

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA): Changes to the Greater Cambridge Design Review Service

Introduction – Please read

The Public Sector Equality Duty, introduced under the Equality Act 2010, requires all public bodies, including local authorities, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) allow the Council to:

- Show that we are meeting this legal duty by demonstrating due regard for the provisions of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Identify possible negative impacts on individuals and groups with protected characteristics, plan mitigating action and seek to maximise opportunities to advance equality within our activities.

EqIAs provide a methodical approach to the assessment of impacts across the [nine protected characteristics](#) and should be completed during the development and review of all Council policies, strategies, procedures, projects or functions. Where there is any doubt, the completion of an EqIA is always recommended.

Throughout the course of this form, please hover over the [] symbol for guidance in relation to specific questions. When the form is completed, please send an electronic copy to equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk. If you require any additional support completing the form, please email the above address.

Equality Impact Assessment Complete Form

Section 1: Identifying Details

- 1.1** Officer completing EqIA:
Joanne Preston
- 1.2** Team and Service:
Built and Natural Environment Team, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service.
- 1.3** Title of proposal:
Changes to the Design Review Service in Greater Cambridge
- 1.4** EqIA completion date:
June 2021
- 1.5** Proposal implementation date:
Launch of the new Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel currently anticipated January 2022.
- 1.6** Who will be responsible for implementing this proposal:
Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service

Section 2: Proposal to be Assessed

- 2.1** Type of proposal:
Service
- 2.2** Is the proposal: Change to Established
The proposed Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel (GCDRP) is a new design review panel that will replace two existing panels administered by the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (The Design Enabling Panel for the South Cambridgeshire District Council area and the Design and Conservation Panel for the Cambridge City Council area). The terms of

Appendix E: EQIA for Proposed Changes to the GCSP Design Review Service

reference for the new panel aims to achieve a consistent approach to design review within GCSP and align the design review service with the latest best practice guidance.

- 2.3** State the date of any previous equality impact assessment completed in relation to this proposal (if applicable):

N/A

- 2.4** What are the headline aims of the proposal and the objectives that will help to accomplish these aims? (Approximately 250 words)

Design Review advice is an important and valued, if discretionary, service and it is recognised as such in the National Planning Policy Framework. It offers an independent and impartial evaluation of the design of significant proposals, at the pre-application and application stages, by a panel of built environment experts. The advice of the panel is advisory, with the aim of identifying where improvements can be made, to influence the planning process and improve the quality of buildings and places for the benefit of the public.

Design review in Cambridge City Council (CCC) and South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) is currently provided by two panels with different processes and different charges. GCSP committed to reviewing its design review service in its 2020/2021 Business Plan and in 2021 appointed an independent expert to review the two panels.

The Terms of Reference for the new Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel are informed by the recommendations of the 2021 review. The proposal aims to replace the two separate design review panels with a new single panel, operating in a consistent manner across the CCC and SCDC areas, and with a common charging regime.

This will be achieved by meeting the following objectives:

- Establish a pay to use service that recovers its costs and remunerates panel members

Appendix E: EQIA for Proposed Changes to the GCSP Design Review Service

- Establish a new governance arrangement with an Independent Advisory Group.
- Recruit a diverse panel of 20-30 members built and natural environment experts. Applications for panel members will be scored according to a published marking criteria and chairs and vice chairs will be interviewed for the role. Recruitment will encourage applications from people with protected characteristics.
- A new clear scheme referral criterion based on a proposals' scale, site or significance
- Align the panels feedback with the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth's 4 C's 'Character, Climate, Context and Connectivity'.
- Improve communication, through a dedicated web page with Terms of Reference, a Handbook for the management of the Panel, a Quick Guide for applicants and an annual report.
- Establish ongoing monitoring with questionnaires after every review and an Annual Report, scrutinised by the Independent Advisory Group.

2.5 Which of South Cambridgeshire District Council's business plan priorities does this proposal link to?

- Helping Businesses to grow - ✓
- Building homes that are truly affordable to live in -
- Being green to our core -
- A modern and caring council - ✓

2.6 Which of South Cambridgeshire District Council's equality objectives (as detailed in SCDC's Equality Scheme) does this proposal link to or help to achieve?

