

Wirral Local Plan 2021 to 2037 Submission Draft

Equality Impact Assessment

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

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Quality information

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

AECOM has been commissioned by Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council ('the Council') to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) of the emerging Local Plan from Regulation 18 to adoption. Once adopted, the Plan will establish a spatial strategy in relation to housing and employment growth up to 2037, replacing the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (2000).

As a public sector organisation, the Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the associated Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to ensure that the objectives and options considered through the emerging Local Plan do not lead to unlawful discrimination (direct and indirect), advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those with a protected characteristic and all others. An EqIA is often used by public sector organisations to demonstrate how this duty has been discharged.

AECOM has also been instructed by Wirral Council to undertake the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) and Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of the emerging Local Plan. An appraisal of equality impacts has been undertaken as part of the SA/SEA process which has integrated the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment, Health Impact Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment. This report provides a full, standalone high-level assessment of the equality impacts of the proposed policies contained within the Submission Draft Regulation 19 Wirral Local Plan.

1.2 Purpose

EqIA is intended to help make decisions by predicting the equality consequences of the implementation of a proposed plan. In addition to assessing the equality consequences, it also produces recommendations as to how favourable consequences for equality could be enhanced and how any harmful consequences could be avoided or minimised. It addresses equality in relation to protected characteristics, as defined in the Equality Act 2010. These are race, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy or maternity.

EqIA considers whether the implementation of proposed policies could:

- Help to address existing discrimination or disadvantage experienced by particular groups in the population;
- Increase equal opportunities for protected characteristic groups, so that they are able to access opportunities on an equivalent basis to others, particularly for people from backgrounds who have experienced historic disadvantage or inequality;
- Improve relations between groups who have different protected characteristic identities (e.g. between people from different racial backgrounds); and
- Identify if there is any risk that the policies could give rise to any intended or unintended illegal discrimination.

In summary, EqIA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of a draft plan, and alternatives, in terms of equalities issues, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising the positives. The aim is to ensure that the plan contributes to the achievement of equality of opportunity for all of Wirral residents.

This EqIA will support the Council to fulfil its equality duties in relation to the PSED. It provides a consideration of potential direct and indirect equality impacts (both negative and positive) associated with the draft Local Plan.

1.3 Report structure

Following on from this introduction section the remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2: Policy and legislation review** – providing context through relevant national, regional and local policy and legislation;
- **Section 3: Equalities baseline** – using secondary data sources such as Census 2011 data to form an equalities baseline for Wirral;
- **Section 4: Assessment of potential equality effects** – an appraisal of potential impacts using the evidence gathered for the policies contained within the draft Local Plan; and
- **Section 5: Recommendations and conclusions** – high level recommendations and conclusions for enhancing positive equality impacts and minimising potential negative impacts based on available evidence to date.

2. Legislation and Policy

2.1 Legislation

Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010¹ legally protects people from discrimination both in the workplace and in wider society. It replaces previous anti-discrimination laws which include the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Act ensures that individuals with certain 'protected characteristics' are not indirectly or directly discriminated against. The protected characteristics include:

- **Age:** this refers to persons defined by either a particular age or a range of ages;
- **Disability:** a disabled person is defined as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities;
- **Gender reassignment:** this refers to people who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process for the purpose of reassigning their gender identity;
- **Marriage and civil partnership:** marriage can be between a man and a woman or between two people of the same sex. Same-sex couples can also have a civil partnership. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples;
- **Pregnancy and maternity:** pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth;
- **Race:** the Equality Act 2010 defines race as encompassing colour, nationality (including citizenship) and ethnic or national origins;
- **Religion or belief:** religion means any religion a person follows. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief, and includes those people who have no formal religion or belief;
- **Sex:** this refers to a man or to a woman, or to a group of people of the same sex; and
- **Sexual orientation:** a person's sexual orientation relates to their emotional, physical and/or sexual attraction and the expression of that attraction.

Under section 149 of the Act, a public authority in the exercise of its functions is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The PSED requires public bodies to have due regard to three aims. Specifically, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Equality Act 2010 explains that the second aim (advancing equality of opportunity) involves, in particular, having due regard to the need to: remove or minimise disadvantages affecting people due to their protected characteristics; take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people; and encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Relevant guidance on fulfilling the PSED includes:

- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), The Essential Guide to the Public Sector Equality Duty;

¹ HMSO (2010). Equality Act 2010. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

- EHRC, Engagement and the Equality Duty and guide for public authorities;
- EHRC, Equality Act 2010: Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty England;
- EHRC, Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision-Making England (and non-devolved public authorities in Scotland and Wales); and
- Government Equalities Office, Equality Act 2010: Public Sector Equality Duty What Do I Need To Know? A Quick Start Guide for Public Sector Organisations.

2.2 National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)

This assessment also seeks to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).² Specifically the paragraphs detailed below:

- **Paragraph 16.** Early, representative, and effective engagement and collaboration with neighbourhood, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that Local Plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision.
- **Paragraph 61.** To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes).
- **Paragraph 92.** The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Local planning authorities should create a shared vision with communities of the residential environment and facilities they wish to see. To support this, local planning authorities should aim to involve all sections of the community in the development of Local Plans.

2.3 Local Policy

Wirral Council Plan: A 2021-2026: Equity for People and Place

The Wirral Plan is a non-statutory document which sets out the key priorities for the local authority over the coming years. The primary aim is to make Wirral a more equitable and fairer place to live, work and visit and respond to the Covid19 Pandemic. The vision consists of five key pillars, each of which will have effects in terms of equality and diversity.

- Sustainable Environment
- Brighter Futures
- Inclusive Economy
- Safe and Pleasant Communities
- Active and Healthy Lives

A key principle is outlined as follows:

“Working together for brighter futures for our children, young people and their families by breaking the cycle of poor outcomes for all regardless of their background”

² Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021). National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf

Wirral Economic Strategy 2021-2026

The Wirral Economic Strategy (2021)³ sets out a five-year strategy for delivering economic growth in Wirral. The purpose of the Economic Strategy is to update the previous Growth Plan from 2015, align with national and city-region policy frameworks and provide a high level framework for Wirral over a five year period. The vision is to create

“Vibrant places Vibrant places, where communities and businesses thrive and people choose to live, work and visit. A rebalanced borough that stands out for its achievements on fairness, reducing inequalities and building local wealth. A borough that is celebrated for delivering new and big ideas, working jointly with others and for prioritising environmental sustainability.”

The three central objectives of the Economic Strategy are:

- Thriving economy;
- Vibrant Places; and
- Inclusive Economy

These are underpinned by 3 working principles:

- Community wealth building;
- Prioritising Sustainability; and
- Openness and collaboration

Wirral Council - Equality Impact Assessments

Wirral Council uses EqIAs to improve services by focusing on fairness, access and inclusion. This helps the Council to consider a policy, service or process and how it might affect different groups. A new Council Equality Plan is being put together and will be available in the near future.

³ Wirral Council Economic Strategy 2021-2026 [online] available from:
[Wirral Economic Strategy 2021 2026.pdf](#) [accessed 28/02/22]

3. Equalities baseline

3.1 Study Area

The area of study considered in this EqIA baseline includes relevant evidence at the local, regional and national levels, to allow the assessment to consider the potential effects of the proposed policies within the Local Plan for protected characteristic groups at varying geographical scales. At the local level, data has been collected and analysed to identify where there is disproportionate representation of protected characteristic groups, in comparison to regional and national averages.

This baseline also uses existing research to understand the needs of protected characteristic groups so that the assessment of potential equality effects can be made more robust. The baseline includes, where relevant, published evidence regarding how protected characteristic groups experience particular social or economic issues, which may shape their sensitivity or resilience to potential effects.

The main source of data used in the baseline profiling at this stage is Census 2011⁴ data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

3.2 Profile of protected characteristic groups

Population change

According to the most recent census data available, Wirral is home to 312,293 people. As shown in Table 3.1, the population of Wirral increased at a lower rate between 2001 and 2011 in comparison to the North West of England and England averages.

Table 3.1: Population growth 2001 - 2011

Date	Wirral	North West	England
2001	312,293	6,729,764	49,138,831
2011	319,783	7,052,177	53,012,456
Population Change 2001-2011	+2.4%	+4.8%	+7.9%

Source: ONS Table UV02 (2001)⁵ and QS102EW (2011)⁶ - Population Density

Age structure of the population

The age profile of the population living within Wirral is broadly similar to that in the North West and England. 29.2% of residents within Wirral are within the younger age categories (0-15 and 16-24), broadly similar to the totals for the North West of England (31.6%) and England (30.8%). In contrast, a slightly lower proportion of residents are within the working age categories (25-44 and 45-59) in Wirral (45.1%) in comparison to the percentages for the North West of England (46.2%) and England (46.9%).

There is also a larger proportion of elderly residents aged 60+ within Wirral (25.7%) than in the North West (22.8%) and England (22.3%), as shown in Table 3.2.

⁴ It should be noted that although the most recent Census for England and Wales took place in March 2021, the full census data outputs are not scheduled for release until March 2023.

