council's chosen Plan, including Objectives for development across the village clusters and site-specific policy allocations, with background text, to support the allocation of each site. Following a review of the representations submitted in response to the Regulation 18 consultation it was determined that the Core Policies that had previously been included replicated existing planning policy; as such Core Policies have not been carried forward into the Pre-submission Draft version of the Plan.

The Regulation 19 Pre-submission Draft Plan is the version of the Plan that the Council intends to submit for Examination in Public. Representations submitted in response to the publication of this Plan should be related to matters of legal and soundness compliance.

In accordance with the Local Planning Regulations (2012), the Council will notify anyone who they considered has an interest, and the specific and general consultees as listed in the Regulations, including:

1. people who live in, work in and visit South Norfolk;
2. individuals, organisations, landowners and development companies needing to make planning applications to the Council, and the professional planning agents and architects who represent them;
3. public sector organisations (e.g. Norfolk Constabulary, Norfolk County Council);
4. housing associations, registered social landlords and other organisations in the voluntary sector;
5. general consultees (e.g. local interest groups such as those representing different racial, ethnic or national groups, different religious groups, disabled persons, Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and older or younger people);
6. statutory bodies (e.g. the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England) and;
7. neighbouring local authorities.

It is important to recognise that the needs of different equalities groups are considered throughout the process. The consequences of not recognising and addressing the different needs of different groups, could result in discrimination or a failure to promote the equality of opportunity for everyone. As a result, all of the protected characteristics under the PSED are considered within this report as part of scoping and screening exercises.

Legal Context

Local authorities are specifically required to undertake an EqlA under The Equality Act 2010. The requirement to undertake an EqlA stems from the duty placed on local authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination in carrying out its functions, and to promote equality of opportunity.

The Equality Act 2010 requires local authorities to ensure that their plans and policies do not adversely impact upon any group with 'protected characteristics', and furthermore should encourage greater equality between different groups. The following characteristics are protected characteristics under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation

Applying the Public Sector Equality Duty to local plans, it is important to assess whether the Objectives and site-specific allocations in the South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocation Plan have an impact (positive or negative) on any of the protected groups set out above, and how the Plan addresses socio-economic inequality.

Methodology

In producing the EqlA, various sources of information have been gathered by the Officer team involved in preparing the Plan in order to determine whether the VCHAP is likely to have an impact on, or discriminate against different groups, within the community. Such sources of information include the most recently available Census data, along with national and local statistics. Drafting of the Plan has also included the involvement of a range of organisations and consultees throughout the preparation period, including formally at the Regulation 18 stage of production. Progress on the EqlA has run in tandem with the production of the VCHAP and has been an iterative process, reflecting the evolution of the Plan itself.

This report will identify any protected groups which may be impacted (either positively or negatively) by each Objective in turn. If an Objective would have no impact on a particular group, the result is recorded as 'not applicable'. Moving through the Plan, an assessment of its impacts on protected groups has been categorised by theme rather than by individual site allocation. This approach recognises the similarities between the sites being allocated and therefore avoids unnecessary duplication, whilst still presenting the key findings in an accessible format. Where the screening exercise identifies that the Village Clusters Housing

Allocation Plan has an impact upon one or more group this is explained in more detail. If any negative impact exists, the Objective or site allocation has been subject to further consideration. The requirement for a full Equality Impact Assessment is considered with the aim of avoiding negative impacts upon the identified group or groups, and to take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people. In the instance that an impact on a protected group is identified (either positive or negative) the report will conclude with a proposed method of monitoring that impact.

For the purposes of preparing this updated EQIA a scoping exercise was undertaken. This determined that the residential land use policies proposed in the Village Clusters Housing Allocation Plan are unlikely to impact upon a person's personal identity or relationships. Therefore, the following protected characteristics have been scoped out of this report: gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation.

The screening exercise therefore focussed on the potential impact of the objectives and policies within the Plan (positive and negative) on people with the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity

In addition to these protected groups, the Council has also considered it appropriate to assess the community impacts on other groups within the village cluster areas to ensure a robust assessment has taken place. The impact of the Plan on the following additional groups (in the context of the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010) has therefore also been assessed:

- Health
- Place (including 'Rurality')
- Low Income and Poverty

The Equalities Profile of South Norfolk

An 'Equalities Profile' for South Norfolk can be found at Appendix 1, while Table 1 (below) sums up the baseline information of the different protected characteristics, which are focussed upon as part of the following assessment. The characteristics are in accordance with the list set out above.

At the time of preparing the interim EqIA in May 2021 the available Census data referred back to the 2011 Census. Since this time some updated information from the 2021 has been made available and Table 1 below has been updated to reflect this information.