- Identify, prioritise and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community- ✓
- SCDC is an employer that values difference and recognises the strength that a diverse workforce brings - ✓
- Protected characteristic groups have a voice and are represented in forming the future shape of the district - ✓

2.7 Which of Cambridge City Council's equality objectives (as detailed in CCC's Equality Scheme) does this proposal link to or help to achieve?

- To further increase our understanding of the needs of Cambridge’s growing and increasingly diverse communities so that we can target our services effectively - ✓
- To continue to work to improve access to and take-up of Council services from all residents and communities - ✓
- To work towards a situation where all residents have equal access to public activities and spaces in Cambridge and are able to participate fully in the community - ✓

2.8 Which groups or individuals will the proposal affect:

- Service Users ✓
- External Stakeholders ✓
- Employees ✓
- Councillors ✓
- Other ✓

If other, please specify – all residents and visitors to the Greater Cambridge area.

2.9 How will these groups or individuals be affected?

The terms of reference for the new GCDRP has been prepared to provide a consistent, efficient and effective design review service. The advice of the independent panel aims to improve the design of new development across the Greater Cambridge area. As the design review advice will apply to new development across the Greater Cambridge area. There is potential for it to affect a large and wide-ranging proportion of existing and future communities by improving the design quality of new buildings and public spaces.

The design review panel provides an independent review of schemes at pre-application and application stages. The panel provides advice on how the design of the proposal can be improved. The advice is for applicants and their design teams, councillors, officers and the public. The advice from the review is published as letter which is attached to committee and delegated reports. This gives confidence to decision makers to support well designed schemes and resist poorly designed schemes. In this regard, the Design Review Panel

will specifically affect applicants, councillors, officers and the public by providing additional guidance about the quality of planning applications.

The purpose of the panel is to provide an expert and independent peer review process that is distinct from the community engagement which takes place during the pre-application stages. GCSP have established mechanisms in place to ensure that the community are engaged during the pre-application design stages and GCSP's expectations for this are set out within the GCSP Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

Design review does not replace the on-going dialogue that it is possible to have with design officers through pre-application meetings or the advice provided by the Inclusive Design Panel. Design review, inclusive design advice and pre-application advice from officers are most effective when working together and in parallel with community engagement.

2.11 How many people will this proposal affect?

The Greater Cambridge Design review Panel has the potential to affect all existing and future residents, workers, and visitors to the Greater Cambridge area.

2.12 If any part of the proposal is being undertaken by external partners, please specify how SCDC will ensure that they will meet equality standards?

The Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel will be managed and administered by the GCSP. The proposal involves recruiting a diverse pool of 20-30 independent built environment experts as panel members, plus 2 chairs and 2 vice chairs. Panel members and chairs will be paid for attending the panel meetings. The pool of panel members will be refreshed after 3 years.

The panel recruitment process addresses tackling inequalities in employment and equal opportunities for our communities. It will encourage applications from people with protected characteristics. Applications for panel members will be scored and appointed according to a published marking criteria and chairs and vice chairs will be interviewed for the role.

An Independent Advisory Group (IAG) will ensure the effectiveness and accountability of the panel in the public interest and, in consultation with the

Joint Director of Planning & Economic Development, make recommendations to adjust working practices in accordance with these terms of reference.

The IAG will comprise; two independent built environment experts with significant experience, reputation and external to the panel (such as chairs or experts of other design review panels), the 2 panel chairs, senior council officers, the lead members and planning committee chairs of both councils (excluding the joint development control committee as these developments are reviewed by the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel).

The IAG will meet once a year to review an Annual Report, assess any issues, advise on improvements and the future direction of the panel. The Annual Report is a public document, comprising the feedback, finance and summary of the outcome of the panel's advice within the planning process and as development is built.

Data about the make-up of the panel and IAG will be monitored and analysed as part of the Annual Report so that recruitment of new members can be targeted to ensure people with different protected characteristics are represented.