⁵ Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=1697>

⁶ Available at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?reset=yes&mode=construct&dataset=143&version=0&anal=1&initiel=>

Table 3.2: Age structure

	Wirral	North West	England
0-15	18.6%	18.8%	18.9%
16-24	10.6%	12.8%	11.9%
25-44	24.1%	26.4%	27.5%
45-59	21%	19.8%	19.4%
60+	25.7%	22.8%	22.3%
Total Population	319,783	7,052,177	53,012,456

Source: ONS KS102EW – Age Structure ⁷

Sex

Wirral has a slightly higher proportion of female residents (51.6%) compared to males (48.4%) according to 2020 population estimates. A similar trend is observed regionally and nationally, while Wirral's female population is at least 1% higher than both geographies and consequently the male population is ~1% lower.

Table 3-3: Population breakdown by sex and geographical area

	Wirral	North West	England
Male	48.4%	49.4%	49.5%
Female	51.6%	50.6%	50.5%

Source: ONS Mid-Year population estimates 2020 ⁸

Sexual orientation

There are no official statistics relating to sexual orientation in the UK Census 2011. However, the 2021 Census includes the question 'Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?' and as such more detailed data on sexual orientation will be available for future analysis.

However, data from the Annual Population Survey (APS) in 2019 reveals that 2.7% of England identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB), while the North West has a slightly lower average of 2.2%.⁹ The UK breakdown of sexual orientation identifies 1.6% of UK residents as Gay or Lesbian; 1.1% as Bisexual; 93.7% as Heterosexual or straight; and 0.7% as an 'other' sexual identity.

Gender reassignment

There are no official statistics relating to gender reassignment and the UK Census currently only collects data relating to sex (gender assigned at birth). The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has identified a need for information about gender identity for policy development and service planning with these requirements strengthened by the need for information on those with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The 2021 Census includes the optional question "Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?" and as such more data on the transgender population will be available in the future.

Transgender people may have concerns about safety and security when using public transport and existing evidence from the Crime Survey for England and Wales suggests they are at greater risk of being victims of crime than heterosexual people. The survey recorded that the number of hate crimes against transgender people had risen by 45%, from 858 in 2015-16 to 1,248 in 2016-17. Transgender people may also avoid associated public transport facilities such as toilets for fear of being harassed or identified. ¹⁰

⁷ Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?reset=yes&mode=construct&dataset=145&version=0&anal=1&initselel=>

⁸ Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?reset=yes&mode=construct&dataset=31&version=0&anal=1&initselel=>

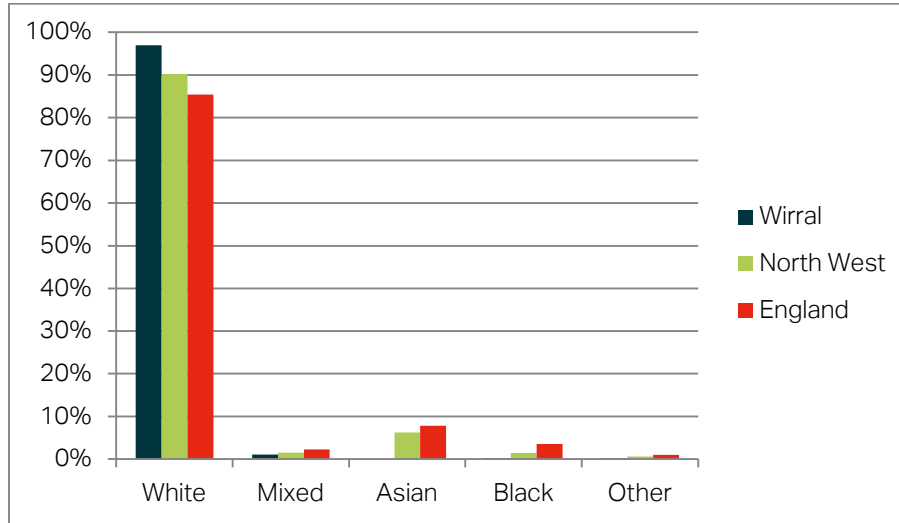
⁹ Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2019>

¹⁰ Available at: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/key_facts_and_findings-transgender_0.pdf

Race

The 2011 Census ethnicity results presented in Figure 3.1 revealed that the majority of the population of Wirral are classed as White British (97%). This is a greater proportion in comparison to the North West (90.2%) and England (85.4%). Wirral has one of the lowest proportions of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups in the country. The largest non-white ethnic groups within Wirral are Chinese (0.5% of the population), Indian (0.4%), Bangladeshi (0.3%), Other Asian (0.3%), Pakistani (0.1%), African (0.1%), Black Caribbean (0.1%), Table 3.4 shows the breakdown of ethnic groups at the three geographical levels.

Figure 3.1: Ethnicity by Geography



Source: ONS (2011) KS201EW - Ethnic Group ¹¹

When compared with 2001 Census data, it can be seen that certain areas within Wirral are becoming slightly more ethnically diverse. For example, 3.01% of the Wirral population are now from a BAME group in comparison to 1.69% in 2001 and 20.2% for England as a whole. Within the BAME population the groups that have grown the most between 2001 and 2011 are Asian British (0.4% of the population in 2001 to 1.2% in 2011) and Indian (0.2% of the population in 2001 to 0.4% in 2011).

¹¹ Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?reset=yes&mode=construct&dataset=608&version=0&anal=1&initseI=>

Table 3.4: Breakdown of ethnic group

	Wirral	North West	England
White	96.99%	90.21%	85.42%
English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	94.97%	87.08%	79.75%
Irish	0.83%	0.92%	0.98%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.02%	0.06%	0.10%
Any other White background	1.17%	2.15%	4.58%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups	1.03%	1.57%	2.25%
White and Black Caribbean	0.30%	0.56%	0.78%
White and Black African	0.17%	0.26%	0.30%
White and Asian	0.30%	0.43%	0.63%
Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	0.25%	0.32%	0.53%
Asian / Asian British	1.60%	6.20%	7.82%
Indian	0.42%	1.52%	2.63%
Pakistani	0.07%	2.69%	2.10%
Bangladeshi	0.27%	0.65%	0.82%
Chinese	0.52%	0.68%	0.72%
Any other Asian background, please describe	0.33%	0.66%	1.55%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	0.22%	1.39%	3.48%
African	0.12%	0.84%	1.84%
Caribbean	0.06%	0.33%	1.11%
Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	0.04%	0.22%	0.52%
Other	0.17%	0.63%	1.03%
Other Ethnic Group: Arab	0.07%	0.35%	0.42%
Any other ethnic group	0.10%	0.28%	0.62%

Source: ONS (2011) KS006 – Ethnic group

Religion or belief

The proportion of the population within Wirral that identify as Christian (70.4%) is greater than the North West (67.3%) and England (59.4%). Other than the proportion of people who identify themselves as being Muslim in Wirral, the proportion of all other religions are broadly similar across the North West and England, as outlined in Table 3.5 below.

Table 3.5: Religion or belief by Geography

Religion	Wirral	North West	England
Christian	70.4%	67.3%	59.4%
Buddhist	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%
Hindu	0.2%	0.5%	1.5%
Jewish	0.1%	0.4%	0.5%
Muslim	0.6%	5.1%	5.0%
Sikh	0.1%	0.1%	0.8%
Other religion	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%
No religion	21.3%	19.8%	24.7%
Religion not stated	6.8%	6.2%	7.2%

Source: ONS (2011) KS209EW – Religion ¹²

¹² Available at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?reset=yes&mode=construct&dataset=616&version=0&anal=1&initsele=>

Disability

The total proportion of residents within Wirral who report that their activities are limited ‘a lot’ is slightly greater than the regional and national totals, as shown in Table 3-6. There are also slightly more residents within Wirral who report that their activities are limited ‘a little’ (10.7%) in comparison to the North West of England (10.0%) and England (9.3%).

Overall, 22.6% of residents state that they experience a long-term health problem or disability in Wirral according to the 2011 Census.

Table 3-6: Long-term health problem or disability

	Wirral	North West	England
Day-to-day activities limited a lot	11.9%	10.3%	8.3%
Day-to-day activities limited a little	10.7%	10.0%	9.3%
Day-to-day activities not limited	77.4%	79.8%	82.4%

Source: ONS QS303EW – Long-term Health Problem or Disability¹³

Wirral Health and Wellbeing Board reported that 6.4% of the local population claim an out of work benefit (due to disability / health conditions) according to Nomis 2021 data collection.¹⁴ This sits marginally lower than the 6.5% national average but has increased by 73% since the start of the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020.

Of these claimants, over 2,500 are aged 18-24 which is 12.1% higher than regional and national averages. The claimant count amongst this age group can reach 17% in the most deprived areas of Wirral.

Marriage and civil partnership

According to the 2011 Census, 44.8% of the population in Wirral who are over the age of 16 are married or in a registered same-sex civil partnership comparable to 46.8% nationally. Singles account for 33.4% of the population, 10.3% of the population are divorced, 3.0% are separated and 8.5% widowed.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnant women can be more susceptible to experience negative effects associated with development and the built environment. For example, pregnant women can be more susceptible to poor air quality¹⁵, which can have a negative impact on birth weight.