Table 1: Summary of baseline information of protected characteristics

Protected Characteristic	South Norfolk
Age	<p>The 2021 Census population figure for South Norfolk District is 141,947 persons in some 61,382 households.</p> <p>Nearly a quarter (24.3%) of the South Norfolk population is of retirement age (based on 65+ plus years) which has potential implications for health and social care, and potentially access to services.</p> <p>In 2011 the population figure for South Norfolk was 124,012 persons across 52,809 households with 21.4% of the population in South Norfolk of retirement age.</p> <p>This uplift in both overall population and age suggests that there will be continued implications for health and social care, housing need and access to facilities and services</p>
Disability	<p>Census respondents were asked to assess whether their health was very good, good, fair, bad or very bad. South Norfolk has a high percentage of persons with very good and good health, with only 4.5% with bad or very bad health.</p> <p>Another Census question asked whether residents had a long-term (12 months +) health problem or disability which limited their day-to-day activities. The results, as shown in Appendix 1 show that 7.4% of South Norfolk residents have a severely limiting health condition.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>In 2016 data for South Norfolk of the Live Birth Rate (CBR) was at 10,100 persons and the General Fertility Rate (GFR) of all live births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 was 62.1%</p>
Health	<p>Census respondents were asked to assess whether their health was very good, good, fair, bad or very bad. South Norfolk has a high percentage of persons with very good and good health, with only 4.5% with bad or very bad health.</p>
Place inc. Rurality	<p>In South Norfolk 78.6% of people live in rural areas, compared with 31% in the Eastern Region. 23,678 persons live in urban parts of South Norfolk, with 87,032 people living in rural areas (less sparse). Of that 87,032, 32,838 persons live in towns, 39,144 live in villages and 15,050 persons in dispersed areas.</p>
Low Income and Poverty	<p>The classification of household deprivation on the Census is independent of the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation</p>

	<p>published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Four dimensions from the Census returns have been identified as giving an indication of household deprivation.</p> <p>A household is deprived in a dimension if they meet one or more of the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment: Where any member of a household, who is not a full-time student, is either unemployed or long-term sick. • Education: No person in the household has at least Level 2 education (see highest level of qualification), and no person aged 16 to 18 is a full-time student. • Health and disability: Any person in the household has general health that is 'bad' or 'very bad' or has a long-term health problem. • Housing: The household's accommodation is either overcrowded, with an occupancy rating -1 or less, or is in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating. <p>Within South Norfolk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 193 people identify as being deprived in all 4 dimensions • 2,381 people identify as being deprived in 3 dimensions • 11,241 people identify as being deprived in 2 dimensions • 17,956 people identify as being deprived in 1 dimension: and • 14,829 people identify as being not deprived in any dimension.
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Source: 2011 Census ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 26 April 2021]

The Equality Impact Assessment

Objectives and Settlement Limit Review

The following table illustrates the screening process for the objectives and the Settlement Limit review.

Any negative impact identified on a protected group will result in further consideration of the objective/policy and depending on the outcome the objective/policy may be subject to full Equalities Impact Assessment.

The table below identifies with a tick (✓) any protected groups which may be impacted positively, and with a cross (X), any protected groups which may be impacted negatively. Potential impacts identified are described in the next section, and any actions needed are explored in the conclusion.

Table 2: Screening the Equality Impacts of The Village Cluster Plan– Objectives, and Settlement Limit review

	Age	Disability	Pregnancy and maternity	Health	Place inc. Rurality	Low Income and Poverty
SNVC Objective 1 Meeting housing needs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SNVC Objective 2 Protecting village communities and support rural services and facilities	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	N/A
SNVC Objective 3 Protect the character of villages and their settings	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	✓	N/A
Amendment of Settlement Limits	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓

Potential Impacts

This section assesses the impact of the Objectives contained within the VCHAP on the identified protected characteristics.

