

## EQUALITY SCREENING

Equality Impact Assessment guidance should be considered when completing this form.

POLICY/FUNCTION/ACTIVITY	LEAD OFFICER
Englefield Green Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan	Michael Corbett (Senior Planning Policy Officer)

**A. What is the aim of this policy, function or activity? Why is it needed? What is it hoped to achieve and how will it be ensured it works as intended? Does it affect service users, employees or the wider community?**

It is a statutory duty of Runnymede Borough Council, under the 'Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990', to review past Conservation Area designations and determine whether the boundaries need to be altered.

The Council's adopted Runnymede 2030 Local Plan includes Policy EE5: Conservation Areas, which sets out detailed policy considerations to be taken into account when considering development within or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area, including views in or out, and the need for development to protect, conserve and wherever possible enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It also makes a clear commitment to reviewing the Borough's Conservation Areas, in accordance with its legislative duty.

Englefield Green Conservation Area was first designated in 1970 and extended to the north in 1978. The aim of the latest Conservation Area review is to look at the history of Englefield Green and assess how the historical interest has influenced the character and appearance of the area. As part of this process an audit has been undertaken which assesses what contribution individual buildings make to the Conservation Area, including identifying listed and locally listed buildings. A review has also been undertaken of the boundaries to the Conservation Area to ensure that these continue to reflect the special architectural and historic interest of the area.

Several changes are proposed to be made to the existing Englefield Green Conservation Area designation. These changes, and the reasons for them, are set out in the Englefield Green Conservation Area Appraisal and the accompanying Management Plan. They include removing six areas from the Conservation Area and adding in three new areas. In summary, the changes take account of new development, which has occurred since the area was designated or which are not considered to reflect its character, or are to amend the boundaries of the designation, where it is considered to have originally been drawn too tightly or too loosely.

The Draft review of the Englefield Green Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA), together with the accompanying Management Plan, have been prepared for public consultation. These two documents set out why the area is considered to have special architectural and historic interest, the local and national context, including its history and details of the original design of the houses. If the extent of the current review of the Conservation Area is designated, this will help inform applicants and decision makers to understand why the area is significant when planning applications in the area are under consideration.

Local consultation (in line with the relevant legislation) is due to take place on the proposed reviewed designation. Consultation gives local residents the opportunity to be more involved in the Conservation Area designation and appraisal process and informs them of the decision-making process if the reviewed designation is formally made.

The review of this Conservation Area designation, if made, is not expected to affect any Runnymede Borough Council employees. This part of Englefield Green is already designated as a Conservation Area, and has been since 1970, and consequently the impact on service users/members of the wider community, are expected to be confined to the three areas being proposed to be added to the designation. It is considered that there is potential in these areas to impact on those who live in or visit the proposed extension to the Conservation Area who have the protected characteristic(s) of age or disability given the additional policy requirements which would apply and which would add additional controls in terms of the changes that can be made to the external appearance of a buildings within the designated area. Whilst Conservation Area designation does impact on the planning process, any proposal that requires planning permission within the designated area will be judged on its planning

merits (including any personal circumstances / equalities issues raised by the applicant which could be material considerations weighed in the planning balance).

**B. Is this policy, function or activity relevant to equality? Does the policy, function or activity relate to an area in which there are known inequalities, or where different groups have different needs or experience? Remember, it may be relevant because there are opportunities to promote equality and greater access, not just potential based on adverse impacts or unlawful discrimination.**

**The Protected Characteristics are; Sex, Age, Disability, Race, Religion and Beliefs, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity.**

There is the potential for there to be inadvertent negative impacts upon those residents with protected characteristics who live in / visit the three areas proposed for designation in the Conservation Area that weren't previously included in the designation. This is because it is considered that those with protected characteristics, such as being elderly or disabled, could be negatively impacted as a result of the higher design standards / limitations that Conservation Area status can impose on an area, thus making it harder for adaptations to be made to buildings, e.g., the installation of ramps to access a property.

A review of the comments received following the public consultation will be undertaken and any implications in terms of equalities will be discussed with the Council's Equality Group, before a report is brought back to the Planning Committee recommending whether a CA designation in this part of the Borough should still be pursued.

**If the policy, function or activity is relevant to equality then a full Equality Impact Assessment may need to be carried out. If the policy function or activity does not engage any protected characteristics, then you should complete Part C below. Where Protected Characteristics are engaged, but Full Impact Assessment is not required because measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented that would mitigate the impact on those affected or would provide an opportunity to promote equalities please complete Part C.**

**C. If the policy, function or activity is not considered to be relevant to equality, what are the reasons for this conclusion? Alternatively, if it is considered that there is an impact on any Protected Characteristics, but measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented please state those measures and how it/they are expected to have the desired result. What evidence has been used to make this decision? A simple statement of 'no relevance' or 'no data' is not sufficient.**

A six-week public consultation on the proposed changes to the Englefield Green Conservation Area designation will provide the opportunity for relevant consultees to provide comments. Any comments made which relate to equalities matters will be carefully considered and discussed with the Council's Equalities Group before a report is brought back to the Planning Committee recommending whether to approve the proposed changes to this Conservation Area designation or not.

If the proposed changes to the Englefield Green Conservation Area are made, it is considered that this will benefit most elements of the community who live and/or visit this part of the Borough. This includes benefits which result from the additional protection and enhancement of the three new areas covered by the designation and also less protection, and thus more freedom to make changes to their properties, for the six areas proposed to be removed from the designation.

This EqIA screening has picked up potential negative impacts on those with the protected characteristics of age and disability, however, it is not considered that a full EqIA is required as the Government requires local authorities to designate Conservation Areas through primary legislation where they have been identified to have special architectural or historic interest, and the Council is following this process. Also, as set out earlier in this screening, personal circumstances can be weighed in the planning balance when determining planning applications.

Date completed: 12/06/2023

Sign-off by senior manager: Georgina Pacey