Section 3: Evidence and Data

- 3.1** Describe any research (this could include consultation) and analysis you have undertaken to understand how [protected characteristic groups](#) are likely to be affected? Please list any key sources that you used to obtain this Information. [📖](#)

The South Cambridgeshire District Council [Equality Scheme](#) (2020-2024) describes the district as a rural area with a population which is expected to grow at faster than the national average. A growing elderly population, greater mobility, immigration, and other social trends are making changes to the population. These changes will accelerate as a result of the population growth facing the district in the future, leading to a more diverse society than previously.

The Cambridge City Council [Equality Scheme \(2018 – 2021\)](#) sets out the Council's proposed objectives related to equality and diversity work over the three year period and includes useful data regarding the nine protected

characteristics collated from a range of Council services and functions. It describes the city as an urban area which is experiencing growth. The following is a snapshot of the residents of Cambridge:

There is little evidence to suggest that the GCDRP will have specific impacts upon protected characteristic groups. However, the GCDRP will have wide-reaching impacts on communities across Greater Cambridge by improving the design of buildings and public spaces for local communities.

- 3.2** Describe any research (this could include consultation) and analysis you have undertaken to understand any effects on any other groups of people not mentioned in the nine [protected characteristic groups](#) (for example people who live in rural areas, who live in areas of high growth, or from low-income backgrounds). 

Design review is a discretionary service provided by GCSPS and changes to the service do not require statutory consultation to be carried out. However, targeted consultation and engagement exercises with key stakeholders were undertaken as part of the review and recommendations for improvements to the service.

The consultant who carried out the review conducted semi-structured interviews with the chairs of the existing Design Review Panels, members of the senior management team (Joint Director of Planning, Assistant Directors and BNE Manager), the two panel managers/administrators, the SCDC Lead member for Planning and the CCC Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces, the chairs of the planning committee of both councils, and two planning agents to understand the stakeholders' experience of the existing panels and their requirements for design review.

The consultant conducted surveys with stakeholders including existing panel members, those who have brought schemes to the panels in the last 12 months; planning officers; planning committee members; members of residents' associations and parish councils.

The consultant conducted interviews with the panel managers of other design review panels that operate across multiple local authority boundaries to understand what has worked well elsewhere.

The main finding from the consultation was that many Parish Councils and Residents Associations were unaware of the GCSP design review service. These groups would benefit from improved access to communications about the role and impact of the service.

3.3 If you have not undertaken any consultation, please detail why not, or when consultation is planned to take place. [📖](#)

N/A

Section 4: Impact of proposal on those with protected characteristics

4.1 Age:

4.1.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

The advice provided by the panel will apply to new development and has the potential to improve the design of new public spaces and buildings within Greater Cambridge. This includes improvements to connectivity and access to natural green spaces and areas of play. Improved access may be beneficial to specific age groups. For example, the provision of well-designed play spaces within a new residential development may be of particular benefit to younger residents. Well-designed streets and spaces that promote walking and cycling over car use may be of particular benefit to residents of age groups who are less likely to drive. i.e., younger or older age groups. The provision of natural green spaces within a new business park may be particularly beneficial to people of working age as it may be possible to access these during the working day.

Evidence suggests that a relatively high proportion of people within older age groups may not have access to the internet and therefore they are less able to access information about the design review panel on the GCSP website. A contact telephone number for the relevant officer within the Built and Natural Environment Team is provided on all briefing materials, so that viewing arrangements can be made.

4.1.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.1.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?
Ensure hard copies of all public information about the panel are available for viewing. Include contact details for responsible officer on all public information	Built and Natural Environment Team	Ongoing from July 2021, if GCDRP is approved at committee	The project sponsor (Trovine Monteiro) will check all public information before publishing

4.2 Disability:

4.2.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

Whilst no specific impacts on this protected characteristic have been identified, the advice of the GCDRP has the potential to improve access for less mobile individuals and groups to public spaces and buildings within or around new developments in Greater Cambridge. GCSP have an Inclusive Design Panel and the GCDRP will work alongside this existing service with the aim of improving the accessibility of proposals in the Greater Cambridge Area.