Objective Policies' Impacts

- SNVC Objective 1 - Meeting Housing Needs: This objective seeks to provide new housing to meet housing needs and is considered to have a positive impact. Objective 1 ensures that allocated sites provide an appropriate mix of house types, sizes and tenures to allow for residents at different stages in their lives (for example, first-time buyers, affordable housing, upsizing/downsizing). The mix of housing on a site will be informed by the latest evidence base and the requirements identified within it. This approach to housing development benefits many different groups in society including first time buyers, persons with reduced mobility, low-income households, people with a physical disability and older residents. Updates to the existing Settlement Limits to encourage windfall development, in accordance with Objective 1, will encourage new development to take place in appropriate locations focusing development in settlements and in closer proximity to existing facilities and services. This will benefit residents of all ages, those who may suffer from ill-health and/or disabilities as well as low-income groups who are less likely to have access to a private car. Overall, the impact of this objective on protected characteristics is considered to be positive.
- SNVC Objective 2 - Protecting village communities and support rural services and facilities: Objective 2 seeks to provide opportunities for new housing development to support local services and facilities, meeting the needs of a range of occupiers who have the potential to support different local services and facilities. The promotion of well-located development that supports local facilities and amenities benefits all groups within the community but particularly those in the following protected groups who may have a greater reliance on access to local facilities: age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, health and low-income and poverty. A key output of this objective is the proximity and accessibility of allocated sites to the existing services and facilities within the cluster. However, it is also recognised that the historic organic growth of settlements and development in the rural areas means that existing services and facilities are often distributed throughout the cluster rather than being grouped together as would be more typical in a larger settlement. An alternative approach to the distribution of sites throughout the Plan area could have opted to focus development on fewer sites located within the larger settlements that typically benefit from a greater range of facilities and services. Whilst this may have some benefits, particularly to protected groups who may require access to a more diverse range of amenities, this would not provide the wider support to existing village communities or result in the same level of support for the rural services and facilities that are so important to the vitality of the smaller settlements that form a large part of the Plan area. Overall, the impact of this objective on protected characteristics is considered to be neutral.

- SNVC Objective 3 - Protect the character of villages and their settings: The third Objective of the Plan seeks to ensure that the scale, location and density of housing is well related to the form and character of existing villages and ensure appropriate landscaping measures are delivered as part of new development. The impact on protected characteristics is neutral.

Site Specific Site Allocation Impacts

Having considered above the Objectives within the Plan, it is also important to consider the site-specific allocations it sets out in order to identify whether any adverse impacts arise for any group with protected characteristics and establish whether the plan encourages greater equality between different groups. In doing so, it is important to recognise that the Village Clusters Housing Allocation Plan allocates only a small proportion of the total development and infrastructure being delivered across the entire Greater Norwich Plan area and as such the impacts identified within this specific EqIA must also be considered within the wider context of allocations being made within the remainder of the Local Plan. The impacts of allocations made in the Greater Norwich Local Plan are set out in the associated EQIA prepared to support the production of that Plan.

Many of the Policies and Objectives within the Plan will benefit the wider community across South Norfolk and not specifically those with protected characteristics. However, some will have the potential for some direct or indirect impact on different groups.

Applying the Public Sector Equality Duty to the VCHAP, an overall assessment of the positive and/or negative impacts of the Plan has been made and summarised below, grouped together by theme:

Age

The Village Clusters Plan will have a positive overall effect on all age groups, including persons within the younger and older protected characteristic groups.

Young children require schools and recreation facilities to be closely located to their homes. The proximity of allocated sites to key services, including play areas and primary education provision, has been a key consideration in the assessment of sites, as has the accessibility of these facilities from development sites. With only a few exceptions allocated sites are located within walking distance of the local primary schools, with a number of site-specific policies requiring upgrades to the existing footpath provision to improve this connectivity (for example, VC SPO2 at Spooner Row and VC TAC1 require the installation of a safe crossing points to the local schools from these sites). In addition, whilst all allocated sites may be expected to support the existing education facilities within the cluster to some degree via increased pupil numbers, some sites also facilitate the expansion of existing primary school facilities, or the provision of additional parking areas associated with the schools. In Gillingham, for example, an area of land of 0.5ha is to be safeguarded for the future expansion of Gillingham St Michael's Primary School. Similarly, policies for allocations in Tasburgh and Wicklewood seek to safeguard land to enable future growth of the primary school facilities should this be required in the future whilst in Woodton Policy VC WOO1 includes a direct requirement for land that will specifically ease the pressures currently being experienced at a local level by education providers.

For adults in older age groups and who may be less mobile access to services becomes more important. These age-related issues have been considered as part of the Plan with access to services and facilities being taken into account as part of the site assessment

process. Improvements to existing pedestrian footpaths feature in the policy requirements of a number of specific allocations with all sites requiring a frontage footpath to connect to existing provision as a minimum. Where it has been considered necessary and proportionate, improvements to the wider pedestrian network have also been set out in site specific policies to enhance the existing provision and facilitate pedestrian movement within a settlement. VC WOO1, for example, includes a new footpath connection between the primary school and recreation ground and the centre of the village thereby enabling users to access navigate around the settlement safely. However, it is recognised that not all village clusters benefit from the same range of services, or from the full range of services that would typically be available to residents of higher order settlements. This is largely due to the rurality of South Norfolk, where it is common for residents to rely on private vehicles and/or public transport to travel short distances to nearest local service centre. The Plan does, however, seek to improve connectivity in and around settlement wherever possible.

