

Equality Impact Assessment

Section 1: Details of the policy/practice/project

<p>Department/Team responsible:</p>	<p>Hole Farm Project Team</p>
<p>Name of Policy, Practice or Project being assessed:</p>	<p>Hole Farm woodland creation project, Brentwood</p>
<p>Purpose and anticipated outcomes:</p>	<p>Thames Chase Community Forest The Forestry Commission (now known as Forestry England) has been working within the Thames Chase Community Forest (TCCF) since its inception in 1990. To date, over 350 ha of land is now owned or managed by the Forestry England (FE) within TCCF. The TCCF is dedicated to increasing the community woodland resource for the benefit of people and the environment. A particular strand of the TCCF priorities is to improve degraded landscapes through community woodland planting and the engagement of local communities in the design and management of such sites.</p> <p>Forestry England and National Highways partnership Since 2017, Forestry England and National Highways (then Highways England) have been discussing and developing an exciting vision to deliver an exemplary environmental project with a legacy that matches the scale and ambition of the Lower Thames Crossing. Following a scoping study on identifying the best areas for a new community woodland adjacent to the proposed LTC scheme, National Highways purchased an area of farmland in 2021, with a view to create a new multi-functional woodland of 100ha.</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant increases in biodiversity • Demonstrable increase in natural capital Biodiversity net gain • Resilience to pests, diseases and climate change • Net decrease in carbon release • Reduction in nitrate leaching from agricultural soils • Significant enhancement of access to the countryside for local people • Grows community spirit and empowers local people through pride and sense of place

Equality Impact Assessments

Is this a new or existing policy, practice or project?	New	X	Existing	
List of participants in Equality Impact Assessment Process:	Forestry England, National Highways			
Date assessment started:	14/03/2022	Completion Date:	27/02/2023	
<p>Please indicate who is likely to be affected:</p> <p>For example: Employees, visitors, contractors, women, men, young people, older people, people with disabilities etc.</p>	<p>The woodland creation will affect a large range of people that may use the site for recreation, education, forestry and research. There may be minor impacts off site through flood risk mitigation, reductions in chemical inputs, and a contribution to carbon sequestration and nutrients capturing.</p> <p>Facilities such as an easy access trail linked to a car park will facilitate a wide range of abilities.</p>			

Equality Impact Assessments

Section 2: Collecting information

What evidence is available about the needs of relevant groups? Please consider demographic data, including census information, research, consultation and survey reports, feedback and complaints, case law, others knowledge and experience. Please refer to the list of evidence on the EqlA page of the intranet.

Details	Source of Evidence																																								
<p>2021 Census data - Brentwood</p> <p>Total Population = 77,000 (23rd least densely populated of the East of England's 45 local authority areas) This is a 4.6% increase from the 2011 census (average increase for the East of England was 8.3%). For each age group in Brentwood there has been an increase of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10.3% in people aged 65yrs + - 2.4% in people aged 15 - 64yrs - 6.6% in children aged under 15yrs <p>Age</p> <table> <tr> <td>Under 18</td> <td>21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18-64</td> <td>59%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65 and over</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Sexual orientation</p> <table> <tr> <td>Straight/Heterosexual</td> <td>92%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gay/Lesbian</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bisexual</td> <td>0.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>0.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not answered</td> <td>6.2%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Ethnicity</p> <table> <tr> <td>White</td> <td>89%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed or multiple ethnic groups</td> <td>3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black, Caribbean or African</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Religion</p> <table> <tr> <td>Christian</td> <td>56%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No religion</td> <td>33%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All other religions</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not stated</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Disability</p> <table> <tr> <td>Disabled and limited a lot</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disabled and limited a little</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not disabled</td> <td>86%</td> </tr> </table>	Under 18	21%	18-64	59%	65 and over	20%	Straight/Heterosexual	92%	Gay/Lesbian	1%	Bisexual	0.6%	Other	0.2%	Not answered	6.2%	White	89%	Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	3%	Asian	5%	Black, Caribbean or African	2%	Other	1%	Christian	56%	No religion	33%	All other religions	5%	Not stated	6%	Disabled and limited a lot	5%	Disabled and limited a little	8%	Not disabled	86%	<p>2021 Census data ONS https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E07000068/ https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps?lad=E07000068</p>
Under 18	21%																																								
18-64	59%																																								
65 and over	20%																																								
Straight/Heterosexual	92%																																								
Gay/Lesbian	1%																																								
Bisexual	0.6%																																								
Other	0.2%																																								
Not answered	6.2%																																								
White	89%																																								
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	3%																																								
Asian	5%																																								
Black, Caribbean or African	2%																																								
Other	1%																																								
Christian	56%																																								
No religion	33%																																								
All other religions	5%																																								
Not stated	6%																																								
Disabled and limited a lot	5%																																								
Disabled and limited a little	8%																																								
Not disabled	86%																																								