The Planning Service has been mindful of this protected characteristic by ensuring all published documents relating to the panel are made available in an accessible format. Braille and large print versions of the documents will be made available on request.

4.2.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.2.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?
Ensure copies of all public information about the panel are made available in an accessible format.	Built and Natural Environment Team	Ongoing from July 2021, if GCDRP is approved at committee.	The project sponsor (Trovine Monteiro) will check all public information before publishing

4.3 Gender Reassignment:

4.3.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

NO.

4.3.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 📖
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.3.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?

4.4 Marriage and Civil Partnership:

4.4.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

NO.

4.4.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 📖
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.4.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?

4.5 Pregnancy and Maternity:

4.5.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

NO

4.5.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 📖
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.5.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?

4.6 Race:

4.6.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

4.6.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.6.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?

4.7 Religion or Belief:

4.7.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

NO

4.7.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.7.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?

4.8 Sex:

4.8.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

NO.

4.8.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.8.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?

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4.9 Sexual Orientation:

4.9.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

NO.

4.9.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 📖
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.9.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?

4.10 Other: (e.g., rurality, growth, socio-economic status etc.)

4.10.1 Has your research identified that the proposal will have an impact on this protected characteristic?

People from lower income groups may not have access to the internet and therefore they are less able to access information about the design review panel on the GCSP website. A contact telephone number for the relevant officer within the Built and Natural Environment Team is to be provided on all briefing materials, so that viewing arrangements can be made.

The GCDRP will charge the applicants to use the service. This may reduce access to advice for small businesses and community organisations. The proposals seek to address the service’s need to manage the cost of its discretionary services and aim to increase a greater proportion of that cost through charges. For design review advice, (where the service provided can lead to significant financial benefits accruing to property/land owners and developers) the charging schedule reflects a need to support community organisations and small businesses, whilst reducing the subsidy provided by both Councils for this service for more substantial development projects – and help respond to the growing pressure on costs and income facing both Council Planning Services.

Fees and review types will be monitored as a standing item at the annual IAG meeting and adjusted accordingly to ensure the GCDRP remains financially viable. In exceptional circumstances the fees outlined below may be reduced to support community organisations and charities, in accessing the panel.

4.10.2 Describe the impacts of the proposal on this protected characteristic group identified through your research, including

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. 
- approximately 250 words per impact

Impact – Neutral

4.10.3 Please complete the table below to detail actions that need to take place to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts raised in the previous question:

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for completion	How will the actions be monitored?

Section 5: Summary

- 5.1** Briefly summarise the key findings of the EqIA and any significant equality considerations that should be taken into account when deciding whether or not to proceed with the proposal (this section can be included within the 'equality implications' section of any committee reports). (Approximately 250 words).

GCSP will improve the diversity of the membership pool of the design review service by recruiting a new panel of professionals from Cambridge and across the UK, with expertise that cover the range of specialisms within the field of the built and natural environment. Recruitment will encourage applications from people with protected characteristics. Applications from panel members will be scored according to a published marking criterion. Chairs and vice chairs will be interviewed for the role.

The approach to charging does recognise that there may be some applicants e.g. a community group that may have more limited ability to access the service and allows for reductions in fees in these circumstances.

Equalities Impact Assessment will continue to form part of the ongoing process of refreshing the panel (every 3 years).

- 5.2** Confirm the recommendation of the officer completing the EqIA:
- Approved (No major change): Your analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust, and the evidence shows no potential for discrimination and that you have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.

- 5.3** Signature of individual completing EqIA:
Joanne Preston

- 5.4** Date of completion:
June 2021

Section 6: Sign Off

6.1 Approving officer EqIA review outcome: (delete as appropriate):

- Approved (No major change): Your analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust, and the evidence shows no potential for discrimination and that you have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.

6.2 Do you give permission to publish this EqIA on SCDC website (delete as appropriate)? If no, please state reason.

Yes.

6.3 When will this proposal next be reviewed and who will this be?

In January 2025, when the panel membership is refreshed. To be undertaken by the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Built and Natural Environment Team.

6.4 Approving officer signature:



6.5 Date of approval: 14th June 2021