Boosting the vitality of existing communities/ settlements via the dispersal of new development throughout the village clusters will support the ongoing provision of existing facilities and services, and may support the growth and development of new amenities at a local level as the community grows. This positive impact may benefit those age groups within the protected characteristic groups, as well as different ages who choose to become involved with their local community facilities (for example, local businesses or community groups).

The Village Cluster Plan seeks to ensure housing mix that is in line with needs identified through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which can reasonably be expected to help ensure that age-based needs are met across Plan. Population projections will require housing development to keep pace with anticipated growth in demand. Demand for certain types of accommodation may change, for example the demand for housing for elderly persons may increase as the numbers of residents falling into these categories also increase and development proposals will be expected to have regard to these changing requirements. Ensuring a balanced approach to housing mixes on allocated site will benefit and promote the equality of opportunity, whilst also promoting social cohesion within these communities, and facilitating the growth of local support networks.

Disability

Due to the nature of the site-specific allocations within the Village Clusters Housing Allocation Plan, the specific impacts arising from the Plan on people with disabilities is somewhat limited. Within this protected group it is considered most likely that persons with limited mobility would be impacted most by the Plan; however, it should be recalled that this Plan forms just one element of the strategic growth and development within the Greater Norwich area and as such the impacts of new development and infrastructure on this protected group should be considered as a whole. On balance it is considered that the VCHAP may have a positive impact on less mobile residents who wish to live within the rural areas of the District, noting the limitations of the Plan. Residents who require access to more specialist or diverse services and facilities may have seen a greater positive impact if the Village Clusters Housing Allocation Plan had directed more growth to the larger settlements which have the potential to offer a greater range of services. However, such needs are likely to be effectively addressed by the Council's emerging planning strategy when taken as a whole.

Overall, the VCHAP seeks to secure improvements to local facilities and services via improved connectivity and accessible development sites. Inevitably not all settlements

and/or clusters provide a full range of services however the presence and ease of access to existing facilities and amenities has been an important part of the site assessment and policy preparation process. A number of site-specific policies include a requirement for crossing points across the highway which will be of benefit to those persons with limited mobility. Similarly, the provision of car parking areas associated with local schools may also enable disabled carers and/or children to attend these sites more readily. In Alington, for example, VC ALP1 requires the formalisation of the existing crossing point at Church Road to improve access to the village hall whilst VC HEM1 requires discussions with the Highways Authority to determine the need for a crossing point between the site and existing development at Millfields to services north of Mill Road (including the GP surgery). Improving the routes to existing facilities not only encourages access but also may open up these facilities, and the user groups of these facilities, to a wider group of residents.

It is recognised that some clusters have a more limited range of services than larger villages and towns. It is also acknowledged that whilst the Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan seeks ensure footpath access to those services and facilities that exist wherever possible, there are some locations where this is not possible. Consideration has been given, however, to the safety of the highway for walking, including the availability of places to step off the highway (including where verges may be present).

Housing design standards benefit people with disabilities where there is a focus on accessible design. This is set out at a strategic level within the Greater Norwich Local Plan which has a range of policies that aim to improve access to services for all residents, seeks a percentage of adaptive homes, encourages use of Building for a Healthy Life and requires a Health Impact Assessment for some schemes. Any housing that is put forward in the Village Clusters Plan would need to be in accordance with this emerging policy (subject to inspector's main modifications).

Pregnancy and Maternity

The Village Clusters Housing Allocation Plan has a neutral-positive impact on persons within the protected group, 'Pregnancy and maternity'.

The VCHAP recognises that the availability and accessibility of a number of different facilities are important to local communities, as evidenced in the Site Assessment process. During the course of the Plan production period the Council engaged with the NHS Integrated Care Services (ICS) to better understand the constraints and opportunities afforded by the emerging Plan. It is clear that existing medical resources are under increasing pressure across the District, in common with the country as a whole. The dispersal of allocated sites throughout the village clusters does not focus new development solely in locations that have existing medical facilities. Rather, the scale and location of development aims to disperse new housing across the Plan area. Recognising the wider constraints that exist within the NHS at present, this approach will enable residents to seek local health provision where it exists, and it also supports the work of the outreach NHS workers who operate in the local community (for example, midwives and support healthcare workers). In this respect, the Plan may be considered to have a neutral impact on this protected group. Inevitably a wider range of medical facilities and services will be more readily available and accessible in the more developed settlements and towns and an increased level of housing growth in these larger settlements (rather than the balanced approach taken in the Plan) would potentially have a more positive impact on this protected group. Although the overall scale of growth proposed within the Village Cluster Plan as a

proportion of that across Greater Norwich as a whole does need to be taken into account in weighing the significance of this effect.