Equality Impact Assessments

<p>Employment</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Economically active - employed</td> <td>60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Economically active - unemployed</td> <td>3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Economically inactive - student</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Economically inactive - retired</td> <td>24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Economically inactive - other</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Education - Highest Qualification Level Achieved:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Degree or similar - <i>professional qualification (accountancy etc.)</i></td> <td>29%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Apprenticeship</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HNC, HND or 2+ A Levels</td> <td>14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5+ GCSEs, an A-Level or 1-2 AS Levels</td> <td>13%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1-4 GCSEs or Equivalent</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No qualifications</td> <td>12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other/does not apply</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> </table>	Economically active - employed	60%	Economically active - unemployed	3%	Economically inactive - student	4%	Economically inactive - retired	24%	Economically inactive - other	10%	Degree or similar - <i>professional qualification (accountancy etc.)</i>	29%	Apprenticeship	4%	HNC, HND or 2+ A Levels	14%	5+ GCSEs, an A-Level or 1-2 AS Levels	13%	1-4 GCSEs or Equivalent	8%	No qualifications	12%	Other/does not apply	20%	
Economically active - employed	60%																								
Economically active - unemployed	3%																								
Economically inactive - student	4%																								
Economically inactive - retired	24%																								
Economically inactive - other	10%																								
Degree or similar - <i>professional qualification (accountancy etc.)</i>	29%																								
Apprenticeship	4%																								
HNC, HND or 2+ A Levels	14%																								
5+ GCSEs, an A-Level or 1-2 AS Levels	13%																								
1-4 GCSEs or Equivalent	8%																								
No qualifications	12%																								
Other/does not apply	20%																								
<p>The 2011 census data showed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income Deprivation (22.5%) Employment Deprivation (22.5%) Education, Skills and Training Deprivation (13.5%) Health Deprivation and Disability (13.5%) Crime (9.3%) Barriers to Housing and Services (9.3%) Living Environment Deprivation (9.3%) 	<p>2011 Census data ONS</p>																								
<p><u>Temperature check questionnaire</u></p> <p>A temperature check questionnaire was sent to 7,000 households in the local area to collect information on the views and needs of people living in the area. 311 responses were received which were summarised in a report by LUC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The activities deemed most important by respondents were riding a horse and walking. This was followed by exercise (of which cycling was mentioned frequently) and spending time with family. In addition to woodland, the most popular things that people wanted to see at Hole Farm were paths, car parking and a variety of natural landscape features. Around a third of respondents thought that they would travel by car whilst more than half would travel on foot, cycle or horse. Only a small number would travel by public transport The most mentioned concern was that the site may become overdeveloped or commercialised. Questions around making the site inclusive sparked responses asking for easy accessible entrance points, clear signage, different trail options and a diverse range of activity options. 	<p>LUC Hole Farm consultation report</p>																								

Equality Impact Assessments

From your research above have you identified any gaps in evidence? If so, what are the gaps?

Marriage and civil partnership. Marriage and civil partnerships are grouped under one statistic and same sex marriage/civil partnership is not identified.

As appropriate please describe the consultation/engagement undertaken including details of the groups involved and the methods used.

The general population within 1km of the site were encouraged to contribute to the design of the woodland, through several phases of consultation. A stakeholder mapping session with National Highways, Thames Chase Trust, FE and local councillors took place first to determine engagement (interest and influence) of prospective groups. This identified those that needed to be contacted for consultation through the following phases.

Phase 1

A questionnaire was sent to 7,000 local households, asking for their thoughts on the project.

Phase 2

Utilising the information gathered from the questionnaire, four online workshops on the key themes appearing in the questionnaire were undertaken to gather more detailed information.

Phase 3

Targeted consultation with The Great Warley Conservation Society (TGWCS) in March and June 2022. TGWCS act as the parish council for the local area. The first meeting was to discuss the community consultation and gather their views on the project. The second meeting was to discuss the draft design. A stakeholder roundtable was also held with MPs and local councillors in May 2022 to bring key stakeholders together to review the draft design.

Phase 4

Two open days were held to allow members of the public to come for a site tour, presenting the draft design. People were then asked to comment on the design though annotating a copy of the draft design.

Phase 5

Two drop-in days were held in the Great Warley church hall where the final woodland design was presented. The local community and stakeholders were encouraged to come and ask questions and give their comments.

Input and feedback were also received from a far broader sphere of respondents. Stakeholders, including national organisations such as Natural England, RSPB, Woodland Trust, mountain bike and horse-riding groups were also consulted. A separate online workshop for environmental groups was held to gather their opinions on key environmental themes.

Equality Impact Assessments

Are there any other groups to be consulted?

The project team have compiled a list of respondents who have indicated interest in keeping in touch about on-going plans. This includes stakeholders, residents, volunteers and partner businesses.