Pregnant women will also need good access to health care facilities, particularly towards the latter stages of pregnancy. Accessibility is therefore an important issue for this group.

With regards to income, housing and wellbeing, young mothers (and fathers) may be more likely to suffer from deprivation and struggle to find affordable housing.

¹³ Available at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?reset=yes&mode=construct&dataset=532&version=0&anal=1&initsel=>

¹⁴ Available at:

<https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50078354/Tackling%20Health%20Inequalities%20Through%20Regeneration.pdf#:~:text=Claimant%20count%20data%20currently%20shows%20that%20there%20are, March%202020%20and%20the%20start%20of%20the%20pandemic.>

¹⁵ <https://www.nhs.uk/news/pregnancy-and-child/air-pollution-associated-with-low-birthweight/>

3.3 Socio-economic status

Socio-economic status considers a number of indicators, including education levels and relative deprivation. Employment is also a relevant factor; however this is outlined in the Business and Employment section of the baseline (sub-section 3-7).

Deprivation

The Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IMD) shows that Wirral is the 77th most deprived authority of 317 England, a decrease from a rank of 66th in 2015.¹⁶

The IMD summary indicates that Wirral is relatively more deprived compared to 2015. 72 LSOAs within Wirral are amongst the 20% most deprived in England, which accounts for 35% of the population. This is an increase from 62 LSOAs containing over 32% of people in 2015, this equates to an additional 20,000 residents living in deprivation by 2019. Wirral's LSOA 011C has ranked amongst the most deprived 100 LSOAs since 2004.

In terms of deprivation domains, Wirral performs particularly poorly in the income and employment domains. 17.2% of the population in Wirral experience income deprivation, however this average hides the disparity between 58% of residents being income deprived in Birkenhead compared to 0% in Caldy South. While 15.7% of residents experience employment deprivation, which ranks Wirral as the 17th worst authority in the country. Wirral performs best in the barriers to housing and services domain and relatively well in terms of crime deprivation, while performing the worst in health deprivation and disability and not particularly well in the living environment domain. The health deprivation and disability domain classify more than half of Wirral's LSOAs as the worst 20% of areas in England. Wirral performs relatively well in the crime domain.

The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) reveals that 22% of children aged 0-15 live in low-income families in Wirral, but with a significant range of variation. For example, an LSOA in East Wirral classifies 62% of children as living in income deprived households, compared to 0% in a western LSOA.

Education

Table 3-7 reveals that Wirral performs better on education and qualifications and residents are better qualified, on average, than across England as a whole. 33.1% hold level 4 qualifications and above, compared to 27.4% nationally. 17.9% of the population of Wirral have no qualifications, significantly lower than regional and national levels. Slightly less people in Wirral have undertaken an apprenticeship in comparison to regional and national averages.

Table 3.7: Educational attainment by different geographical areas

	Wirral	North West	England
No qualifications	17.9%	24.8%	20.7%
Level 1 qualifications	13.6%	13.6%	13.6%
Level 2 qualifications	16.1%	15.8%	16.4%
Apprenticeship	2.7%	3.9%	4.3%
Level 3 qualifications	11.5%	12.9%	13.2%
Level 4 qualifications & above	33.1%	24.4%	27.4%
Other qualifications	5.18%	4.5%	5.7%

Source: Annual Population Survey 2017¹⁷

However, the proportion of 16–18-year-olds not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) remains higher than regional and national figures at 9.0% with concentrations of NEET in deprived areas reaching up to 16% in some areas of Wirral.¹⁸

¹⁶ <https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/media/2928/imd-2019-briefing-paper-november-2019-final2.pdf>

¹⁷ Annual Population Survey 2017

¹⁸ Wirral Economic Profile June 2011. Available online at:

<https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s19885/Investment%20Strategy%20Appendix%202.pdf>

Health inequalities

Overall health outcomes in Wirral are slightly below those at regional and national levels. According to the 2011 Census, there are slightly more people in the Borough in “fair health”, lower proportions of the population being in “very good” and “good” health, and higher proportions being in “bad” and “very bad” health when compared with regional and national levels. This corresponds to data indicating that approximately one fifth of Wirral residents experience a long-term health problem or disability (as described in Table 3.6 above).

The 2020-21 Wirral Annual Report of the Director of Public Health identifies the inequalities in life expectancy¹⁹. The latest data available from this report highlight that in 2017-2019, life expectancy for men was 78.5 and 82.3 for women, both of which are below the national average. However, estimates since the coronavirus pandemic indicate that nationally, life expectancy in 2020 has dropped by 1.2 and 0.9 years for men and women respectively. This report also reveals that residents of the Borough are in good health for three quarters of their life (78.6% for men, 77.6% for women), again being below the national average. This ‘Healthy Life Expectancy’ falls even lower for those living in deprived areas, where residents have shorter life expectancies and spend more years of life in poor health.

Reducing health inequalities between Wirral and England involves targeting the largest contributors to the gap in life expectancy between the two geographies. The Annual Report reveals these to be respiratory diseases and cancer. Cancers accounted for 1 in 3 avoidable deaths in Wirral for the period 2014-2016 and cardiovascular disease (CVD) accounted for 1 in 4.²⁰ Further, avoidable deaths for the period 2014-2016 were commonly caused by coronary heart disease, lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, falls and alcohol related liver disease.

Areas with the highest rates of avoidable mortality are in the north and east of Wirral particularly surrounding Birkenhead and Wallasey. Areas surrounding Birkenhead and Wallasey are also the most deprived areas in Wirral suggesting there is a direct correlation between levels of poor health and levels of deprivation. Specifically, alcohol-related mortality follows this trend of the most deprived wards experiencing the highest rate. For example, Birkenhead and Tranmere experience a rate of 36.7 deaths related to alcohol consumption per 100,000 people compared to the less deprived ward of Pensby and Thingwall where the rate is 1.9.

Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts and is a contributing factor in many chronic conditions such as cancer, asthma, heart disease, and neurological changes linked to dementia. It particularly affects the most vulnerable in society including children, older people and those with pre-existing diseases as they are more sensitive to the effects of poor air quality.²¹ A report assessing the impact of air pollution on public health in the UK suggests that air pollution is contributing to about 40,000 early deaths a year in the UK.²² Evidence from the Wirral Annual Report suggests that in 2020-21 3.9% of deaths in Wirral were directly attributable to air pollution, although it is highlighted that this is a lower proportion than the North West region (4.1%) and England (5.1%).

In terms of obesity, recent data reveals that a larger proportion of children and adults are overweight in Wirral than England.²³ Deprivation is again strongly associated with an increasing incidence of obesity. Adults in more deprived areas of Wirral experience a 66.6% prevalence compared to 58.8% in more affluent neighbourhoods. Drug-use, mental disorders and behavioural conditions influencing cases of obesity is more than twice the national rate.

¹⁹ Wirral Council (2021) Embracing optimism: Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2020-2021. Available at: [final-phar_2021-22_final-30_9_21.pdf \(wirralintelligenceservice.org\)](https://www.wirral.gov.uk/media/10000/2021-22-final-30-9-21.pdf)

²⁰ Available at: <https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50058620/Healthy%20Wirral%20System%20Operating%20Plan%202019-20%20280519%20App1%20FINAL.pdf#:~:text=The%20largest%20cause%20of%20avoidable%20death%20in%20Wirral.for%201%20in%204%20of%20all%20avoidable%20deaths.>

²¹ DEFRA (2006) Air Quality and Social Deprivation in the UK: an environmental inequalities analysis. Available at: https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cat09/0701110944_AQinequalitiesFNL_AEAT_0506.pdf

²² Royal College of Physicians (2016) Every breath we take: The lifelong impact of air pollution. Available at: <https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/every-breath-we-take-lifelong-impact-air-pollution>

²³ Ibid 22

3.4 Employment and business ownership

Table 3-8 presents a detailed breakdown of employment sectors by geographical area. This highlights that there is a lower proportion of employment in manager, directors and senior official roles, skilled trades occupations and elementary occupations than the regional and national geographies. Associate professional and technical occupations also sit below the country-wide percentage. Notably, the percentage of employment in administrative and secretarial occupations is relatively higher in Wirral than across both other levels, alongside care, leisure and other service occupations.

Table 3-8: Employee jobs by broad sector group across geographical area

	Wirral	North West	England
Managers, directors and senior officials	9.3%	9.9%	10.9%
Professional occupations	17.7%	16.3%	17.5%
Associate professional and technical occupations	12.0%	11.5%	12.8%
Administrative and secretarial occupations	12.9%	11.7%	11.5%
Skilled trades occupations	10.9%	11.3%	11.4%
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	10.9%	10.1%	9.3%
Sales and customer service occupations	8.5%	9.4%	8.4%
Process, plant and machine operatives	7.6%	8.1%	7.2%
Elementary occupations	10.2%	11.7%	11.1%

Source: ONS, LC6112EW – Occupation by age ²⁴

According to Nomis Labour Market data for 2020-21, Wirral has a significantly lower rate of economic activity (73.7%) compared to regional (77.0%) and national (78.4%) levels. ²⁵ While Wirral has significantly higher percentages of economically inactive residents (26.3%) compared to the North West (23.0%) and more so England (21.6%), although unemployment rates are below average, 4.2% compared to 4.9% in the North East and 5.0% in Great Britain. The proportion of residents who were self-employed (7.5%) is below regional (8.3%) and national (9.4%) averages.

