



BLETSOE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

APPENDIX 1 EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

March 2020

Appendix 1- Equalities Assessment

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Section 149 of The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on all public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have regard to the need to eliminate conduct prohibited by the Act, advance quality 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. Protected characteristics are defined as: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 1.2 This Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared by Bletsoe Neighbourhood Development Plan (BNP) working group on behalf of Bletsoe Parish Council. It is an analysis of the Policies within the Neighbourhood Development Plan to scrutinise the potential for an adverse impact on any persons or group, and in particular those people/groups with a protected characteristic.
- 1.3 An assessment has been made on the impact of the Bletsoe Neighbourhood Development plan on each of the protected characteristics.

2. Aims and Policies of the Bletsoe Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1 The Vision of the BNP is:

Bletsoe will remain a peaceful rural village that seeks to meet the housing, economic and infrastructure needs of its residents. Any future development must therefore be sensitive and must respect the character of the village that makes it so special.

- 2.2 The Objectives of the BNP are:

- To deliver housing which both sustains the current and meets the future needs of the community
- To protect and enhance existing and future open spaces
- To manage both existing and future traffic and transport provision and encourage safe and sustainable movement
- To ensure the village benefits from sufficient facilities and services
- To protect and enhance all listed buildings and the scheduled monument within the Parish.

- 2.3 The Planning Policies are:

BNP1 General Principles
BNP2 Land behind Captains Close
BNP3 Land North of the Old Rectory
BNP4 Design Criteria
BNP5 Vehicle and Cycle parking
BNP6 Transportation
BNP7 Village Open Space
BNP8 Next Generation Broadband

- 2.4 Non Policy Actions are:

NPA1 Parking
NPA2 Speed Awareness
NPA3 Protection of the village entrance

- NPA4 Identifying potential allotment land
- NPA5 Improvement of local Rights of Way
- NPA6 Continued promotion of community facilities
- NPA7 Protection for buildings of local interest.

3 Profile of Bletsoe ¹

Census data from 2011 has been used to provide information on the following protected characteristics: age, disability, race, and religious belief. Data relating to sex and sexual orientations, gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity is unavailable at Parish level.

3.1 Age Profile

In 2011 the population stood at 260. Located in the north of Bedford Borough, Bletsoe has an older age profile than the Borough with few residents aged 20-39 and a high proportion aged over 40, including 23% over 65. The level of non-White British residents (6%) is among the lowest of all parishes.

Age	Parish	Percentage
		Bletsoe (as of 2011)
Age 0-4	13	5.0
Age 5-15	28	10.8
Age 16-17	8	3.1
Age 18-29	20	7.7
Age 30-39	23	8.8
Age 40-49	51	19.6
Age 50-64	38	21.9
Age 65-74	38	14.6
Age 75-84	17	6.5
Age 85+	5	1.9
TOTAL	260	100

¹ Source data <https://bbcdevwebfiles.blob.core.windows.net/webfiles/Files/Bletsoe.pdf>

3.2 Ethnic Group ¹

Ethnicity	No	Percentage
White British	244	93.8
White Other	12	4.6
Mixed / Multiple	1	0.4
Asian / Asian British	2	0.8
Black / Black British	0	0.0
Other	1	0.4

¹ Source data <https://bbcdevwebfiles.blob.core.windows.net/webfiles/Files/Bletsoe.pdf>

3.3 Disability

There is no known data available relating to disability in the village.

3.4 Religion ¹

The dominant faith in Bletsoe is Christian (67.7%) which is higher than the Borough which is 59.3%, only 1.5% follow a different religion which is much lower than the Borough figure of

10.5%. Within the parish 30.8% of the population have no religion or have not stated a religion which is higher than the Borough figures of 30.2%

	No	Percentage
Christian	176	67.7
Other Religion	4	1.5
No Religion	71	27.3
Not Stated	9	3.5

¹ Source data <https://bbcdevwebfiles.blob.core.windows.net/webfiles/Files/Bletsoe.pdf>

4.0 Impact on Protected Characteristics

4.1 Age

The plan seeks to accommodate modest housing need and growth reflective of the scale of the village through the allocation of two housing development sites under Policy BNP2 and Policy BNP3 which together equate to up to 12 homes. Both policies require the mix and tenure of the development proposed should meet identified need, and this could include starter homes and/or bungalows for the elderly. The policy requires future planning applications to demonstrate how the proposed development will assist in meeting the local housing need.

This will help to ensure that housing provision caters for all ages, including younger people seeking housing for the first time, and/or older people looking to downsize by requiring that housing proposals properly address identified local needs in so far as is possible.

Policy BNP4 requires all new development to be of good design in accordance with Village Design Advice and should consider incorporating accessibility for people with a range of mobility into the design. The impact on all ages will be positive.

Policy BNP7 seeks to protect areas of open space within the village which will ensure the village retains open space to the benefit of all residents

Policy BNP8 seeks to encourage the growth of home based businesses, which will help to create business and home-working opportunities for people of working age, and will help to create choice and opportunity for people who have restrictions on their mobility (including the young and the old) by improving access to home-based employment, to online goods and services.

4.2 Disability

The needs of the disabled, including those with limited mobility, are addressed in Policies BNP3 and BNP4 which looks for housing to meet the needs of various groups to meet local housing need. Policy BNP7 seeks to protect Village Open Space to maintain the pleasant local environment.

Policy BNP6 provides commitment from the Parish Council to continue to support public transport.

Key issues for women who are pregnant or have small children are access to appropriate housing, flexible employment and community facilities.

Policies BNP2 and BNP3 provides housing to meet the needs of the local community.

The impact will be positive on all disabilities

4.3 Race

Only 1.6% of the population of Bletsoe are from non-white ethnic groups. The plan will have the same impact on the local population regardless of race. Policies BNP1, BNP2, BNP3 and BNP4 seek to create well designed development, including safety considerations to reduce any possible hate crime (there is no evidence that any takes place in Bletsoe).

The impact will be positive on people of all races.

4.4 Religion

Most of the population in Bletsoe is Christian, with a smaller percentage of other/none/not stated. Community facilities are currently used by all faiths and none. Policies within the plan do not consider any form of religion, and simply provide a safe environment for all to live in

The impact will be positive on people regardless of religion.

4.5 Sex (gender), Gender Reassignment and Sexual Orientation

The neighbourhood plan proposals and policies have been written to provide the same opportunities to both sexes, with neither sex disadvantaged, and to provide the same opportunities to all residents regardless of sexual orientation or if they are undergoing gender reassignment.

Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan cannot address social attitudes that may result in transphobia or discrimination, policies have been written to ensure that there is a safe built environment for all to enjoy.

The impact will be positive on all people regardless of Sex, Gender Reassignment or Sexual Orientation.

4.6 Conclusion

Bletsoe Neighbourhood Development Plan provides a range of proposals and policies which will result in positive benefits for all members of the community, including those with protected characteristics. The Neighbourhood Plan makes equal provision for all housing, employment and community facilities which will benefit all those living there.