As noted in the previous sections however, the Plan seeks to improve connectivity and accessibility between sites and existing services/ facilities, whilst also making wider improvements to the highway and/or footpath network where this is considered to be reasonable and proportionate. In this respect the VCHAP may be considered to have a positive impact on this particular protected group through the improved linkages that will exist in the settlements. This connectivity can prove to be incredibly beneficial to those who are pregnant, as well as parents/ carers of babies and young children, providing access to existing to local support groups and facilities and support networks that exist within the local community.

Health

As noted in the previous response, the Council has sought engagement with the NHS as part of the preparation of the Village Clusters Housing Allocation Plan to understand existing constraints and potential opportunities that could arise for all groups within the community. With regards to access to physical services and facilities it is inevitable that many of these are focused within larger settlements and towns, often with smaller clinic and surgeries operating at a local level. Opportunities to expand existing NHS services via the provision of additional sites and facilities is not considered to be possible as part of the VCHAP, due to both the scale of development proposed on the sites being allocated as well as the wider availability of resources currently available within the NHS (the latter issue being recognised as a wider concern at a national level). Focussing development within larger settlements with a greater range of medical services and facilities available may have had an increased positive impact on this protected group when compared to the approach to growth taken in the Plan. In terms of the VCHAP however, a number of sites are allocated within settlements that benefit either from a medical practice being present (for example, VC MUL1 in Mulbarton) or are within in close proximity to settlements/ clusters that can offer the same.

The VCHAP has identified opportunities to enhance the public realm and access to the surrounding countryside via new connections to the existing Public Right of Way networks (PRoW). These connections will encourage recreational use of the countryside which can improve health and wellbeing, including that of those people identified as being within protected groups. Examples of allocated sites requiring new/ enhanced connectivity to the existing PRoW network include VC ALP1 (Alpington), VC BRO1 (Brooke), VC HAL1 (Hales) and VC ELL2 (Ellingham).

The Village Cluster Housing Allocation Plan will deliver a range of housing to meet local housing needs which it is anticipated will improve both the quality and the availability of the housing stock throughout the Plan area. This may have a positive impact on those people considered to have low-poor health by addressing issues that arise by virtue of overcrowding and sub-standard housing.

Place. Inc Rurality

Over 75% of South Norfolk's population live in rural areas and in recognition of this meeting the needs of these people effectively is vital to the ongoing success of these communities.

Whilst communities in rural and urban areas face many similar challenges that can range from housing to healthcare and education to employment, living within a rural environment can increase barriers to accessing services and facilities and present unique challenges to

overcoming them. In addition, whilst rural living presents also presents many opportunities in terms of health and wellbeing it can increase the sense of isolation that may be felt by residents, particularly in the absence of support networks and local facilities and services. An alternative strategy to the allocation of sites within the Plan area, the concentration of new housing on larger sites within larger settlements, would fail to meet the needs of the large proportion of the District's residents who live within the rural communities. This alternative approach to the distribution of growth could result in the continued loss of existing services, facilities and community support networks that are currently available at a local level within the villages as residents move to new housing in the larger villages and towns. The VCHAP has sought to address the barriers that have been identified where possible, noting however the limitations it faces due to the scale and type of development it proposes.

The improved connectivity promoted in site-specific policies, as well as new linkages to the existing Public Right of Way network, will aid in the integration of new housing developments into the existing community, as will the additional areas of open space required in compliance with existing Local Plan policy requirements. In addition to the standard requirements, new development at VC ASL1 (Aslacton) will facilitate the creation of a village green whilst VC BB1 (Barnham Broom) and VC WIC1 (Wicklewood) will create new focal points for the settlements through the provision of open space in gateway locations to these sites.

The Village Clusters Housing Allocation Plan is considered to have a neutral impact on protected groups, but it is anticipated that it will benefit those working in rural areas seeking local housing, or existing residents who are looking to up/downsize but remain local to their area. Residents relocating to these areas will also support the existing services and facilities, including community groups, education provision and local business, all of which are critically important in creating and maintaining a sense of local identity and a supportive community in a rural context.

Low Income and Poverty

The site-specific allocation policies are generally considered to have a positive impact on residents who are in poverty or have a low-income.

A key focus of the strategic policies set out in the GNLP is ensuring sites deliver an appropriate level of affordable housing to meet the needs of the resident population. In addition to this standard expectation, site specific policies in Great Moulton and Spooner Row have been prepared to secure the appropriate quantum of affordable housing based on previous/ recent developments that have been permitted on linked sites.