In terms of economic activity, there is a significantly higher than average proportion of residents who are long-term sick (32.2%) compared to the North West (26.5%) and UK (23.8%). While the retired population of Wirral (13.7%) falls below the regional levels (14.6%) but is slightly above that of the UK (13.5%).

Table 3-9 outlines economic activity by ethnic group in Wirral. It is evident that a higher proportion of BAME groups are economically active and unemployed and a lower proportion are economically inactive in comparison to white residents.

Table 3-9: Economic activity by ethnic group in Wirral

Ethnic Group	Economically active	Unemployed	Economically inactive
White	58.8%	5.1%	41.2%
Mixed/ multiple ethnic group	69.3%	8.7%	30.7%
Asian/ Asian British	69.8%	5.0%	30.2%
Black/ African/ Caribbean	73.4%	8.8%	26.6%
Other ethnic group	75.1%	9.0%	24.9%

Source: ONS, DC6201EW – economic activity by ethnic group by sex by age ²⁶

²⁴ ONS (2011). LC6112EW – Occupation by age. Available at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?reset=yes&mode=construct&dataset=1049&version=0&anal=1&init sel=>

²⁵ Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157107/report.aspx?town=Wirral#tabempunemp>

²⁶ ONS (2011). DC6201EW - Economic activity by ethnic group by sex by age. Available at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?reset=yes&mode=construct&dataset=677&version=0&anal=1&init sel=>

Table 3.10 outlines economic activity by age group in Wirral. This reveals that a higher proportion of ages 25-34 are economically active and unemployed and a lower proportion are economically inactive compared to all other age groups.

Table 3-10: Economic activity by age in Wirral

Age Group	Economically active	Unemployed	Economically inactive
Age 16 to 24	64.8%	14.5%	35.2%
Age 25 to 34	84.7%	7.6%	15.3%
Age 35 to 49	84.2%	5.1%	15.8%
Age 50 to 64	64.9%	3.6%	35.1%
Age 65 and over	7.8%	0.2%	92.2%

Source: ONS, DC6201EW – Economic activity by ethnic group by sex by age ²⁷

3.5 Housing

According to the Wirral Housing Strategy (2016) there is an on-going need to continue to improve the quality of housing available to residents. ²⁸ 1 in 3 homes fail to meet decent homes standard and 16% of households in Wirral experience difficulty in heating their homes.

Over 6,000 households sought housing advice and assistance between 2013 and 2015. In 30% of these cases, the potential loss of accommodation was a result of affordability issues linked to welfare reforms. In 2015/16, approximately 335 households were prevented from becoming homeless every three months, through either assisting residents to remain in their own homes or assisting them to access alternative accommodation.

Over the same period, the Wirral adaptations service received an increase of 56.1% in the number of applications for people requiring minor works to enable them to leave hospital and other social care settings and to also avoid admission to hospital. The strategy states that over 2,000 home adaptations are completed each year to enable disabled people to remain in their own homes.

The Wirral SHMA and Housing Needs Assessment (2022) identifies the housing need for Wirral, including affordable housing and other specialist housing types. The following strategic conclusions are set out:

- There is a high level of affordable housing need in Wirral.
- Although the vast majority of older people want to remain in their own home with support when needed, there is a need to diversify options available to older people wanting to move to more appropriate accommodation
- there needs to be a broader housing offer for older people across Wirral Borough
- it is recommended that 6% of new dwellings are built to M4(3) wheelchair accessible standard and all other dwellings are built to M4(2)
- There is a need for family housing of 3 or 4 bedrooms.

3.6 Public realm and townscape

The ability to access and use the public realm is important to ensuring that all members of society are able to participate in their community. However, certain PCGs such as people with a disability and BAME groups are less likely to take part in public life than other sections of the population. For disabled people, public spaces can often be inaccessible due to mobility limitations. Access to the public realm is also important to the provision (and management) of play space for children.

²⁷ Ibid 29

²⁸ Wirral Council (2016). Wirral's Housing Strategy. Available at: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/About%20the%20council/Wirral%20Plan/Housing%20Strategy.pdf>

3.7 Access to services and facilities

Wirral is well connected via transport networks. ²⁹The M53 runs through the Borough and connects to the wider motorway network via the M56. The A41 is the busy main road corridor in the east of Wirral, while the quieter main road to the west is the A540. The Queensway Tunnel (A41) and Kingsway Tunnel (M53/A59) provide a connection from Wirral to the rest of Liverpool City.

The Borough is served by a series of public transport networks. Private bus networks (Arriva, Stagecoach and Avon) operate on a commercial basis. While there are 25 rail stations in Wirral, 23 on the Merseyrail Wirral Line and 2 on the Borderlands line, which provide connections to Ellesmere Port, Chester and Liverpool (via the Mersey Railway Tunnel). Wirral is also serviced by a Ferry service which serves commuters travelling from Seacombe, Woodside and Birkenhead to Pier Head in Liverpool.

Within Wirral there are 108 primary schools, 32 secondary schools and 26 colleges (ages 16-18). ³⁰

3.8 Safety security and wellbeing

The feeling of safety and security within a person's local area is key to ensuring their personal wellbeing. Everyone is vulnerable to feelings of being unsafe, however these may be particularly acute for people belonging to certain protected characteristic groups, including young people, older people, disabled people, women, and people belonging to a particular ethnicity, or sexual orientation. ³¹

The number of recorded crime events has increased steadily since March 2017. ³² The lowest number of crime events was in February 2019 with a total number of 2299 events recorded. The highest number was recorded in May 2019 with a total number of 2921 events recorded. ³³ Recorded crime events in the Wirral predominantly consist of violence and sexual offences, anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and arson and vehicle crime. ³⁴

The majority of crime events occur around Birkenhead in the north east which as discussed below is a highly deprived area. Violence and sexual offences are the greatest recorded crime events occurring in Birkenhead.

3.9 Community Cohesion

To ensure healthy communities which are functional, safe, and enjoyable places to live and work, it is important to promote community cohesion and good relations between different groups. Encouraging civic engagement and ensuring dialogue with all people in the community; particularly those belonging to protected characteristic groups, is an important step in working towards community cohesion. For people belonging to protected characteristic groups, their feelings of a lack of cohesion (or exclusion) may be more acute than those of other people.

3.10 Covid-19 impacts

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is important to consider the disparate ways in which Covid-19 affects protected characteristic groups.

²⁹ Wirral Council (2015). Wirral Transport Strategy 2015-2020. Available at: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/About%20the%20council/Wirral%20Plan/Transport%20Strategy%20final.pdf#:~:text=The%20Wirral%20Transport%20Network%20Wirral%20has%20a%20comprehensive,well%20as%20to%20the%20A55%20to%20North%20Wales>.

³⁰ HMSO (2018/19). All schools and colleges in Wirral. Available at: <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/schools-by-type?step=default&table=schools®ion=344&la-name=wirral&geographic=la&for=ofsted&tab=list&orderby=OFSTEDRATINGCODE&orderdir=desc>

³¹ Equality and Human Rights Commission, (2010); *How Fair is Britain?* report. Available at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/how-fair-britain>, accessed September 2016.

³² Wirral Council (2019). Wirral Intelligence Service: Crime and Safety. Available at: <https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/media/2975/this-is-wirral-crime-and-safety-ig-added-19-12-19-final.pdf>

³³ Home Office (2019) Crime map [online] available at: <https://www.police.uk/merseyside/A1A2/crime/+qG7YTJ/> [accessed 22/02/19]

³⁴ ONS (2018), Recorded Crime Data at Local Authority Level Year to June 2018

According to a report by Public Health England (2020), Covid-19 is more likely to affect certain protected characteristic groups, on the basis of factors such as race, ethnicity, age and deprivation.³⁵ Concurrently, the Local Government Association elaborate that “people living in more socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods and minority ethnic groups have higher rates of almost all of the known underlying clinical risk factors that increase the severity and mortality of Covid-19”.³⁶ These characteristics are discussed below in the context of Wirral.

Race and ethnicity

Public Health England report a disproportionate diagnosis and death rate from Covid-19 amongst BAME groups. Specifically, people of Other Asian, Black Caribbean Other Black ethnicities have a 10-50% higher risk of death compared to White British when external variables are controlled for. This opposes mortality rates prior to the pandemic which were higher amongst White ethnic groups than Asian and Black ethnic groups, demonstrating the disparity in Covid-19 mortality.

