

## Harborough District Council Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment is an on-going proactive process which requires us to consider the effect our decisions are likely to have on local communities, service users and employees, particularly those most vulnerable and at risk of disadvantage.

This document has been designed to assist in the collation of information and evidence required to support the ‘Due Regard’ process when introducing new policies/procedures/functions and services or reviewing existing ones.

**Name of policy/procedure/function/service being assessed:** Local Plan

**Department and section:** Strategic Planning

**Name of lead officer:** Sarah Driscoll

**Other people involved (assisting or reviewing – including any service users or stakeholder groups etc.):** Strategic Planning

**Date assessment commenced:** October 2024

**Date assessment submitted for sign off:** February 2025

### Step 1: Defining the policy/procedure/function/service

After a review of the [Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031 \(adopted 30 April 2019\)](#) in July 2021, the Authority resolved to commence work on the new Local Plan. Preparation of the new Local Plan provides an opportunity for local people and other interested parties to help shape what the district will look like up to 2041.

The Local Plan will provide policies covering a very wide range of topics including housing, economic development, town centres including retail and leisure, infrastructure, climate change, blue and green assets, heritage and conservation, design, health and wellbeing, transport and accessibility, flood risk, drainage, sustainable construction, biodiversity and geodiversity, contamination, advertising, and telecommunications.

Once adopted the new Local Plan will:

- Provide the main policies that will be used to make development decisions and determine planning applications
- Identify the designation that will protect the districts most important environmental assets, town centres and infrastructure
- Support the delivery of key infrastructure, such as transport, education and utilities
- Set the framework for Neighbourhood Plans

Before adoption, the preparation of the Local Plan must follow strict procedures and consult with the public and statutory consultees at the various stages in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement that sets out how the Council will consult and involve the public and statutory consultees in planning matters, including making copies of consultation document available in alternative formats e.g., large print, audio or alternative language on request. Full details of the current adopted Statement of Community Involvement can be viewed in the [Statement of Community Involvement \(SCI\) \(2020\) | Harborough District Council](#)

It is expected that the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan alongside other supporting documents will be published for consultation, if approved at the Cabinet and Council in early 2025. It should be noted that the Local Plan is at draft stage and as such there is scope to adapt and modify any policies which are identified as having a negative impact on protected characteristics as the Local Plan evolves.

The Equality Act (2010) identifies nine 'protected characteristics' that seek to protect people from discrimination on the basis of these characteristics. They are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex (Gender)
- Sexual Orientation

As a Public Authority, the Equality Act 2010 and associated Public Sector Equality Duty, places a legal responsibility on the Authority to pay 'due regard' when making decisions which affect people with 'protected characteristics'. The purpose of the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to assess the likely impact of the planning policies in the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan on the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act. If any potential for adverse or unique effects on protected and other vulnerable groups are identified, the Council will need to potentially take action or make adjustments to address this likely impact or provide a justification for its actions.

## **Proposed Submission Draft Harborough Local Plan**

### **Step 2: Data collection & evidence**

The following data and evidence has been collected as part of preparing the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan:

- An EqIA prepared in December 2023 on the issues and options for the Harborough Local Plan
- Extensive Local Plan evidence base covering the economy and retailing, future assessments of housing need, which includes an assessment of the housing needs of specific groups of the population, and transport and environmental matters.
- The responses from the issues and options consultation that took place for 6 weeks between 16 January and 27 February 2024 are summarised in the Statement of Consultation
- The Local Plan has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal at each stage of the Local Plan preparation, which assesses the social, economic and environmental impact of the development strategy and individual policies.

The process for producing a Local Plan places great weight on the quality of the evidence supporting policy decisions. The evidence base will be tested through public examination by a Planning Inspector before the Local Plan can be adopted.

### Step 3: Consultation

The [Issues and Options for the Harborough Local Plan 2020-2041](#) was the first stage of the consultation process that invited views on a range of planning issues and potential options for the future development of the district. This consultation was carried out for six weeks between 16 January and 27 February 2024. Generic and specific questions were asked in relation to six chapters on Spatial Strategy, Environment and Sustainability, Health and Well-being, Housing Needs, Town Centres, Retailing, Leisure and Tourism, Transport, Local Services and Infrastructure. A Sustainability Appraisal was published alongside the [Issues and Options consultation document](#).