Connectivity to services and facilities can prove to be a barrier to people on a low income or in poverty within the rural area. The site assessment process included a consideration of the availability and accessibility of the public transport network locally, as well as the distance of sites from existing services and facilities. It is recognised that in some locations access to public transport is limited and, as is typical in rural areas, there will inevitably be a reliance on private modes of transport which may negatively impact on low income households.

Summary of Impacts

The Village Clusters Housing Allocation Plan has a clear opportunity to promote the equality of opportunity, and enhance community cohesion, within the village clusters of South Norfolk. It is anticipated that this will benefit people within the following protected characteristic groups: age, disability and pregnancy and maternity and will also have a

positive impact on those people who fall within the additional groups the Council has identified as being at potential risk of exclusion: health, place (specifically rurality) and those with a low income or in poverty.

Wherever possible the Council has allocated sites that are well located and accessible to existing services and facilities, adjacent to existing established communities. This promotes a social cohesion within these communities, providing opportunities for support networks to be developed and a sense of community to result.

Many of the sites allocated are expected to improve local connectivity through improvements to the existing pedestrian footpaths, linkages into the Public Rights of Way network and informal footpath improvements. This will be to the benefit of all people in the identified protected groups, as well as the wider community. Site specific requirements for education facilities, as well as the provision of open space and connections to existing village halls, will be of benefit to all age groups, as well as those identified as being within protected characteristics.

The housing mix required at a strategic level and delivered at a local level via the VCHAP will benefit those groups of people who perhaps require specialist housing, including affordable housing, but it will also improve the diversity and quality of the housing stock throughout the Plan area.

Inevitably an assessment of the Plan has identified that tensions do exist and it is not always possible via the VCHAP to have a positive impact for all protected groups. Most notably, it is recognised that the allocation of sites across a rural area presents some challenges around providing access to a full range of services and facilities that the residents within these protected groups may require. An alternative distribution of sites that focusses development on larger sites primarily in those settlements with a greater number of services and facilities would have addressed, at least in part, this constraint. However, in taking this approach the VCHAP would miss an opportunity to support a diverse range of services over a wider geographical area, many of which are considered to be important to the existing communities in the Plan area. Such an approach would also miss opportunities to strengthen and/or develop social cohesion within rural communities, possibly resulting in a deterioration of existing support networks and community groups.

Finally, the Plan is one element of a wider growth strategy for new housing development and infrastructure throughout the Greater Norwich area, and as such whilst it is correct to assess the impact of this Plan as a standalone document, it should also be considered holistically within the context of the opportunities that this wider growth will provide.

Conclusion

This EqIA has examined whether the Village Cluster Plan has an impact (positive/negative) on-different groups within the community. The assessment identified that the Objectives and site-specific housing allocations are likely to have either a positive impact, or no differential impact on the different protected characteristics, having sought to make improvements to the existing context wherever possible, and that the scale and type of land use proposed via the VCHAP should also be considered within the context of the wider allocations, and growth, set out in the Greater Norwich Local Plan.

Appendix 1: Equalities Profile for South Norfolk District

Population by gender

This dataset shows the resident population by gender across the last two Censuses.

South Norfolk Local Authority 2011	Number	%
All usual residents	124,012	100.0
Males	60,515	48.8
Females	63,497	51.2
Lives in a household	122,219	98.6
Lives in a communal establishment	1,793	1.4

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South Norfolk Local Authority 2021	Number	%
All usual residents	141,947	100.0
Males	69,238	48.8
Females	72,709	51.2
Lives in a household	140,165	98.7
Lives in a communal establishment	1,783	1.3

2021 Census ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis 14 December 2022]

Population projections for all persons by year

The projections below take population estimates as their starting point.

Year	South Norfolk	Norfolk	England
2027	156,807	958,978	58,527,723
2032	164,190	983,735	59,592,225
2037	170,390	1,005,408	60,571,681
2042	176,032	1,025,829	61,549,624

2018 Population Projections ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis 15 December 2022]

Age structure

This dataset shows the resident population by broad age groups as in 2021

South Norfolk Local Authority	Number	%
All usual residents	141,948	100.0
Aged 4 years and under	6,989	4.9
Aged 5 to 9 years	8,107	5.7
Aged 10 to 15 years	9,632	6.8
Aged 16 to 19 years	5,346	3.8
Aged 20 to 24 years	5,977	4.2
Aged 25 to 34 years	15,473	10.9
Aged 35 to 49 years	26,052	18.4
Aged 50 to 64 years	29,861	21.0
Aged 65 to 74 years	17,885	12.6
Aged 75 to 84 years	11,925	8.4
Aged 85 years and over	4,701	3.3

Sexual orientation and gender reassignment

Data on sexual orientation and gender reassignment is not available at a District Level. In 2020, an estimated 3.1% of the UK population aged 16 and over identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) (Source: [Office for National Statistics](#)).