ONS provisional analyses (March-May 2020) of Covid-19 deaths by ethnic group revealed that Black ethnic groups have the highest mortality at 225.7 deaths per 100,000 population, compared to the White ethnic group with 87 deaths. Deaths amongst Black males were 3.3 times greater than White males, and Black females were 2.4 times greater than White females.³⁷

However, BAME Covid-related deaths represented only 0.8% of total deaths in Wirral.³⁸ The small BAME population in Wirral (5% of the population) and relatively small number of deaths relative to the UK made it challenging to draw conclusive impacts of Covid-19 on ethnic mortality in Wirral.

Deprivation

Nationally, populations living in deprived areas have higher diagnosis rates and death rates than those living in less deprived areas. As per Public Health England, Covid-19 mortality is more than double in the most deprived communities compared to the least deprived, for both males and females. This exceeds the disparity of previous years, indicating that Covid-19 exacerbated widely experienced inequalities. The proximity to infections, cuts to public services and jobs with high exposure all contributed to the high mortality within areas of high deprivation. Between 2009 and 2020, the 10% most deprived areas net expenditure per person fell by 31% in comparison to only 16% in the least deprived areas.³⁹

However, the relationship between Covid-19 mortality and deprivation is less clear in Wirral. Quintile 4 (second least deprived quintile) reported the highest death rates.⁴⁰ This is largely explained by the location of Care Homes; Care Home residents contributed the majority of Covid-19 deaths in quintile 4. A separate analysis of non-Care Home deaths presented findings more comparable with national patterns of quintile 1 experiencing the highest death rate compared to quintile 5 reporting the lowest.

Housing

It is important to consider the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on house prices and affordability in terms of renting, especially in the Private Rented Sector (PRS). Rental prices are likely to increase as a larger number of households will be unable to access home ownership, including affordable home ownership products, in the short term. The overall demand for rented housing could increase in the short term and increasing rents may impact several households over the course of the pandemic, and long after it ends. This might also have disproportionate impact on BAME groups that are more likely to rent in the social rented sector and could face increasing costs.

³⁵ Public Health England (2020); Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19; available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908434/Disparities_in_the_risk_and_outcomes_of_COVID_August_2020_update.pdf [accessed October 2021].

³⁶ Local Government Association (2021). Deprivation and poverty – the impact of Covid-19; available at: <http://www.local.gov.uk/deprivation-and-poverty-impact-covid-19> [accessed October 2021].

³⁷ ONS (2020); Ethnicity and COVID-19; available at: <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/covid-19> [accessed October 2021].

³⁸ Wirral Intelligence Service (2021). COVID-19 Mortality in Wirral. Available at: <https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/media/3418/wirral-covid-19-mortality-report-v5accchkd.pdf>

³⁹ Ibid³⁸

⁴⁰ Ibid⁴¹

Furthermore, for those that might still want to access specialist housing, the experiences of pandemic isolation could lead to a greater demand of certain attributes in the types of housing: people are likely to need spacious homes, homes located near green space, homes equipped with smart technology (for those who cannot access carers), and homes located close to community support networks in order to ensure their physical and mental well-being. These factors in isolation might affect site allocation for specialist housing, and commercial housing developments in general.

Employment

The pandemic has reduced economic activity and affected business, with increased redundancy and uncertainty in the workforce. Evidence indicates that such negative impacts are disproportionately felt by vulnerable groups of the labour force, including women, disabled people and ethnic groups and exacerbate existing inequalities such as pay gaps.⁴¹ The Keep Wirral Well Covid action plan identifies high risk workplaces as a priority area.

3.11 Future baseline

Population projections indicate that the older population (above 65+) in Wirral is expected to increase by 30% between 2020 and 2035. Even larger increases are predicted for the 85+ age group which is predicted to increase by 71% between 2020 and 2035.⁴²

As the population continues to age, the number of people with many chronic conditions is expected to increase. For example, the number of people with diabetes in England is expected to increase in the next two decades from 3.9 million people in 2017 to 4.9 million in 2035. Obesity is a major risk factor for diabetes and a range of other diseases, including heart disease and some forms of cancer, and this number will increase further if the prevalence of obesity also increases.

Estimates suggest that the number of people in Wirral surviving a stroke and heart attack who are left with a longstanding health condition as a result will rise by a third by 2030, with significant implications for health and social care services.

By 2032, the vast majority of households in Wirral with children in 2032 are expected to have 1 or 2 children. The proportion of households comprising larger families (with 3 or more children) is projected to equate to less than 13% of the total of households with children.

3.12 Key issues and objectives

The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- Although life expectancy in Wirral is in line with regional and national averages, there are significant changes to the structure of the population anticipated with a 30% increase in people aged 65 and over by 2030. This will have implications for the types of development and services that will be required to meet the needs of society. Social care, in particular, will be placed under additional pressure over the plan period as a result of population ageing.
- Public realm accessibility is a key issue, particularly for younger and older people, as is a need for community facilities and/or meeting places to reduce isolation and vulnerability. Quality street design and design measures to reduce the fear of crime in the public realm and safe and accessible public transport will help promote accessibility to the public realm, including to key services.
- Approximately one fifth of Wirral residents have a long-term health problem or disability. The Local Plan can help to provide for the needs of people who have a disability. This could include the delivery of suitable housing to meet the needs of this community group and ensuring that services and facilities are accessible.
- All improvements to infrastructure facilities, design, housing, natural and physical environment could have some impact on LGBT groups. There are specific issues experienced by this group such as concern for personal safety and fear of crime and

⁴¹ People Management (2020). The long-term impact of Covid on the workplace. Available at: <https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/experts/legal/the-long-term-impact-of-covid-on-the-workplace>

⁴² Source: ONS 2016-based subnational population projections for Wirral

harassment in the public realm. Good urban design to reduce crime and the fear of crime has the potential to benefit this group.

- An increase in the number of elderly people will require appropriate housing that meets their needs. Housing implications include increased demand for both specialist accommodation for older people and for services and home adaptations to enable older people to remain 'at home' living independently.
- It is important that the housing needs of families with children are met, through the provision of sufficient, good quality family accommodation in sustainable locations. However, the provision of family housing should be balanced against the requirement for smaller housing to meet the needs of an ageing population with increasing numbers of single person households.
- Housing affordability is a key issue in Wirral. This is a particular challenge for both young and elderly people who are unable to access affordable housing. The availability of affordable housing also disproportionately affects BAME households, as evidence suggests that rents are less affordable for most ethnic minority groups when compared to White British households.
- There are areas of entrenched deprivation within the Borough, particularly in Birkenhead in the north east, creating a complex and nuanced range of community needs.
- Despite higher proportions of the population with high levels of qualifications, the proportion of 16-18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) remains higher than regional and national averages, particularly in deprived areas.
- Poor health is an issue in some parts of Wirral with higher proportions of people experiencing "bad" and "very bad" health when compared with regional and national levels. Health inequalities are also evident and there is significant health deprivation in Birkenhead and the north east of the Borough.
- Though there are no AQMAs in Wirral, air quality particularly in traffic hotspots, can adversely affect the health of the Borough's residents. This is a particular issue for individuals living or working close to major traffic thoroughfares as they are often exposed to higher levels of air pollution. Children, older people and those with pre-existing diseases are also particularly sensitive to the effects of poor air quality.

4. Assessment of impacts

4.1 Approach to assessment

The assessment of equality impacts takes into account the information gathered through the policy information and the baseline evidence. A judgement is made as to how the proposed policies contained within the Local Plan could potentially contribute to the realisation of effects for people with protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010. These protected characteristics are:

- **Age:** this refers to persons defined by either a particular age or a range of ages. This can include children (aged under 16), younger people (aged 16-24), older people or pensioners (i.e. those aged 65+), the elderly/very old (i.e. those aged 80+);
- **Disability:** a disabled person is defined as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. It can also include people who have progressive conditions such as HIV, cancer, or multiple sclerosis (MS) - even where someone is able to carry out day to day activities;
- **Gender reassignment:** this refers to people who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process for the purpose of reassigning their gender identity;
- **Marriage and civil partnership*:** marriage or civil partnership can be between a man and a woman or between two people of the same sex;
- **Pregnancy and maternity:** pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth;
- **Race:** the Equality Act 2010 defines race as encompassing colour, nationality (including citizenship) and ethnic or national origins;
- **Religion or belief:** religion means any religion a person follows. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief, and includes those people who have no formal religion or belief;
- **Sex:** this refers to a man or to a woman or a group of people of the same sex, while gender refers to the wider social roles and relationships that structure men's and women's, boys' and girls' lives;
- **Sexual orientation:** a person's sexual orientation relates to their emotional, physical and/or sexual attraction and the expression of that attraction.

*Marriage and civil partnership discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 applies to the workplace only⁴³. Therefore, as there are unlikely to be any impacts with regards to marriage and civil partnership, this protected characteristics has been scoped out of the assessment work.

In addition to these identified groups, it has been considered useful to explore the impacts with regards to socio-economic factors given that this is a significant issue in parts of the Wirral.

The assessment considers both differential and disproportionate impacts of the proposed policies on protected characteristic groups. A **differential** equality effect is one which affects members of a protected characteristic group differently from the rest of the general population because of specific needs, or a recognised vulnerability or sensitivity associated with their protected characteristic.

