

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and our equality duty

The Equality Duty helps public bodies to deliver their overall objectives for public services, and as such should be approached as a positive opportunity to support good decision-making.

It encourages public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs. By understanding the effect of their activities on different people, and how inclusive public services can support and open up people's opportunities, public bodies are better placed to deliver policies and services that are efficient and effective.

Complying with the Equality Duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. For example, it may involve providing a service in a way which is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic, such as providing computer training to all people to help them access information and services.

Whilst [the Gunning Principles](#) set out the rules for consulting with 'everyone', additional requirements are in place to avoid discrimination and inequality.

Cheshire East Council is required to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Act 2010 simplified previous anti-discrimination laws with a single piece of legislation. Within the Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149) has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, by consciously thinking about equality when making decisions (such as in developing policy, delivering services and commissioning from others)
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, by removing disadvantages, meeting their specific needs, and encouraging their participation in public life
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not

The Equality Act identifies nine 'protected characteristics' and makes it a legal requirement to make sure that people with these characteristics are protected from discrimination:

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|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Age                             | • Race               |
| • Disability                      | • Religion or belief |
| • Gender reassignment             | • Sex                |
| • Marriage and civil partnerships | • Sexual orientation |
| • Pregnancy and maternity         |                      |

## Applying the equality duty to engagement

If you are developing a new policy, strategy or programme you may need to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. You may be able to ascertain the impact of your proposal on different characteristics through desk-based research and learning from similar programmes, but you also need to carry out some primary research and engagement.

People with protected characteristics are often described as ‘hard to reach’ but you will find everyone can be reached – you just need to tailor your approach, so it is accessible for them.

Please feel free to contact the [Equality and Diversity mailbox](#) who will try to help you to assess the impacts of your proposals and will ensure that you help the Council to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## Section 1 – Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of a service, strategy, function or procedure

*(Please delete the guidance in italics once you complete a section)*

<b>Proposal Title</b>	Option Agreement – Disposal of Land at Longridge, Knutsford
<b>Date of Assessment</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
<b>Assessment Lead Officer Name and other officers involved</b>	Lee Beckett  Report of: Peter Skates, Acting Executive Director – Place & Director of Growth and Enterprise
<b>Directorate/ Service</b>	Estates Service / Place
<b>Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure.</b>	An option agreement to dispose of the land at Longridge, Knutsford which will facilitate a residential development of up to 225 dwellings which is referenced in the Local Plan as Site LPS 38 Land South of Longridge, Knutsford and has recently obtained outline planning permission (21/3100M) via appeal.
<b>Who is impacted?</b>	There will no impact on the groups with protected characteristics as defined with the Equality Act 2010.
<b>Links and impact on other services, strategies, functions or procedures.</b>	A disposal will facilitate a residential development of up to 225 dwellings which is referenced in the Local Plan as Site LPS 38 Land South of Longridge, Knutsford and has recently obtained outline planning permission (21/3100M) via appeal.
<b>How does the service, service change, strategy, function or procedure</b>	Should the site be utilised for the purpose of development then any disposal will be in accordance with Council policy and any future application by a third party will be subject to a planning application and building regulations application.

<p><b>help the Council meet the requirements of the <a href="#">Public Sector Equality Duty</a>?</b></p>	<p>This process in turn will be subject to elements of the Equality Act.</p> <p>The appropriate legislation (Town and Country Planning Act 1990) in terms of planning permission etc will ensure that no individual or party is discriminated against.</p>
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## Section 2 - Information – What do you know?

<p><b>What do you know?</b></p>	<p>On the 10 October 2017, Cabinet considered a report exploring the potential for enabling access to a development site at Longridge, Knutsford known as LPS 38 in the Local Plan. The Cabinet report set out options and issues in respect of a thin strip of land subject to a covenant (referred to as the Green Land) and the disposal of a strip of land to enable access across other land (referred to as the Blue Land).</p> <p>Cabinet approved the freehold disposal of part of the land delineated 'blue' on the plan annexed to a report dated 10th October 2017 for the purposes of providing access to the site and the land delineated 'green' on the same plan, on terms to be agreed by the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the Director of Legal Services, the Section 151 officer, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Communities, and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration subject as set out below.</p> <p>The Cabinet decision was qualified in that the delegation was subject to adherence to the provisions of s123 of the Local Government Act 1972 regarding the proposed disposal of open space land. The intention to dispose of the land delineated in blue and the land delineated green was duly advertised in the local press pursuant to s123 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Regeneration gave due consideration to all the objections and representations received and determined to proceed with the disposal as considered by Cabinet. As a consequence of that decision, negotiations were commenced with the owner of the LPS 38 land (Dewscope Ltd).</p> <p>Dewscope Ltd and the Council entered into an option agreement option over the green and blue land. The Option agreement required Dewscope Ltd to make a planning application and to market the whole site on the open market with the benefit of a planning permission, before disposing of the site sharing costs and receipts in accordance with the detailed provisions of the agreement.</p>
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	Even though Planning Permission has now been obtained (by way of appeal) the option agreement has now expired and as such a new option agreement on similar terms is required.
<b>Information you used to arrive at the decision</b>	As above.
<b>Gaps in your Information</b>	As above.