A series of staffed drop-in events were held across the district to provide interested parties with more information on the consultation documents and associated evidence base, how to respond and an understanding of what happens next. These were advertised in the local press, social media and mentioned at meetings held before and during the consultation. In total, around 300 people visited the drop-in events which were held at Market Harborough, Scraftoft, Lutterworth, Broughton Astley and Kibworth.

In total 3,449 individual representations were received from 236 respondents during the consultation. After the consultation event a Statement of Consultation was prepared summarising the process, feedback and how the Council has taken the responses into account to inform the Proposed Submission Draft Harborough Local Plan. This document and subsequent changes will be considered for member approval at the Cabinet and Council in early 2025. Extracts of the comments received during the consultation for some of the topics are summarised below:

#### Scale of growth

- A vast majority of site promoters/developers supported high levels of growth whilst most parish councils supported a medium level of growth.

#### Affordable Housing

- Generally, there is support from the public for developers to provide 40% of the dwellings on a site as affordable houses, subject to supporting evidence and a viability assessment.

### **Mix of Housing**

- General support for mix of housing on larger sites
- The mix of housing on small to medium sites should be flexible and considered on a site-by-site basis based on up-to-date evidence to support the delivery of development over the plan period
- There was general support that bungalows should be encouraged, but remain flexible

### **Older Person and Specialist Housing**

- Generally, most respondents were in support of specific site allocations for specialist housing that are near or with access to existing services.

### **Accessible and adaptable and wheelchair user dwellings**

- The Homes Builder Federation, site promoters and developers broadly disagreed with the requirement for all dwellings to meet the M4(2) standard (accessible and adaptable dwellings) and 10%-25% of dwellings to meet the M4(3) standard (wheelchair user dwellings). The reason given was that these standards are set out in the Building Regulations therefore they consider it is not necessary to repeat within the local plan.
- These requirements were supported by several neighbouring parish councils/neighbourhood plan forums

### **Self-build and custom housing**

- Site promoters and parish councils agree that any provision for self-build must be based on local evidence of identified need, including the self-build register.
- Site promoters would like to see flexibility that any plots not sold within 12 months would return to market housing.

### **Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers**

- There was not a clear preference among the four options identified in the [issues and options consultation document](#), with each receiving a similar level of support.
- Leicestershire County Council highlighted that transit need is not mentioned. They added there is a huge need for local authority managed transit sites in Leicestershire.
- Leicestershire County Council also noted the possibility of converting existing housing stock into single Gypsy and Traveller pitches, where the property becomes the amenity block and the garden/driveway is large enough to accommodate a caravan, which they

say would enable Gypsy and Travellers to live in appropriate accommodation without the need to allocate land specifically for the purpose.

- Most comments suggest sites capable of accommodating up to 10 pitches would be appropriate. Leicestershire County Council noted that small family sites tend to be 2-6 pitches, with sites of 5 and above being more financially viable, also noting that sites of 10-15 pitches are manageable, but more costly to run.

**Local services Infrastructure provision**

- Members of the public and Parish Councils were concerned over the lack of local services, facilities and other community infrastructure. They were keen to ensure that increased service capacity is delivered alongside new development.
- Responses emphasised the importance of delivering infrastructure at the earliest stage of any development and before any sites come forward, whose development will impact on existing infrastructure capacities.

Consultation on the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan will be carried out in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement and statutory requirements under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) 2012 Regulations.

**Step 4: Potential impact/ Mitigating and assessing the impact**

The impact of all the Local Plan policies on the nine protected characteristics of the Equalities Act has been considered and presented in table 1.

Table 1: Assessment of the planning policies on the protected characteristics

Planning Policy	Impact on protected characteristics
Policy DS01 Development Strategy: Delivering Homes	<p>Providing good quality, affordable and accessible housing within the district will benefit those residents who are seeking housing or currently homeless. This will positively impact young people, those who live on their own and people on low income who are disproportionately represented on our housing register as well as people with disabilities and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.</p> <p>With an ageing population and knowledge that statistically incidence of disability increases with age delivering accessible housing and appropriate housing will have a positive impact for residents with these characteristics.</p>