A **disproportionate** equality effect arises when an impact has a proportionately greater effect on a protected characteristic group than on the general population overall at a particular location. In some cases, protected characteristics are subject to both differential *and* disproportionate equality effects. The EqIA considers impacts on groups of people and not those on specific individuals. The criteria used to determine differential or disproportionate impacts of the Local Plan policies with respect to protected characteristics include where:

⁴³ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/marriage-and-civil-partnership-discrimination>

- an impact of a policy is predicted where a protected characteristic group make up a greater proportion of the affected resident population than their representation in Wirral, North West or England;
- an impact of a policy is predicted on or associated with a resource which is predominantly used by a protected characteristic group (e.g. primary schools attended by children).
- people who share a protected characteristic form a disproportionately large number of those adversely affected by a policy;
- amongst the population affected by a policy, people who share protected characteristics are particularly vulnerable or sensitive to a possible impact in relation to their specific protected characteristic;
- a policy may either worsen or improve existing disadvantage affecting people who share a protected characteristic;
- people with shared protected characteristics amongst the affected population may not have an equal share in the benefits from the policy. This can be either due to direct or indirect discrimination or where the groups experience particular barriers to realising such benefits, unless suitable actions are proposed to overcome those barriers; and
- the policy may worsen existing community cohesion amongst the affected local population or exacerbate conflicts with community cohesion policy objectives.

Table 4-1 outlines the scoring used for the screening assessment and Table 4-2 contains the outcomes of the EqIA screening assessment for each Wirral Local Plan policy.

Table 4-1: Scoring assessment for EqIA

Potential impacts	Score
Positive	+
Negative	-
Positive and/or negative	+/-
Neutral	0

4.2 Assessment of impacts by policy

Table 4-2: Wirral Local Plan assessment of impacts

Policy area and draft policies	Socio-Economic	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Religion/Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy/Maternity	Gender Reassignment	Justifications/ Recommendations
Strategic Policies										
The Development Strategy										
Policy WS1.1 Homes	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	Regeneration of housing can result in positive and negative impacts for existing residents depending on the type and location of regeneration. Those excluded from new homes due to cost or availability could experience growing disparity in deprivation and exclusion from opportunities.
Policy WS1.2 Employment	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Provision of land for new jobs will offer employment opportunities that contribute to decreasing the level of income and employment deprivation. The Local Plan's focus on adding social value through training residents for work within and outside Wirral could have long-term positive impacts on young people and low skilled workers.
Policy WS1.3 Infrastructure	0	+	+	0	0	+/-	0	+	0	Provides positive impacts for those who rely on public transport, walking and cycling including younger and older people, women and lower socio-economic groups. It is important that inclusive access to walking and cycling routes are considered for disabled people. Positive effects in terms of access to green and open space.
Policy WS1.4 Flooding and drainage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Social Value										
Policy WS2 Social Value	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	Prioritising added social value in development proposals could potentially provide positive impacts for local people who are overrepresented in unemployment figures etc. However, the extent to which these positive impacts will arise will depend on the implementation and monitoring of an inclusive social value statement.

Policy area and draft policies	Socio-Economic	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Religion/Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy/Maternity	Gender Reassignment	Justifications/ Recommendations
Strategy for Housing										
Policy WS3.1 Housing Design Standards	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	+		The policy of 'zero carbon ready by design' could provide positive health benefits to residents most vulnerable to emission-related illnesses, including children, the elderly, disabled persons and pregnant women. Positive impacts should be provided for older and/or disabled residents by fulfilling the M4(3) Building Regulations to ensure the adaptability of, and prioritised access to, new build dwellings for wheelchair users.
Policy WS3.2 Housing Density	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Overcrowding is considered unlikely despite higher densities being proposed given the space standards, design principles and housing mix standards required in WS3 and WS7.
Policy WS3.3 Affordable Housing Requirements	+	+	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	The provision of affordable housing should have positive impacts for those from lower socio-economic groups (including those protected characteristics that are likely to be in lowest socio-economic groups, such as young people, BAME groups and disabled people) particularly in meeting the demand for affordable renting post-Covid. However, it is important that individual EqIAs are undertaken at the implementation stage to ensure that the affordable housing benefits are being realised and that levels of rent are 'affordable' considering the disparity in deprivation across Wirral.
Policy WS3.4 Housing Mix	+	+/-	0	0	0	+/-	0	0	0	Residential developments could provide positive and/or negative impacts for residents requiring specific tenures, including renting for lower socio-economic status tenants, and specialist housing for the elderly and disabled. The impacts will depend on the type of development and the ways in which they are affected by the development.
Policy WS3.5 Self Build and Custom Build Housing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This aspect of the policy is unlikely to have any notable effects in terms of equalities.
Policy WS3.6 Specialist Housing	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	Positive impacts for those requiring specialist housing, including older people and those with particular housing needs such as the disabled or young people requiring support.
Policy WS3.7 Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The development policy regarding permanent accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople identified no existing need.

Policy area and draft policies	Socio-Economic	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Religion/Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy/Maternity	Gender Reassignment	Justifications/ Recommendations
Strategy for Economy and Employment										
Policy WS4.1 Meeting the strategy	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Provision of new employment land will help to support access to jobs for a range of communities. There is also support for upskilling and training of local workforce, which could be beneficial for groups with low socio-economic backgrounds.
Policy WS4.2 Designated Employment Areas	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	Safeguarding existing employment areas and encouraging the creation of new employment in these areas should provide benefits of employment opportunities for the unemployed, especially the lower socio-economic population, BAME ethnic groups and those aged 25-34.
Policy WS4.3 The Ports	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Provision of jobs could benefit communities from low socio-economic backgrounds.
Policy WD4.5 Tourism	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Provision of jobs could benefit communities from low socio-economic backgrounds.
Strategy for green and blue infrastructure, biodiversity, open space and landscape protection										
Policy WS5.1 Green and Blue infrastructure networks	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	Accessibility to play areas for children will be improved, alongside footpath access for disabled people and others with limited mobility, including older people and people with pushchairs.
Policy WS5.2 Open space provision	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Children will benefit from the provision of safe open spaces accompanying dwelling sites.
Policy WS5.3 Outdoor Sports	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Young people in particular may benefit from the provision of good quality sports provision.
Policy WS5.4 Ecological networks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WS5.5 Mitigating recreational disturbance on International Sites for Nature Conservation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WS5.6 Protecting geodiversity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WS5.7 Maintenance of green infrastructure and open space provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Likely to be benefits relating to access to open space for all community groups. It will be important to ensure standards are achieved for all communities.
Policy WS5.8 Landscape Character	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.

Policy area and draft policies	Socio-Economic	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Religion/Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy/Maternity	Gender Reassignment	Justifications/ Recommendations
Policy WS5.9 Evidence of approach	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Placemaking for Wirral										
Policy WS6.1 Placemaking principles	0	+	+	0	0	+	0	+	0	Place-making principles include creating places and routes that are safe and perceived to be safe; provision of facilities such as shops, health care and opportunities for employment; accessible locations for shops, facilities and public transport and direct safe and pleasant routes for pedestrians and cyclists. This will have potential positive impacts for more vulnerable groups such as younger and older people, people with mobility difficulties, women and those who are pregnant or have small children as well as people who rely on walking, cycling and public transport.
Policy WS6.2 Gateway Areas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WS6.3 Masterplan Areas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Principles of Design										
Policy WS7.1 Design principles	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	By requiring development to be inclusive, the policy should generate positive impacts for populations with specific needs, such as disabled people. <i>(This policy clause was added as a result of a recommendation in a previous iteration of the EqIA)</i>
Policy WS7.2 Privacy and Amenity	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	Addressing issues of noise, dust, fumes, air pollution etc will protect users and neighbours most vulnerable to illness, especially children, the elderly, disabled persons, and pregnant women.
Policy WS7.3 Agent of change	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WS7.4 Car Parking	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	The policy requires parking provision to take account of the needs of disabled people, which is positive. <i>(This positive clause was added as a result of a recommendation in a previous iteration of the EqIA)</i>

Policy area and draft policies	Socio-Economic	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Religion/Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy/Maternity	Gender Reassignment	Justifications/ Recommendations
Policy WS7.5 Tall buildings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Strategy for Sustainable Construction, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy										
Policy WS8.1 Energy Hierarchy	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	Construction/planning strategies working to minimise operational emissions of buildings and the output of greenhouse gases should provide positive health benefits for those most vulnerable to emission-related illnesses including children, older persons, residents with disabilities and pregnant women. There should also be benefits with regards to the cost of energy provision, which could help those of low income groups.
Policy WS8.2 Sustainable Construction – Energy Efficiency	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	
Policy WS8.3 – Improvements to historic buildings	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	
Policy WS8.4 On site Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	
Policy WS8.5 Carbon Compensation	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	
Policy WS8.6 Heat and Power networks	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	
Policy WS8.7 Stand alone Renewable and low carbon energy schemes	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	
Policy WS8.8 Climate change and energy statement	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	
Strategy for transport										
Policy WS9.1 Transport Schemes	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	The provision and promotion of public transport networks (including rail services, walking and cycling) will deliver benefits to those who rely on such services which may include younger and older people, women and those from lower socio-economic groups.
Policy WS9.2 Accessibility and sustainable transport	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	+	0	Provides positive impacts for those relying on sustainable transport networks and promotes the inclusive mobility of users from all ages, abilities and socio-economic circumstances to protect them from social exclusion.