Marital and civil partnership status

This dataset shows the resident population by marital status across the last two Censuses.

South Norfolk Local Authority 2011	Number	%
All usual residents aged 16+	101,717	100.0
Single (never married or never registered a same-sex civil partnership)	25,795	25.4
Married	56,458	55.5
In a registered same-sex civil partnership	257	0.3
Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a same-sex civil partnership)	2,223	2.2
Divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	9,528	9.4
Widowed or surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership	7,456	7.3

2011 Census ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis 26 April 2021]

South Norfolk Local Authority 2021	Number	%
All usual residents aged 16+	117,219	100.0
Single (never married or never registered a same-sex civil partnership)	34,193	29.2
Married	60,357	51.5
In a registered same-sex civil partnership	293	0.3
Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a same-sex civil partnership)	2,363	2.0
Divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	12,006	10.2
Widowed or surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership	8,007	6.8

2021 Census ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis 14 December 2022]

English language proficiency

Population by English language skills in 2021

South Norfolk Local Authority	Number	%
All usual residents aged 3 years and over	137,981	100.0
Main language is English	134,429	97.4
Main language is not English	3,552	2.6
Main language is not English: Can speak English very well	1,964	1.4
Main language is not English: Can speak English well	1,090	0.8
Main language is not English: Cannot speak English well	417	0.3
Main language is not English: Cannot speak English	81	0.1

2021 Census ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis 15 December 2022]

Ethnic group

This dataset shows the percentage of population by ethnic groups across the last two Censuses.

South Norfolk Local Authority 2011	Number	%
All usual residents	124,012	100.0
White	120,981	97.6
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	117,998	95.2
Irish	455	0.4
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	183	0.1
Other White	2,345	1.9
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	1,214	1.0
White and Black Caribbean	313	0.3
White and Black African	179	0.1
White and Asian	422	0.3
Other Mixed	300	0.2
Asian/Asian British	1,270	1.0
Indian	433	0.3
Pakistani	64	0.1
Bangladeshi	60	0.0
Chinese	325	0.3
Other Asian	388	0.3
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	378	0.3
African	259	0.2
Caribbean	68	0.1
Other Black	51	0.0
Other ethnic group	169	0.1
Arab	70	0.1
Any other ethnic group	99	0.1

2011 Census ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis 26 April 2021]

South Norfolk Local Authority 2021	Number	%
All usual residents	141,948	100.0
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	2,562	1.8
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	150	0.1
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Chinese	552	0.4
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian	977	0.7
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Pakistani	133	0.1
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian	750	0.5
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	1,164	0.8
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	866	0.6
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean	163	0.1
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other Black	135	0.1
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	2,094	1.5
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	745	0.5
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	369	0.3
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	391	0.3
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	589	0.4
White	135,474	95.4
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	130,292	91.8
White: Irish	519	0.4
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	150	0.1
White: Roma	72	0.1
White: Other White	4,441	3.1
Other ethnic group	654	0.5
Other ethnic group: Arab	145	0.1
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	509	0.4

2021 Census ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis 15 December 2022]

Religion

This dataset shows the percentage of the population by religion across the last two Censuses.

South Norfolk Local Authority 2011	Number	%
All usual residents	124,012	100.0
Has religion	78,904	63.6
Christian	77,234	62.3
Buddhist	364	0.3
Hindu	235	0.2
Jewish	126	0.1
Muslim	403	0.3
Sikh	49	0.0
Other religion	493	0.4
No religion	35,601	28.7
Religion not stated	9,507	7.7

2011 Census ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis 26 April 2021]

South Norfolk Local Authority 2021	Number	%
All usual residents	141,950	100.0
No religion	62,982	44.4
Christian	67,308	47.4
Buddhist	524	0.4
Hindu	542	0.4
Jewish	197	0.1
Muslim	859	0.6
Sikh	57	0.0
Other religion	664	0.5
Not answered	8,817	6.2

2021 Census ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis 15 December 2022]

Health and provision of unpaid Care

This dataset shows the percentage of people (2011) that have a limiting long-term illness, number of people who provide unpaid care for others and the number of hours provided and persons health rating.