Section 3: Impacts

Has the research and consultation identified any potential for impacts on the following groups:

Protected characteristic	Yes	No	Please explain
Age (e.g. older people, children and young people)	✓		An easy access trail will facilitate use of the site by families and older population as well as those with a disability. Benches in all plots will allow visitors to rest.
Disability	✓		Inclusion of an easy access trail next to the car park will increase access for those with a disability. The proximity of the site to residential properties will allow ease of access for local people. Access points will be suited for people of all abilities.
Gender Reassignment (where a person is living as the opposite gender to their birth)			No data available
Pregnancy and Maternity	✓		Easy access trail will be useable by push chairs. Benches in all plots will provide a resting point. Proximity of green space to local residents with children will maximise time spent outside rather than in a car travelling to local green spaces.
Race, ethnicity, nationality or origins (including gypsies or travellers, refugees or asylum seekers)	✓		A tree nursery, orchard and coppicing areas will open up the opportunity for volunteering. The Thames Chase Trust and Forestry England volunteer groups could help broaden the diversity of users beyond those in the local community.
Religion or belief (including non-belief)	✓		Engagement with the church wardens for St. Mary the Virgin (CoE) church next door.

Equality Impact Assessments

Sex/Gender			The office and site toilets will be gender neutral.
Sexual orientation			No data available
Marriage and civil partnership			Data inconclusive

Is there any evidence that the policy may:

	Yes	No	No Evidence
Result in less favourable treatment for particular groups?		√	The site will be available to people of all protected characteristics.
Give rise to direct or indirect discrimination?		√	The site is open access for all users on foot. The site can be reached via public transport from Brentwood (which is the nearest urban centre). Central London connects to Brentwood via the Elizabeth train line. A 94-space car park also provides for those travelling from further afield.
Give rise to unlawful harassment or victimisation?		√	Forestry England has been consulting with Essex police to reduce the prospects of any anti-social or unlawful behaviour on the site.

If yes to any of the above, please give details:

How will the policy, practice or project be modified to mitigate this less favourable treatment?

Equality Impact Assessments

Section 4: Meeting our General Equality Duty

You must complete the following sections:

Which aspects of the policy, practice or project seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?

The project has sought to engage all the immediate community. Work to encourage and involve volunteer groups, schools and partnerships on an ongoing basis will help FE continue to consider all groups.

A community planting event was held in December 2022 that was open to all. A local school was also invited along to plant the first trees which was broadcast through National Highway's media so children and adults of all economic and ethnic backgrounds are made aware of the site and Forestry England. More community involvement days will be held as the project is delivered over the coming years.

Which aspects of the policy, practice or project seek to advance equality of opportunity between people which share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not?

FE will work to reach out to all groups within the community to encourage all social and ethnic groups to engage in activities within Hole Farm. Our interpretation strategy for the site includes a variety of methods to enable visitors to get the most out of their visit, from waymarked trails to interpretation panels, play, sculptures and more. Any written or physical interventions will be fully accessible and designed to appeal to people with different interests (e.g. heritage, environment, recreation and wellbeing).

Which aspects of the policy, practice or project seek to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?

Community planting, wildlife spotting, pond management, coppicing and orchard management will be some of the activities that anyone will be able to participate in. These activities will draw people from diverse backgrounds together around a common goal. The opportunity to see the results of their common efforts in the establishment, improvement and ongoing management of the site aims to draw people together and inspire them. The aim is to provide a broad range of activities so there is something that everyone can be involved in. For example, a less able-bodied individual would be able to get involved with wildlife spotting or helping to collate information for the Hole Farm notice board and Facebook page.

Equality Impact Assessments

An accessible and hireable community room at the heart of the site will be available for local meetings, yoga sessions, workshops and more. Forestry England also aims to continue a social prescribing programme at Hole Farm following the pilot at Thames Chase.

Section 5: Outcome of assessment

Please detail the outcome of the assessment:

No major change	
Adjust the policy	
Continue the policy	✓
Stop and remove the policy	
Please detail recommendations, including any action required to address any negative impacts identified:	
No significant negative impacts identified so no changes made at this stage.	

Section 6: Monitoring

Describe how you will continue to monitor the equality impact of this policy, practice or project e.g. performance indicators used, other monitoring arrangements, who will monitor progress, criteria used to measure achievement of outcomes:

Community engagement will continue beyond the planning phase. A continued dialogue of engagement with local communities will continue through the development and delivery phases of this project. This will gather views of users and the communities in order to adapt where needed and where possible. While our planning and designs are fine-tuned, we will remain receptive to ideas and suggestions on how to improve equal access (both physical and intellectual) to this site.

A mailing list has been created to keep individuals up to date on the project and any events/activities associated with it.

Equality Impact Assessments

When and how is the policy, practice or project due to be reviewed?

The impacts of this project on people will be reviewed throughout the project's development. The Project Management framework for both Forestry England and National Highways will ensure milestone check-in review moments and evaluation throughout the project. A 'lessons learnt' document will also be produced and shared with colleagues on completion of Hole Farm Community Woodland. This will ensure that the objectives for diverse and inclusive engagement are clearly communicated, agreed upon and implemented.

Section 7: Sign-off

Date sent to Wellbeing and Inclusion Manager:	20/02/2023
Comments	
Date signed off	20/02/2023

Please insert name and title of the Senior Manager who has signed off this Equality Impact Assessment:

Name	Neil Kellett
Title	Business Manager
Date approved	20 February 2023

Please send draft Equality Impact Assessment to the Wellbeing and Inclusion Manager at diversity@forestryengland.uk