Policy area and draft policies	Socio-Economic	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Religion/Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy/Maternity	Gender Reassignment	Justifications/ Recommendations
Policy WS9.3 Servicing development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WS9.4 Impact on networks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy 9.5 Overnight Lorry Parking	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Infrastructure Delivery										
Policy WS10.1 Provision of Infrastructure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications
Policy WS10.2 District Heat Networks	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Developing a heat network in areas that suffer from deprivation could help to provide a source of affordable energy for communities that would be most likely to suffer from fuel poverty.
Policy WS10.3 Broadband connection	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WS 10.4 Facilities for education, health and emergency services	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	These policies should offer positive and/or negative impacts for residents with protected characteristics depending on the type and location of services provided. Given that the focus is on the provision of adequate services, it is more likely that the effects would be positive.
Policy WS10.5 Community, Sport, Leisure and Cultural Facilities	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	
Policy WS10.6 Open Space	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 ^e	The policy safeguards the loss of sports pitches, facilities and children's play spaces, which is beneficial for younger people.
Strategy for town and local centres										
Policy WS11.1 Meeting the Strategy	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	Positive impacts should be felt by all protected characteristics who rely on town centres for access to food and shopping services, social outings, and medical care. Increased residential development within centres increases the capacity for meeting Wirral's affordable housing needs.
Policy WS11.2 Hierarchy of Retail Centres										
Policy WS11.3 Town and Local Centre Impact Assessments										

Policy area and draft policies	Socio-Economic	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Religion/Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy/Maternity	Gender Reassignment	Justifications/ Recommendations
Policy WS11.4 Meanwhile use										
Policy WS11.5 Ground floor uses										
Policy WS11.6 Residential development in centres										
Monitoring and Review										
Policy WS12 Monitoring and Review	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications
Regeneration Policies										
Policy RA1 Seacombe River Corridor Regeneration Area	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	<p>Seacombe has a large, deprived population so regeneration could offer positive and/or negative impacts to the low socio-economic status residents depending on the inclusion of residential developments.</p> <p>Enhanced connectivity to amenities via safe sustainable transport networks, particularly walking and cycling, should provide positive impacts for residents who rely on such networks and local services including children, the elderly and women.</p>
Policy RA2 Scotts Quay Regeneration Area	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	<p>Positive and/or negative impacts could be felt by the large low socio-economic group in the area. Those living to the west of Birkenhead Road could miss out on some of the regeneration benefits, while those included in the housing strategy to the west of Birkenhead Road are more likely to experience positive outcomes. However, the benefits of development in the regeneration areas are likely to be felt outside of the boundaries, so overall positive effects are recorded.</p> <p>Enhanced connectivity to waterfront amenities via safe walking and cycling routes will provide positive impacts for residents who rely on such networks and local services including young and old residents and women.</p>

Policy area and draft policies	Socio-Economic	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Religion/Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy/Maternity	Gender Reassignment	Justifications/ Recommendations
Policy RA3 Waterfront Regeneration Area	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	<p>Improved connectivity within the waterfront area and town centre will provide positive impacts for residents relying on local services, including groups with protected characteristics.</p> <p>Regeneration of housing and commercial facilities could result in positive and negative impacts for existing residents depending on the location of developments and how they will affect them.</p>
Policy RA4 Central Birkenhead Regeneration Area	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	<p>As the core of Wirral, Central Birkenhead regeneration could provide positive and/or negative impacts for the residents within and outside the area, depending on the type of development and how it will affect populations. The focus of the Plan is on inclusive regeneration, and therefore it is considered that positive effects are more likely.</p>
Policy RA5 Hind Street and St Werburghs Regeneration Area	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	<p>A new low carbon village development with sustainable public transport infrastructure will provide positive impacts of accessibility for residents relying on such services and health benefits for those most vulnerable to emission-related illnesses, including children and older residents, women and people with disabilities.</p>
Policy RA6 Wirral Waters Regeneration Area	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	+	0	<p>Residential developments in Northbank include new care accommodation which will provide positive benefits for the elderly population.</p> <p>Mixed use developments in Four Bridges should provide positive benefits of low carbon environments for residents most vulnerable to emission-related illnesses, including children, the elderly, the disabled and pregnant women.</p> <p>Active Travel networks should improve the safety of pedestrian and cycling routes for those who rely on public transport services, including children, the elderly and women.</p> <p>Investment in social and community infrastructure will bring positive benefits for children and elderly populations through education, leisure, health and emergency services.</p>
Policy RA7 Hamilton Park Regeneration Area	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	<p>Hamilton Park has high levels of income, employment, and health deprivation so its redevelopment into a family-oriented neighbourhood with employment and residential uses will provide positive impacts for families in lower socio-economic circumstances.</p>

Policy area and draft policies	Socio-Economic	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Religion/Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy/Maternity	Gender Reassignment	Justifications/ Recommendations
										Positive impacts from the green active travel routes (particularly walking and cycling) will be felt by younger and older residents and who rely on such transport networks.
Policy RA8 Northside Regeneration Area	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Employment intensification in Northside will provide positive impacts for those of lower socio-economic groups looking for jobs. Accessibility to employment sites is provided via walking and cycling routes, on which this group relies.
Policy RA9 Liscard Regeneration Area	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	Housing regeneration should result in positive impacts for existing residents, especially those from low socio-economic groups, depending on the type and location of regeneration. Investment in safe and active public transport networks should deliver positive impacts for those relying on such services, including children, the elderly and women.
Policy RA10 New Brighton Regeneration Area	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	While providing leisure, residential and commercial uses to generate employment and improved living standards for those with lower socio-economic statuses, the Council's compulsory purchase powers could threaten businesses and livelihoods. So, both positive and/or negative impacts could be felt by this scheme dependent on the type and location of regeneration. Incorporating safe pedestrian and cycling routes connecting to local amenities, including the waterfront promenades, should deliver positive impacts to residents who rely on such transport networks and local services, including children, the elderly and women.
Policy RA11 New Ferry Regeneration Area	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	Housing regeneration could result in positive and/or negative impacts for existing residents, especially those from low socio-economic groups, depending on the type and location of regeneration. Prioritising accessibility via pedestrian and cycling routes to the Local Centre will benefit residents relying on such networks, including children, the elderly and women.
Settlement Area Policies										

Policy area and draft policies	Socio-Economic	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Religion/Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy/Maternity	Gender Reassignment	Justifications/ Recommendations
Wallasey										
Policy WP1.1 Conservation Areas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WP1.2 Residential sites	+/-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Wallasey has a high proportion of people from lower socio-economic groups residing within the area who could experience differential positive or negative impacts depending on the type of development and the ways in which they are affected by development.
Birkenhead Commercial Core										
Policy WP2.1 Conservation Areas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WP2.2 Residential sites	+/-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Birkenhead has a significantly high proportion of people from lower socio-economic groups residing in the area and therefore could receive differential positive or negative impacts depending on the type of development and the ways the in which they are affected by development.
Policy WP2.3 Employment sites	+	+	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	Re-establishing Birkenhead as a commercial core should provide employment opportunities with accessibility via walking and cycling routes for protected characteristics typically experiencing lower socio-economic groups, including young people, BAME groups and disabled people.
Suburban Birkenhead										
Policy WP3.1 Conservation Areas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WP3.2 Proposals in Devonshire Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WP3.3 Residential sites	+	+	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	Suburban Birkenhead has the largest concentration of social housing. Thereby people from protected characteristic groups belonging to lower socio-economic groups, such as young, BAME and disabled people, could receive differential positive and/or negative impacts depending on the type of residential development.
Policy WP3.4 Employment sites	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	There could be some minor benefits with access to jobs for lower socio economic groups.
Bebington, Bromborough and Eastham										

Policy area and draft policies	Socio-Economic	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Religion/Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy/Maternity	Gender Reassignment	Justifications/ Recommendations
Policy WP4.1 Conservation Areas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WP4.2 Residential sites	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	Development prioritises sustainability in residential developments. Maintaining and improving walking and cycle routes, bus infrastructure and crossing facilities will provide safe access to schools, shops and facilities for those relying on such services, including young and elderly populations, women, pregnant women and the few lower socio-economic families. Positive health impacts should also be felt by these populations due to reduced exposure to vehicle emissions.
Policy WP4.3 Employment sites	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Providing the largest concentration of major employment opportunities outside Birkenhead supported by pedestrian and cycling access could create positive employment opportunities for the unemployed and lower socio-economic groups residing within and outside the area.
Policy WP4.4 Town Centre Proposals	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	The centre will be repurposed for alternative uses, which could include residential development. This could bring benefits for low income groups and populations of BAME groups
Leasowe, Moreton, Upton, Greasby and Woodchurch										
Policy WP5.1 Residential sites	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	Being a commuter settlement brings focus to transport networks in residential developments. Residents relying on public transport will positively benefit from accessible cycle and pedestrian rights of way, upgraded junctions, improvements to bus infrastructure and access and conducting Transport Assessment and Travel Plans to identify how existing roads will serve future developments and maintain equal access. These residents include the young and elderly and women.
Policy WP5.2 Employment sites	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	Employment site developments will be made accessible via pedestrian and cycling route connections to railway stations, which should provide positive impacts of easily accessible employment opportunities.
Policy WP5.3 Town Centre Proposals	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Part of the centre will be repurposed for alternative uses, which could include residential development. This could bring benefits for low income groups and populations.
Hoylake and West Kirby										
Policy WP6.1 Conservation Areas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WP6.2 Hoylake Neighbourhood Plan Area	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.

