

Equality Impact Assessment: Conversation Screening Tool

[Use this form to prompt an EIA conversation and capture the discussion. This completed form or if needed, a full EIA report (form 3) will be published as part of the decision-making process **Please delete prompts before publishing*]

What is being reviewed?	The Introduction of a new Urban Forest Strategy
What changes are being made?	No changes as brand new strategy. The aim of the strategy is: to set out a long-term vision, with aims, principles and actions, for our trees and woodlands. It supports improving the level of tree canopy cover, our quality and health of trees and their importance for people and communities, mitigating climate breakdown and for nature.
Service Unit:	Environment
Participants in the conversation:	Martin Whitchurch, Strategic Lead for Greenspace and Conservation Denise Hewlett, Greenspace Development Manager Andy Sherlock, Landscape & Tree Manager Nick Colledge, Arboriculture Manager
Conversation date/s:	September 2022 up to and including February 2024
Do you know your current or potential client base? Who are the key stakeholders?	<p>A core project team of internal officers supported the strategy development and writing, with an external consultant.</p> <p>Extensive working group across BCP and partner/stakeholder organisations, including multiple organisations and residents who have contributed to the development of the strategy and/or will be involved or be recipients of the benefits of the strategy once approved.</p> <p>All residents and visitors to BCP benefit from our extensive tree canopy and, by extension, the strategies aims and intent to support tree planting, canopy cover and their resultant positive impacts for people and communities.</p>
Do different groups have different needs or experiences?	<p>All protected groups may have different needs of the Tree strategy, but all groups with protected characteristics should have access to quality trees, high levels of tree canopy cover and their resultant benefits.</p> <p>The strategy specifically responds to and uses a Tree Equity Score, that assesses peoples access to trees, knowing that those in more deprived communities generally have less access to green space (and therefore trees). The principles and actions therefore support the prioritising of resourcing in to those areas, alongside BCP-wide schemes and action.</p>

	Age (young/old), disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, members of the armed forces community, any other factors/groups e.g. socioeconomic status, carers, human rights.
Will this change affect any service users?	Adopting for approval the Urban Forest Strategy will have positive effects on our residents, visitors and staff. Progressing such a strategy will support the maintenance of trees in the public realm, can provide guidance for how trees in private estates will be maintained/managed and in so doing will help support community resilience to impacts of climate change as but one example. Equally the strategy speak to the challenges of inequalities across BCP and seeks to rectify inequalities in terms of people's access to trees and the health and wellbeing benefits they can provide.
[If the answer to any of the questions above is 'don't know' then you need to gather more evidence. The best way to do this is to use forms 2 and 3. <i>*Please delete prompts before publishing</i>]	
What are the benefits or positive impacts of the change on current or potential users?	<p>The list of benefits trees can deliver to their immediate surroundings is extensive. These contribute to each of the EHRC 6 domains, in terms of education, people's health (& wellbeing), in terms of the concept of tree equity, this strategy directly relates to the notion of environmental justice, and the development of the strategy has been built on community and business participation and is designed to continue to encourage people's involvement in strategy implementation.</p> <p>Other benefits include: wildlife support, micro-climate enhancement, surface water management, quality of place, health and wellbeing, local food, community links, traffic calming, noise abatement and much more.</p> <p>Fully realising all or any of these benefits requires a concerted approach that exploits enabling factors and devises solutions to potential conflicts. Wide-ranging opportunities exist in our conurbation to better use trees to meet local needs and ambitions.</p> <p>These factors are brought forward and highlighted in the Strategy.</p>
What are the negative impacts of the change on current or potential users?	We have thoroughly explored the implications and benefits of this strategy. Several key stakeholders have been involved in this process and included councillors, research experts in trees, in community engagement and in public health, residents have been made aware by consultation of the work and their views included in the strategy. We do not therefore envisage any negative impacts of approving this strategy.
Will the change affect employees?	The strategy advocates the development of a working group whose remit is to find ways to implement the 34 priority actions detailed in the Strategy (and previously agreed through extensive public, councillor, and officer consultations on the development of the Strategy. The changes that we anticipate will arise include: support in decision processes, the potential for external funds to

	<p>implement the priorities, the potential for these funds to support any staffing required; opportunities to engage public – residents and visitors – in decisions taken on trees in BCP, creating a potential also for the public to share stewardship of trees in the public realm.</p>
<p>Will the change affect the wider community?</p>	<p>Examples of benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Oak trees, the top species in the council-owned tree populations, are a haven for 2,300 wildlife species. – Trees can reduce the ambient temperatures people experience during hot summers in urban settings by 5 to 10 Celsius degrees in Northern Europe, depending on local conditions. – Trees have been found to increase a willingness to travel to and spend time in shopping districts. – The presence of well-maintained trees can increase residential property values by 2 to 9%. Trees can also positively influence development viability by enhancing speed of sale, absorption rates and acceptability of development to local communities. – Neighbourhoods with walkable green spaces including tree lined streets have been found to increase the longevity of senior residents living in dense urban areas, independent of their age, sex, marital status, former occupations, and socioeconomic status. – In the US, where an emerald ash borer (EAB) infestation has led to the loss of over 100 million of ash trees, researchers found that between 1990 and 2007, the EAB-induced canopy loss observed across 15 States was associated with an additional 6,113 deaths related to illness of the lower respiratory system, and 15,080 cardiovascular-related deaths. – Trees also positively impact mental health: neighbourhoods with more street trees have repeatedly been found to be associated with lower prescriptions of anti-depressants. – In Japan, studies of <i>Shinrin-yoku</i> or forest bathing, have found effects on improved immune system response, lowered stress indicators, reduced depression, and lower glucose levels in diabetics. – Tree canopies can intercept between 8% and 68% of rainfall depending on the tree species and the rainfall characteristics. Impacts on flood risks reduction can be further enhanced when the soil surrounding trees is used for infiltration: both the amount and speed of runoff entering the sewer system can be significantly cut.

<p>What mitigating actions are planned or already in place for those negatively affected by this change?</p>	<p>None foreseen nor expected.</p>
<p>Summary of Equality Implications:</p>	<p>One of the underlying features of this strategy concerns the focus on ensuring equality for all residents, and other key stakeholders to trees and the multiple health and economic benefits they can provide.</p> <p>Tree equity analyses have been conducted identifying as an audit of where locations are benefitting well from trees and other areas, frequently amongst the most socio-economically deprived where tree equity needs to be redressed as a priority.</p> <p>This strategy has been a first step in auditing inequalities, in providing for solutions and following its approval at Cabinet, once the working group is set up, will then provide for solutions to overcome challenges in being able to implement the Strategy's priorities.</p> <p>The Urban Forest Strategy is a positive piece of work that should improve the quality of our spaces for all users, and indirectly for non-users. It is therefore not felt to contain any significant negative equality implications. However, future work should ensure that as elements of the Strategy are delivered, they consider individual impacts and return to further EIA assessments.</p>