Policy DS02 Development Strategy: Creating Jobs and Diversifying the Economy	Creating jobs and diversifying the economy in the district is positive for all groups within the community but by providing opportunity to increase the number of jobs available there will be a positive impact for those people who are currently unemployed or have a low income.
Policy DS03 Development Strategy: Tackling Climate Change and Enhancing the Natural Environment	<p>Enhancing the natural environment improves the health of the whole community. Air pollution impacts children, older people and those with pre-existing health conditions who can be particularly sensitive to the effects of poor air quality. The aim of this policy it to contribute towards lower emissions and reducing car dependency by promoting active travel such as walking and cycling.</p> <p>Mental health conditions are increasing - they are the largest single cause of disability in the UK, and can be caused or affected by pollution, flooding and climate change. Green and blue infrastructure could help improve physical and mental health in the community.</p>
Policy DS04 Development Strategy: Preserving and Enhancing Our Heritage and Rural Character	Whilst it is positive to retain and celebrate heritage, it is important to be mindful of the potential impact of historical context on groups where people may have experienced exploitation or discrimination for example links to slavery, criminalisation of the LGBT+ community or reduced rights for women
Policy DS05 Development Strategy: Supporting Strategic Infrastructure	Delivery of new and improved infrastructure that includes improvements to sustainable transport modes as well as improved accessibility has a positive impact on socially excluded groups, young people, people with disabilities and the elderly
Policy SA01 Site Allocations	<p>New housing proposed has criteria to ensure that new houses to be delivered will support younger people to get on the housing ladder, whilst at the same time catering for people with disabilities and the ageing population.</p> <p>Allocated employment areas will provide the opportunity to increase the number of jobs therefore this will have a positive impact for those people who are currently unemployed or have a low income.</p> <p>Delivery of new and improved infrastructure on these sites that includes improvements to sustainable transport modes as well as improved accessibility has a positive impact on socially excluded groups, young people, people with disabilities and the elderly</p>
Policy SA02 Land South of Gartree Road Strategic Development Area	The provision of an older persons housing to include retirement housing, extra care and/ or residential care housing will benefit the ageing population of the district. Seeking to increase the affordable housing supply in the district for those unable to afford market housing will have

	<p>improved opportunities to acquire a home for sale or rent. This policy also includes the delivery of a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures for housing.</p> <p>The provision of community infrastructure including a local district centre, health services, leisure and sport facilities as well as education facilities will have a positive impact on young people, families, people who are elderly, people with disabilities and those on low incomes.</p> <p>As a protected group, the Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will benefit from the development of this area with new sites being proposed. The improvement in community infrastructure will benefit the young, socially excluded and ageing members of the district.</p>
Policy SA03 North of Market Harborough	<p>The provision of an older person's housing in the form of retirement housing, extra care or residential care housing will benefit the ageing population of the district.</p> <p>The provision of community infrastructure including new or extended health services, sports and recreational facilities as well as education facilities will have a positive impact on young people, families, people who are elderly, people with disabilities and those on low incomes.</p>
Policy SA04 Scraftoft East	<p>The provision of schools will benefit the children in the district. The improvement in community infrastructure will benefit the young and ageing members of the district.</p>
Policy HN01 Housing Need: Affordable Homes	<p>Seeking to increase the affordable housing supply in the district for those unable to afford market housing will have improved opportunities to acquire a home for sale or rent. This policy should have a positive impact on young people, families, people who are elderly, people with disabilities and those on low incomes.</p>
Policy HN02 Housing Need: Mix of New Homes	<p>The adaptable and wheelchair accessibility criteria will help meet the needs of the ageing population and those with disabilities in Harborough District but also to address changing needs of the population. This can have a positive impact for those people who are elderly or who have a disability.</p>
Policy HN03 Housing Need: Housing Type and Density	<p>More compact development can make infrastructure and services easier to deliver and access through walking or cycling for the whole community.</p>
Policy HN04 Housing Need: Supported and Specialist Housing	<p>Specialist housing provides positive impacts for populations with identified needs, including older people and residents with disabilities as well as residents with lower socio-economic income requiring community housing arrangements. Wheelchair access and walking proximity to local services, public spaces and transport networks ensures the inclusivity and equal access for residents.</p>