Policy area and draft policies	Socio-Economic	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Religion/Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy/Maternity	Gender Reassignment	Justifications/ Recommendations
Policy WP6.3 Residential sites	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	+	0	Highly accessible and well-connected leisure, health, retail, community, and transport facilities in regeneration developments are the priority of this low deprivation area. This should provide particular benefits to local residents relying on such services, which may include children, older people, women, disabled people and pregnant women. In particular, equal access to sustainable transport facilities (cycling, walking, rail, bus) is inclusive of all residents' abilities while providing positive health impacts through reduced local emission exposure to which the above are most vulnerable.
Policy WP6.4 Town Centre Proposals	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	New facilities and residential development within local centres could provide positive impacts for those without access to a car or who rely on public transport and can include children, the elderly, women and the small proportion of low socio-economic groups.
Irby, Thingwall, Pensby, Heswall and Gayton										
Policy WP7.1 Conservation Areas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WP7.2 Residential sites	0	0	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	The replacement of Heswall Gospel Hall with apartments could have cultural impacts for Christian residents who perceive this as a loss of worship facilities despite it not currently operating as a Church.
Rural Area										
Policy WP8.1 Green Belt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WP8.2 Agricultural land	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WP8.3 Public Rights of Way and Access	0	0	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	There could be benefits for a range of community groups that use PROW. It would be useful to state that PROW and access should be improved for community groups with accessibility issues (Whether this be physical or perceived).
Policy WP8.4 Conservation Areas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.

Policy area and draft policies	Socio-Economic	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Religion/Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy/Maternity	Gender Reassignment	Justifications/ Recommendations
Detailed Policy										
Landscaping										
Policy WD1.1 Landscaping proposals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Policy WD1.2 Trees	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Heritage Assets										
Policy WD2 Heritage Assets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Biodiversity and Geodiversity										
Policy WD3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Coastal Protection, Flood Risk, Sustainable Drainage and Natural Water Management										
Policy WD4 Coastal Protection, Flood Risk, Sustainable Drainage and Natural Water Management	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Residential Extensions										
Policy WD5 Residential Extensions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Self-Contained Flats										
Policy WD6 Self-Contained Flats	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Residential developments comprising of self-contained flats should provide positive impacts of affordable rent, access to local services and connected transport networks for single families typically of lower socio-economic status. The policy would be more beneficial if it explicitly required provisions for ground floor units to meet M4(3) Building Regulations.
Houses in Multiple Occupation										

Policy area and draft policies	Socio-Economic	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Religion/Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy/Maternity	Gender Reassignment	Justifications/ Recommendations
Policy WD7 Houses in Multiple Occupation	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	The provision of house sharing offers low-cost accommodation for those in lower socio-economic situations and single occupants including young adults, especially single mothers residing in sheltered communities, BAME groups and disabled people.
Specialist Housing										
Policy WD8 Specialist Housing	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	Specialist housing provides positive impacts for populations with identified needs, including elderly and disabled residents and those from lower socio-economic groups requiring community housing arrangements. Wheelchair access and walking proximity to local services, public spaces and transport networks ensures the inclusivity and equal access of these residents.
Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople										
Policy WD9 Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	The policy sets out a framework for supporting suitable accommodation for a specific community group that have protected characteristics.
Non-Residential Uses in Primarily Residential Areas										
Policy WD10 Non-Residential Uses in Primarily Residential Areas	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	This policy should provide positive impacts of safety and accessibility for children attending childcare services or the elderly attending medical care within a residential area.
Design in centres										
Policy WD11 Design in Centres	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	Positive impacts should be provided for disabled people and those with limiting mobility via accessible entrances and level access for visiting members of the public.
Hot Food and Drink										
Policy WD12 Hot Food and Drink	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Wirral has a high rate of child and adult obesity. Regulating hot food takeaway services should provide positive health impacts for these age groups.
Telecommunications										
Policy WD13 Telecommunications Development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.

Policy area and draft policies	Socio-Economic	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Religion/Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy/Maternity	Gender Reassignment	Justifications/ Recommendations
Pollution and Risk										
Policy WD14 Pollution and Risk		+	+	0	0	+	0	+	0	Children, the elderly, disabled persons, and pregnant women are all most vulnerable to health issues relating to poor air quality and pollution. These groups should feel positive health impacts low pollutant outputs on developments.
Contamination and Instability										
Policy WD15 Contamination and Instability	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	Positive health impacts could be felt by all residents through this policy dependent on the type and location of the development.
Hazardous Installations and Substances										
Policy WD16 Hazardous Installations and Substances	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	Positive health impacts could be felt by all residents through this policy dependent on the type and location of the development.
Safeguarded areas around aerodromes										
Policy WD17 Safeguarded areas around aerodromes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Assessing the health impacts of development										
Policy WD18 Health Impact Assessment	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	Health impact assessments could deliver positive benefits for all residents dependent on the type and location of the development.
Temporary structures and uses										
Policy WD9 Temporary Buildings, Structures and Uses	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.
Mineral Development										
Policy WM1 Proposals for minerals development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The health Impact assessment for the Local Plan does not identify any negative impacts with regards to mineral development. However, there may be specific health effect on groups with protected characteristics and further assessment should be carried out at a more local level should these policies be implemented.
Policy WM2 Maintaining a supply of aggregates	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Policy WM3 Safeguarding mineral reserves and infrastructure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Policy WM4 Oil and gas development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Policy WM5 Restoration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Policy area and draft policies	Socio-Economic	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Religion/Belief	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy/Maternity	Gender Reassignment	Justifications/ Recommendations
Waste Management										
Policy WW1 Waste management	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No direct implications.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Summary

This report has outlined the approach, evidence and findings for the assessment of equality impacts for the Submission Draft Regulation 19 Wirral Local Plan. The assessment of impacts has considered equality legislation and Wirral Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 and PSED as well as evidence from national demographic datasets.

The assessment has been undertaken by examining each of the individual policies set out in the Wirral Local Plan and identifying any potential differential negative or positive impacts on groups with protected characteristics. Recommendations for mitigation against negative impacts have been made in order that Wirral Council meets its duty under the Equality Act 2010, eliminating potential discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity.

The appraisal has been an iterative process, and so several versions of the policies have been tested, with recommendations being made at each stage. Subsequent iterations of the plan policies took account of the recommendations that had been made.

Positive impacts

Many of the proposed Local Plan policies would potentially provide positive impacts to groups with protected characteristics across Wirral. The majority of these impacts are related to policies that will promote accessibility and connectivity to housing, employment, education and leisure facilities and opportunities, protect community facilities and encourage healthy lifestyles.

It is recommended that:

- ongoing monitoring of these policies takes place throughout the development and adoption of the Local Plan to ensure that the positive impacts are realised and equality of opportunity is advanced. For example, the effectiveness of Policy WS2 (Social Value) will depend on the extent to which social value statements are implemented and monitored by the Council in determine whether or not potential positive effects of local employment opportunities for underrepresented groups will be realised or not.
- Certain policies could be improved with regards to the requirements of disabled people through more emphasis on inclusivity. For example, Policy WS7.1 (Design Principles) does not currently include any reference to inclusive design principles. The addition of these would help to ensure standards consider inclusivity for disabled people and other groups (**This recommendation has been actioned by the Council and is reflected in the final draft Plan**).

Positive and negative impacts

There are a number of proposed policies within the Local Plan have been identified as having both potential negative and positive impacts on groups with protected characteristics. This assessment has been made for policies where there is insufficient evidence to understand the direction or level of impact. For example, residential regeneration may result in either negative or positive impacts depending on the tenure, size and location of the site and who it will comparatively benefit.

It is considered that on balance, positive effects are more likely to arise given that the Plan has a strong focus on regeneration and achievement of social value in development. However, it will be important to ensure that new homes are accessed by people in need and they also benefit from infrastructure improvements and environmental enhancement locally (i.e. it will be important to monitor the extent to which benefits are secured on or near to sites rather than offsite).

It is recommended that more detailed equality impact assessment work is undertaken for site-specific implementation to understand the needs and requirements of local or potential communities with respect to housing and services. Not responding to the needs of protected characteristic groups in new developments could exacerbate inequalities amongst some groups.

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