South Norfolk Local Authority	Number	%
All usual residents	124,012	100.0
Day-to-day activities limited a lot	9,238	7.4
Day-to-day activities limited a little	13,002	10.5
Day-to-day activities not limited	101,772	82.1
Day-to-day activities limited a lot: Age 16 to 64	3,324	2.7
Day-to-day activities limited a little: Age 16 to 64	5,404	4.4
Day-to-day activities not limited: Age 16 to 64	66,466	53.6
Very good health	57,480	46.4
Good health	44,400	35.8
Fair health	16,575	13.4
Bad health	4,297	3.5
Very bad health	1,260	1.0
Provides no unpaid care	110,192	88.9
Provides 1 to 19 hours unpaid care a week	9,604	7.7
Provides 20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week	1,482	1.2
Provides 50 or more hours unpaid care a week	2,734	2.2

2011 Census ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis 26 April 2021]

Disability living allowance

Data on disability living allowance is not available at a District Level. As of November 2018, 22,660 people across Norfolk were claiming disability living allowance (Source: Nomis 15 December 2022).

Earnings by place of residence

Median earnings in pounds for employees living in the area (March 2021)

Gross Weekly Pay	South Norfolk (£)	East (£)	Great Britain (£)
Full-Time Workers	586.5	604.8	587.1
Male Full-Time Workers	624.0	646.4	622.9
Female Full-Time Workers	532.7	550.5	544.3
Hourly Pay - Excluding Overtime	South Norfolk (£)	East (£)	Great Britain (£)
Full-Time Workers	15.02	15.38	15.18
Male Full-Time Workers	15.44	16.01	15.64
Female Full-Time Workers	13.96	14.65	14.42

2021 Annual survey of hours & earnings ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [Nomis 26 April 2021]

Median earnings in pounds for employees living in the area (December 2022)

Gross Weekly Pay	South Norfolk (£)	Norfolk (£)	England (£)
Full-Time Workers	619.0	600.0	645.8
Male Full-Time Workers	657.3	630.3	690.0
Female Full-Time Workers	532.5	536.6	584.5
Hourly Pay - Excluding Overtime	South Norfolk (£)	Norfolk (£)	England (£)
Full-Time Workers	14.82	14.60	16.42
Male Full-Time Workers	15.25	14.94	17.04
Female Full-Time Workers	13.83	13.62	15.44

2022 Annual survey of hours & earnings ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [Nomis 15 December 2022]

Out-Of-Work Benefits

Under Universal Credit a broader span of claimants is required to look for work than under Jobseeker's Allowance. As Universal Credit Full Service is rolled out in particular areas, the number of people recorded as being on the Claimant Count is therefore likely to rise. Percentages in the tables below are claimant numbers as a proportion of residents aged 16-64 – not seasonally adjusted.

	South Norfolk (#)	South Norfolk (%)	East (%)	Great Britain (%)
All People	3,030	3.7	5.6	6.5
Males	1,680	4.2	6.5	7.7
Females	1,350	3.2	4.7	5.0

2011 Claimant count ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis 28 April 2021]

Nov 2021	South Norfolk (#)	South Norfolk (%)	Norfolk (%)	England (%)
All People	1,665	2.0	2.7	3.7
Males	860	2.1	3.0	4.3
Females	805	1.9	2.4	3.2

2022 Claimant count ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis 15 December 2022]

Household deprivation

Area	South Norfolk	South Norfolk	South Norfolk	South Norfolk	South Norfolk	East of England	East of England
IMD	Not deprived on any dimension	Deprived on 1 dimension	Deprived on 2 dimensions	Deprived on 3 dimensions	Deprived on all 4 dimensions	Not deprived on any dimension	Deprived on 1 or more dimensions
Urban	3,075	4,009	2,626	595	52	503,710	1,045,520
Rural	11,754	13,947	8,615	1,786	141	234,574	448,212
Less Sparse	11,754	13,947	8,615	1,786	141	225,574	419,404
Town	4,379	5,640	3,685	679	52	104,454	201,479
Village	5,281	6,032	3,749	832	61	91,914	166,962
Dispersed	2,094	2,275	1,181	275	28	29,439	50,963

2011 Census ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis 28 April 2021]

South Norfolk	Number	Percentage
All households	61,382	100.0
Household is not deprived in any dimension	31,718	51.7
Household is deprived in one dimension	21,228	34.6
Household is deprived in two dimensions	7,114	11.6
Household is deprived in three dimensions	1,261	2.1
Household is deprived in four dimensions	61	0.1

2021 Census ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis 15 December 2022]

Rurality

South Norfolk	Male	Female	Total
<i>Urban</i>	<i>11,475</i>	<i>12,203</i>	<i>23,678</i>
<i>Rural</i>	<i>42,378</i>	<i>44,654</i>	<i>87,032</i>
Less Sparse	42,378	44,654	87,032
Town	15,716	17,122	32,838
Village	19,201	19,943	39,144
Dispersed	7,461	7,589	15,050
Total	53,853	56,857	110,710
Percentage Rural	78.7	78.5	78.6

2011 Census ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis 28 April 2021]