Policy HN05 Housing Need: Self and Custom Build Housing	The Council recognises the potential benefits of self and custom build development including increasing housing choices and adding to the character of neighbourhoods, fostering a sense of individuality and community pride
Policy HN06 Housing Need: Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation	This policy will allocate sites dependent on housing need identified for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities. This will ensure suitable space is assigned to accommodate housing needs of these communities.
Policy AP01: Development in Settlements	The policy is designed to meet housing, and community needs while maintaining the rural character and infrastructure capacity of the district. It guides development within established settlements. Whether in the Leicester Urban Area, Market Towns, Large Villages, Medium Villages, or Small Villages – where there are sufficient services – with the intention to ensure new development is well integrated. Ensuring that it is appropriate in scale and respects the character of the area is essential to avoid significantly changing the character of a settlement or overwhelming services. The safeguards set out in this policy support the creation of sustainable communities that reflect the size and service provision of each settlement This policy also permits some residential development in areas adjoining sustainable settlements, provided it meets specific criteria. This is intended to help meet the housing and employment needs.
Policy AP02: Development in Town, District and Local Centres	This policy focuses on supporting vibrant town, district and local centres by permitting development that reflects the scale and role of each centre. It prioritises "Main Town Centre" uses in these centres. "Main town centre uses," as defined in national policy include a variety of activities typically found in town centres, such as retail development, leisure and entertainment facilities like cinemas, restaurants, and bars, offices, and cultural or tourist attractions like museums and theatres. These uses are encouraged to be located within town centres to enhance their vitality, reduce the need for travel, and support sustainable development. This policy should have a positive impact on young people, families, people who are elderly, people with disabilities and those on low incomes.
Policy AP03: Development in the countryside (Residential)	Seeking to increase the affordable housing supply in the rural part of the districts for those unable to afford market housing will have improved opportunities to acquire a home for sale or rent. This policy should have a positive impact on young people and families, and those on low incomes.
Policy AP04: Development in the countryside (Commercial/Non-Residential)	This policy supports the rural economy and enables businesses to foster local job creation by permitting certain types of non-residential development in the countryside, such as agriculture, outdoor recreation, and tourism, while protecting the character of these areas. Support for small scale employment in rural settings should have a positive impact with



	potential to improve access to employment and create opportunities for skills development and training for those of younger ages and those living in rural poverty and isolation.
Policy AP05: Locating Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy Development	This policy supports renewable energy to address climate change whilst safeguarding the districts landscapes. It is understood that those at socio-economic disadvantage are more likely to be negatively impacted by the effects of climate change. Neutral Impact.
Policy DM01: High Quality Inclusive Design	The policy emphasises safety, accessibility, and connectivity, which are crucial for creating sustainable, inclusive communities. Features such as natural surveillance, safe access for all users, and well-integrated green spaces contribute to safer, healthier environments where people feel welcome and engaged. Enhancing the public realm through high-quality open spaces and promoting active travel options like walking and cycling encourages healthier lifestyles and reduces reliance on cars. This not only supports the wellbeing of residents but also reduces environmental impacts, contributing to meeting our climate change and the natural environment objectives. This policy could have a positive impact on the changing needs of an ageing population in the district as well as people with a disability.
Policy DM02: Amenity and Wellbeing	This policy is crucial for ensuring that new developments offer a high-quality environment and do not negatively impact existing communities. By setting clear requirements for design quality and mitigating potential nuisances like noise, odour and light pollution, the policy helps create healthy and safer environments for occupants of new development and their neighbours. It promotes thoughtful design that considers both the interior and exterior aspects of buildings, ensuring they are accessible, comfortable, and easy to use for everyone. This policy could have a positive impact on the changing needs of an ageing population in the district as well as people with a disability.
Policy DM03: Heritage Asset Conservation and Design Standards	This policy is important because it ensures that development in areas with high heritage value respects and enhances the historic character of our places. It also provides clear criteria for assessing the impact of development on heritage assets, ensuring that their significance, character, and setting are carefully considered and protected. This approach supports the sensitive integration of new developments, helping to maintain the visual and cultural integrity of conservation areas, listed buildings, and other historic sites. Neutral impact
Policy DM04: Landscape Character and Sensitivity	The policy's emphasis on safeguarding important public views, skylines, and landmarks protects the visual integrity of our landscapes, ensuring that these features remain a source of pride and enjoyment for residents and visitors alike. Neutral impact
Policy DM05: Green and Blue Infrastructure and Open Space	This policy is vital for creating high-quality multi-functional green and blue infrastructure as part of new development. Strategic planting within green infrastructure can act as an effective pollution barrier, absorbing pollutants and reducing noise levels, which enhances air quality