### Section 3 - Information - What did people tell you?

<b>What did people tell you about your proposals?</b>	<p>The Council has complied with the requirements of Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 by advertising the intention to dispose of the land for two consecutive weeks in the local press. This was undertaken in November and December in 2017. This allowed the local community an opportunity to comment on and make any representations in respect of the proposed disposal of Public Open Space.</p> <p>The Council received 185 representations in respect of the proposed disposal of Public Open Space. The main points raised in objection to the proposed disposal of land include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public open space contributes to social wellbeing;</li> <li>• relocating public open space would make it less accessible to local residents;</li> <li>• the subject land is used for recreation purposes (including football);</li> <li>• the subject land is used regularly for dog walking;</li> <li>• loss of wildlife habitat.</li> </ul> <p>These were considered by the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Regeneration on the 5th October 2018 and approval was obtained to proceed with the disposal of all or any part of the Green land and part of the Blue land. Reasonable endeavours are to be used to minimise the Blue land disposed of for the access road. Such disposals are to be subject to planning.</p>
<b>Details and dates of the consultation/s and/or engagement activities</b>	Pursuant to section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980) the Council published public open space disposal notices for two consecutive weeks in the local press to confirm its intention to dispose of the land. This allowed all interested parties to comment on or raise any objections to the proposed

	<p>disposal and the Council must consider the responses in accordance with the statutory process as set out in that legislation. The first advertisement was published in the Knutsford Guardian, a newspaper circulating in the Knutsford area, for two consecutive weeks on 23 November 2017 and again on 30 November 2017 and the deadline for objections / representations was 15 December 2017.</p> <p>As a result of feedback from residents, an amended plan (see Appendix 4) was prepared and consequently, a further notice was placed in the Knutsford Guardian. The amended plan showed a reduced subject area focused on the specific part where the strip of land is located which it is proposed to dispose of. Although the land potentially affected fronts onto Longridge, the second notice referred to both Longridge and North Downs as feedback in response to the first notice indicated the subject land may not be clear to residents from the title used in the notices, particularly those of North Downs. The notice was advertised for a further two consecutive weeks in the 14 December 2017 and 21 December 2017 editions and the deadline for objections / representations was 19 January 2018. All communications received whether in response to the first or to the second set of notices are being given due consideration and have been included in Appendix 3 of this report. As a result of the amended publications we do not believe that any interested parties have been disadvantaged.</p> <p>In addition to this statutory requirement, the Council also made the information available at its Westfields office and on the Council's web site and briefed Knutsford Town Council in relation to the notices.</p>
<b>Are there any gaps in consultation and engagement feedback?</b>	No.

## **Section 4 - Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis**

<b>Protected characteristics groups from the <a href="#">Equality Act 2010</a></b>	<b>What do you know?</b> <i>Summary of information used to inform the proposal</i>  <b><u>Refer to Section 2</u></b>	<b>What did people tell you?</b> <i>Summary of customer and/or staff feedback</i>  <b><u>Refer to section 3</u></b>	<b>What does this mean?</b> <i>Impacts identified from the information and feedback (actual and potential).</i>  <i>These can be either positive, negative or have no impact.</i>
<b>Age</b>			no impact
<b>Disability</b>			no impact
<b>Gender reassignment</b>			no impact
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>			no impact
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>			no impact
<b>Religion or belief</b>			no impact
<b>Sex</b>			no impact
<b>Sexual orientation</b>			no impact
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>			no impact

## Section 5 - Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

Mitigation	What can you do to mitigate any negative impacts or further enhance positive impacts?
<i>Please summarise the impacts listed in <b>section 4</b> and what will be done to mitigate these impacts</i>	Not applicable.

## Section 6 – Monitoring and review

<b>Details of monitoring activities</b>	The Councils Estates and Legal Services will oversee the disposal. Any future development will be subject to the planning process with any submission made by a third party.
<b>Date and responsible officer for the review of the EIA</b>	Lee Beckett - Senior Surveyor

## Section 7 – Sign off

When you have completed your draft EIA, it should be sent to the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mailbox](#) for review.

If your EIA is approved, it must then be signed off by a senior manager within your Department (Head of Service or above).

<b>Name</b>	Joanne Jones – Interim Head of Estates
<b>Date</b>	01/05/2025
<b>Signature</b>	<i>J M Jones</i>

Once the EIA has been signed off, please forward a copy to the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mailbox](#) for it to be published on the website.

For Transparency, we are committed to publishing all Equality Impact Assessments relating to public engagement.

**Help and support** - For support and advice please contact the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mailbox](#)