

Equality Impact Assessment - head of service review

Reference: EQIA205991744

Submitted: 11 May 2020 17:03 PM

Executive summary

Title of policy or decision: Adoption and release of the updated 'Essex SuDS Design Guide (2020)'

Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): The main aim of the 'Essex SuDS Design Guide (2020)' is to allow applicants to the planning process access to the Lead Local Flood Authorities' (LLFAs) most current requirements on mitigating the potential flood risk impacts of new development through provision of good quality SuDS. This guide will result in improved quality of information submitted with planning applications and a subsequent reduction in the number of Holding Objections raised by the LLFAs in response to requests for consultation.

With Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) across Essex preparing Local Development Plans to deliver over 140,000 additional homes up to 2036, provision of good quality SuDS is essential for ensuring flood risk is not increased and the additional benefits such as water quality, amenity and biodiversity are realised.

We are hoping Essex County Council will agree to adopt and release the updated 'Essex SuDS Design Guide (2020)' in both print document and website formats for general use to the public.

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?: Help create great places to grow up, live and work

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Help create great places to grow up, live and work: Help secure sustainable development and protect the environment, Facilitate growing communities and new homes

Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?: a change to an existing policy, practice or project

Please provide a link to the document / website / resource to which this EqIA relates:

<https://essexdesignguideub.fmstage.co.uk/suds>

Please upload any documents which relate to this EqIA, for example decision documents:

<https://essexdesignguideub.fmstage.co.uk/suds>

Assessing the equality impact

Use this section to record how you have assessed any potential impact on the communities likely to be affected by the policy (or decision): The decision will primarily affect new development and those looking to submit Planning Applications to the Local Planning Authority (LPA). This may influence how organisations operate and primarily this will impact on the Local Planning Authorities and those proposing to submit Planning Applications for new development.

The decision is linked to the 'Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2013)', to improve flood risk by 'Implementing Sustainable Drainage and Source Control measures' and 'Achieving wider Environmental benefits'. Whilst not yet formally adopted, this will also link to the upcoming 'Green Infrastructure Strategy', within which delivery of good quality SuDS plays a key role.

The decision will support delivery of ECC's Organisational Strategy by contributing to the following priorities:

- o Help to secure sustainable development and protect the environment
- o Facilitate growing communities and new homes

Primarily Stakeholders impacted by the proposed changes would be those looking to submit Planning Applications for new development to the Local Planning Authority (i.e. Developers, Consultants and Planners).

We have consulted with both Internal and External Stakeholders and feedback received has been positive, in favour of releasing the updated version of the Design Guide, particularly the Web-based format. Feedback was received from key Stakeholders (Inc. Developers, Consultants and Planners) at an open workshop held on 25/09/2019 and details incorporated into the final version of the Design Guide where necessary.

It was felt that the workshop held on 25/09/2019 represented a broad cross section of Stakeholders, however, undoubtedly would not capture them all. On release of the Design Guide, the LLFA will continue to review/receive feedback from Stakeholders and make amendments to content of the Design Guide where this is necessary.

Does or will the policy or decision affect:

Service users: Yes

Employees: Yes

The wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities: Yes

Which geographical areas of Essex does or will the policy or decision affect?: All Essex

Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?: Yes

Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?: No

Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies?: Yes

Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?: Yes

Please describe the steps you have taken to meet the digital accessibility requirements: The website has been produced by Essex County Council, Place Services and was developed in line with ECC's Accessible Communication policy.

Please describe the steps you have taken to test the accessibility of the website, system or application: Both the website and .PDF version of the SuDS Design Guide has been circulated, internally and to a select number of external parties for consultation and feedback incorporated where necessary and appropriate.

Please describe the steps you have taken to maintain accessibility once it has gone live: Contact details will be openly available on the website, and any queries raised that might indicate service users are having difficulty accessing information through this media will be addressed by some other means, until such time as the website can be updated where necessary.

Description of impact

Description of Impact. If there is an impact on a specific protected group tick box, otherwise leave blank. You will be given the opportunity to rate identified impacts as positive, negative or neutral on the next page: No impact on any of the above groups

I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics: I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics

Describe any actions that have already been taken to mitigate negative impacts on any of the protected characteristics: Whilst the assessment would appear to indicate no direct negative impact on a protected group,

delivery of good quality SuDS within new development provides Multiple-benefits including positive impacts on air quality, carbon reduction, recreation, education and other elements of community health and wellbeing having some monetary or intangible social value.

Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your EqIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?: No

Details of person completing the form

I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance: I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

Date EqIA completed: 11/05/2020

Name of person completing the EqIA: Lee Sencier

Email address of person completing the EqIA: Lee.Sencier@essex.gov.uk

Your function: Infrastructure & Environment

Your service area: Environment and Climate Change Action

Your team: Development and Flood Risk Team

Are you submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team?: No

Email address of Head of Service: John.Meehan@essex.gov.uk