	and contributes to a healthier environment. Access to shaded areas provided by trees and green spaces is also essential for adapting to climate change, offering natural cooling during extreme heat events and increasing community resilience. Through the creation and enhancement of green and blue spaces this policy should have a positive impact on the whole community but in particular young people, families, people who are elderly, people with disabilities.
Policy DM06: Transport and accessibility	The policy seeks to encourage the use of active travel and public transport, specifically encouraging the contribution towards the transport needs of the elderly and those with disabilities for all major developments
Policy DM07: Managing Flood Risk	The policy minimises the risk of flooding to people and property and ensures that land most vulnerable to flooding is preserved for uses that are less susceptible to damage. Neutral impact
Policy DM08: Sustainable Urban Drainage	This policy addresses surface water flooding and requires all developments to adopt integrated water management practices. Major developments must incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) prioritising nature-based solutions. It requires long-term maintenance responsibilities agreed before development begins. Neutral impact
Policy DM09: Sustainable Construction and Climate Resilience	This policy ensures carbon emissions, resource efficiency, passive design, water use, and waste reduction are factored into all developments, with high environmental standards like BREEAM Excellence guiding residential and non-residential projects. Neutral impact
Policy DM10: Biodiversity and Geodiversity Protection and Enhancement	This policy requires development to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity by safeguarding habitats, priority species, and green-blue corridors, promoting climate adaptation, and addressing impacts on designated sites. It also acknowledges the legal status of securing 10% biodiversity net gain (separate to and irrespective of the local plan). Neutral impact
Policy DM11: Managing Impacts on Land and Water Quality	This policy safeguards water resources by preventing pollution, managing contamination, and enhancing aquatic ecology. It prioritises development on lower-grade agricultural land, requiring assessments and mitigation for impacts on high-quality soils. Neutral impact
Policy DM12: Protection and Enhancement of Community Facilities	Community facilities such as community halls, village shops, pubs, and schools are essential for connecting people and supporting local life. Due to financial pressures, many need to diversify their uses, especially pubs facing challenges in the hospitality sector. This policy encourages developments that allow these spaces to adapt and remain vibrant community hubs.

	Protecting and enhancing community facilities will benefit residents who are most likely to use these facilities for support or to reduce isolation. Users who would benefit from accessible community facilities include people with all characteristics including parents/carers with pre-school aged children, older people who attend events such as luncheon clubs and activity sessions, people who require support and assistance through groups such as Parkinsons Support Group, Dementia Cafes, Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafe's, people of faith where there are no alternative places of worship available locally and Veterans support groups etc.
Policy DM13: Existing Business Uses-Retention and Redevelopment	By ensuring that sites currently in business or employment-generating use remain available, the policy helps to maintain a diverse and resilient local economy, providing jobs and supporting the economic wellbeing of the community. By retaining employment land this will potentially increase the number of available jobs for people that are currently out of employment or on low incomes
Policy DM14: Shopfront Design	The policy requires shopfronts to respect local character by preserving original features, using appropriate materials, ensuring cohesive designs, and integrating discreet security measures. Neutral impact
Policy DM15: Outdoor Advertising and Signage Design	The policy requires outdoor advertising to respect local character through proportionate designs, appropriate materials, and minimal clutter, especially in sensitive areas. Signs must complement shopfronts, limit projecting features, and use subtle, unobtrusive lighting. Neutral impact
Policy DM16: Telecommunications Infrastructure	This policy ensures that telecommunications infrastructure is developed responsibly and with minimal impact on communities and the environment. Neutral impact

In table 1 each policy in the Local Plan is assessed against each of the nine characteristics and the likely impact of each policy is considered. Some of the key planning policies and their likely impacts are discussed further below:

- Policy DS01: Development Strategy: Delivering Homes
- Policy DS02: Development Strategy: Creating jobs and diversifying the economy
- Policy DS05: Development Strategy: Enabling Supporting Infrastructure
- Policy SA01: Site Allocations
- Policy HN01: Housing Need: Affordable Homes
- Policy HN02: Housing Need: Mix of New Homes
- Policy HN03: Housing Need: Housing type and density
- Policy HN04: Housing Need: Specialist Housing for older people
- Policy HN05: Housing Need: Self and Custom Build Housing

Policy HN06: Housing Need: Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople

Policy AP03: Development in the Countryside (Residential)

Policy DM01: High Quality Inclusive Design

Policy DM12: Protection and Enhancement of Community Facilities

The numbers of homes required in the district is set out in Policy DS01 whilst Policy DS02 focuses on creating jobs and diversifying the economy therefore this policy has a positive impact on the whole community. Furthermore, Policy DS02 sets out requirements for large-scale employment use to support training and apprenticeship programmes which will have a positive impact on those with age protected characteristics.

Policy DM12 aims to protect and enhance existing community facilities whilst Policy DS05 aims to secure the delivery of new and improved infrastructure to support new development in the district. Policy DS05 sets out criteria that requires details on the timing of infrastructure as well as improving sustainable modes of travel and improving access to health provision within the community. It is considered that these policies could have a positive impact on families, people in the district who are young and ageing, as well as those with disabilities. Additionally, it will attempt to address the concerns raised in the consultation about ensuring infrastructure is improved alongside development.

Policy SA01: Site Allocations focus growth in key sustainable areas across the district by allocating a range of housing and employment sites, including strategic housing/mixed uses sites and employment sites. These strategically planned sites have the benefit of providing homes, employment as well as facilities in close proximity thereby improving access to essential services and promoting active modes of travels.

Policy HN01 is designed to help provide more affordable housing to ensure that families and younger people can find a home they can afford. On sites with 10 or more dwellings 40% of the total must be affordable. The policy seeks to maximise the provision of affordable housing subject to viability and other policy considerations. The policy addresses the concerns raised in the consultation and will seek to help mitigate financial disadvantage for people with socioeconomic difficulties, therefore it is considered that this policy could have a positive impact on those with the age protected characteristics.

The needs of our population are evolving therefore alongside a strong demand for family homes, we anticipate a rise in single-person households, particularly among older residents in the district. Policy HN02 sets out the expectation for residential development to deliver an appropriate mix of housing types, tenures and size, aiming to address the changing needs something that was identified in the consultation responses. Furthermore, this is likely to have a positive impact on those with the age protected characteristics.

Policy HN02 also states that all homes will be expected to meet accessible and adaptable (M4(2) technical standards) subject to site suitability. Furthermore, all major residential developments will be expected to contribute to wheelchair accessibility as follows:

- A) A minimum of 5% of market homes must meet standard M4(3)A (wheelchair adaptable)); and
- B) Between 5% and 10% of affordable homes must meet standard M4(3)B (wheelchair accessible)

This policy aims to address these changing needs, ensuring that everyone has access to suitable and affordable housing. Although concern was raised by developers in the consultation about these standards the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Employment Needs Study and other evidence support policies on accessibility and space standards in the next iteration of the Local Plan. All policies must be assessed for their impact on viability in accordance with relevant guidance. Therefore, these policies are likely to have a positive impact on those with the age and disability protected characteristics.

Policy HN03 on housing density standards permits well designed higher densities with good access to public transport services and facilities. More compact densities can make infrastructure and services easier to deliver and access through walking or cycling therefore this could potentially help members of the community without access to a car, families and younger age groups. This policy is likely to have a positive impact on those with the age protected characteristics.

Approximately 22% of the population in Harborough is aged 65 and over, with 11% aged 75 and over. By 2041, the population aged 65+ is projected to increase by 59%, and the population aged over 75 is expected to almost double. Our assessment of the needs shows a particular requirement for housing with support in both the market and affordable sectors. Policy HN04 for specialist housing recognises the housing needs of our older residents. We want to make sure that these homes are not just available but also suitable for older people. Of the approximately 2,000 new specialist homes and 800 bedspaces required, various types of housing to support different levels of care and independence are needed. This means designing them with the specific needs of older residents in mind, ensuring they are safe, accessible, and comfortable. It is about creating homes that support the dignity, independence, and wellbeing of our older residents that was also support in the consultation responses. This policy is likely to have a positive impact on those in the age and disability protected characteristics.

Policy HN05 expects developers to provide at least 10% self and custom build housing on sites with over 40 dwellings (gross). To help meet this need, the policy sets out requirements for integration of self and custom build plots into larger housing developments as requested in the public consultation. This promotes diversity in housing types and allows self and custom housebuilders to benefit from the infrastructure and community amenities available in locations where larger development is supported by our strategy and which are more likely to be closer to public transport and other services. This policy is likely to have a positive impact on those with protected characteristics such as young families, first-time homebuyers, and disable people seeking personalised housing solutions to meet their individual needs.

There is a need for affordable housing in rural areas to support community diversity and allow residents to stay close to their roots. Policy AP03 restricts residential development in the countryside to specific needs, such as affordable housing and accommodation for rural

workers, ensuring that it supports local communities without compromising the rural environment. The policy prioritises such housing within or adjacent to existing settlements and caps market housing at 20% to ensure affordability. It also supports housing for rural workers linked to viable businesses. This policy is likely to have a positive impact on young people and those with a lower income.

Policy DM01 requires new development to have high quality and inclusive design ensuring that new development is not only functional but also contributes positively to the character and identity of our communities. This approach helps to maintain the visual coherence and heritage of our towns and villages, making them more attractive and vibrant places to live. Additionally, the policy emphasises safety, accessibility, and connectivity, which are crucial for creating sustainable, inclusive communities. Features such as natural surveillance, safe access for all users, and well-integrated green spaces contribute to safer, healthier environments where people feel welcome and engaged. Enhancing the public realm through high-quality open spaces and promoting active travel options like walking and cycling encourages healthier lifestyles and reduces reliance on cars. This not only supports the wellbeing of residents but also reduces environmental impacts, contributing to meeting our climate change and the natural environment objectives. Therefore, this policy is likely to have a positive impact on all the community but in particular with age and disability protected characteristics.

The Gypsy and Traveller communities have a long-standing presence in Harborough District. Policy HN06 is designed to meet the specific housing needs of these communities, ensuring they have safe and suitable places to live that respect their cultural and lifestyle needs. Based upon the Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Showpeople site assessment, potential sites for allocation are put forward in the Local Plan and existing lawful Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites are protected.

### **Step 5: mitigating and assessing the impact**

The majority of the planning policies either have a positive or neutral impact on the nine protected characteristics, therefore at this stage no recommendations or mitigation is required. It should be recognised that where planning policies are judged to have a neutral impact, this is because the policy will have a positive impact on the community as a whole across all groups, rather than any particular group.

### **Step 6: Decision and Conclusion**

The analysis has concluded that the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan covers a wide range of policies that promote equality and identifies several positive impacts for the various protected characteristics.

It is expected that the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan alongside other supporting documents including the EqIA will be considered for member approval at the Cabinet and Council in early 2025. Upon approval, after any necessary amendments, further public consultation will be carried out in accordance with Regulation 19 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) 2012 Regulations.

After the consultation is completed, the Council will submit the Draft Local Plan and Policies Map together with any representation received, other procedural documents and the evidence base to the Secretary of State for an independent examination. It is currently anticipated that the Local Plan will be submitted in mid-2025 with adoption by December 2026.

**Step 7: Monitoring, evaluation & review of your policy/procedure/service change**

To ensure the Local Plan remains responsive and continues to meet its objectives, we will monitor social, economic and environment changes, development and infrastructure against the plan’s vision, policies and targets. The Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan includes a monitoring framework in Appendix 3 to help us track the progress of policy implementation and assess how effective our strategies are. We will use key indicators and performance metrics to measure outcomes and identify any areas where adjustments might be needed. We will report on Local Plan implementation through an Annual Monitoring Report, which will be published on our website.

**Equality Improvement Plan**

**Equality Objective :**

**Action:**  
**Officer Responsible:** **By when:**

**Equality Objective :**

**Action:**  
**Officer Responsible:** **By when:**

**Equality Objective :**

**Action:**  
**Officer Responsible:** **By when:**

**Signed off by:** T.Nelson

**Date:** 6.2.2025

Once signed off, please forward a copy for publication to Julie Clarke, Equality and Diversity Officer e-mail: [j.clarke@harborough.gov.uk](mailto:j.clarke@harborough.gov.uk)