



**WATFORD  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

# Equality Impact Analysis

<b>Title of policy, function or service</b>	Watford Business Park 'Gateway Zone'
<b>Lead officer</b>	Lauren Sharkey
<b>Person completing the EIA</b>	Lauren Sharkey
<b>Type of policy, function or service</b>	Project – First review
<b>Version &amp; Date</b>	11 February 2019

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. Watford Business Park (WBP) is a major strategic land holding of approximately 75 acres (or 30 hectares) accommodating 65 businesses and employing in the region of 1,000 people. However, a significant proportion of the existing built stock is over 50 years old and is deteriorating.
- 1.2. Whilst Watford Borough Council holds the freehold title to the park, the majority of the buildings have been sold with long leasehold interests, many of which now have less than 40 years remaining. This fragmented leasehold structure is a significant barrier to comprehensive redevelopment or regeneration in the form of new investment either from occupiers, the council or in attracting third party funding.
- 1.3. The 'Gateway Zone' is located at the entrance to the business park and has potential to accommodate a flagship development at the entrance to the estate. It is currently characterised by low density and inefficiently planned buildings comprising low quality office and warehouse accommodation.
- 1.4. Without a significant rationalisation of land holdings and uses this strategic site will fail to attract new business, it risks deteriorating further and losing employment opportunities for the borough. The proposal to redevelop the Gateway Zone is considered to be a much needed catalyst to regenerate WBP as an employment destination.

## **2. Focus of the Equality Impact Analysis**

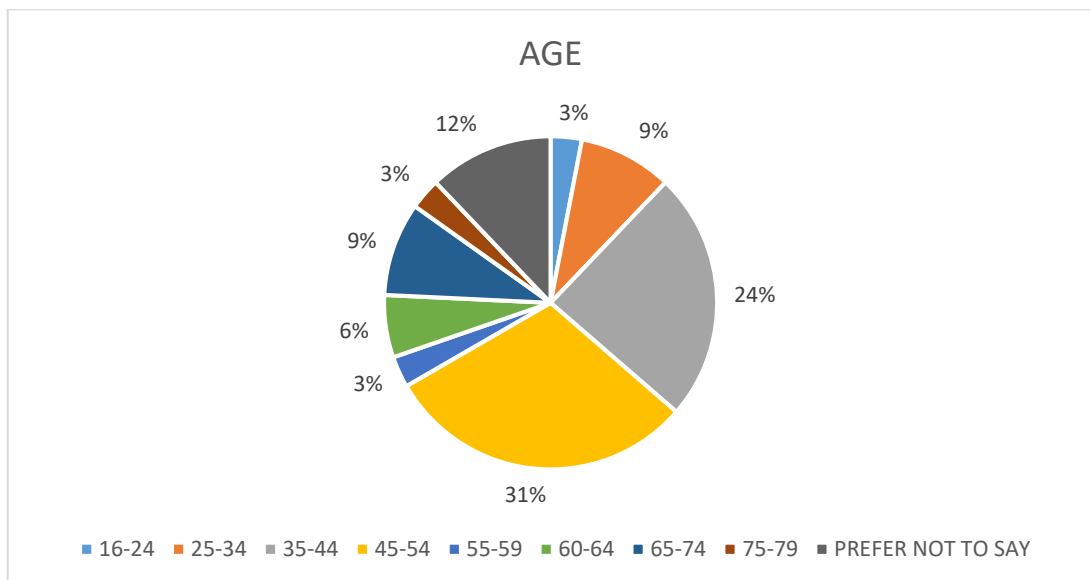
This EIA, therefore, considers the potential equality related impacts, both positive and negative of the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and subsequent redevelopment of the Gateway Zone in Watford Business Park on the people in the groups or with the characteristics protected in the Equalities Act 2010.

These are:

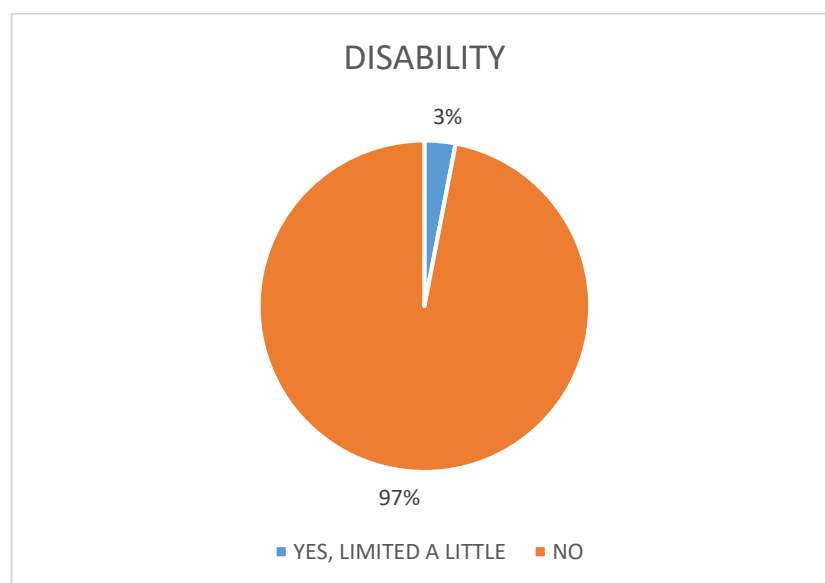
1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender Reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race
6. Religion or belief
7. Sex (gender)
8. Sexual Orientation
9. Marriage and Civil Partnership.

### **3. Engagement and consultation**

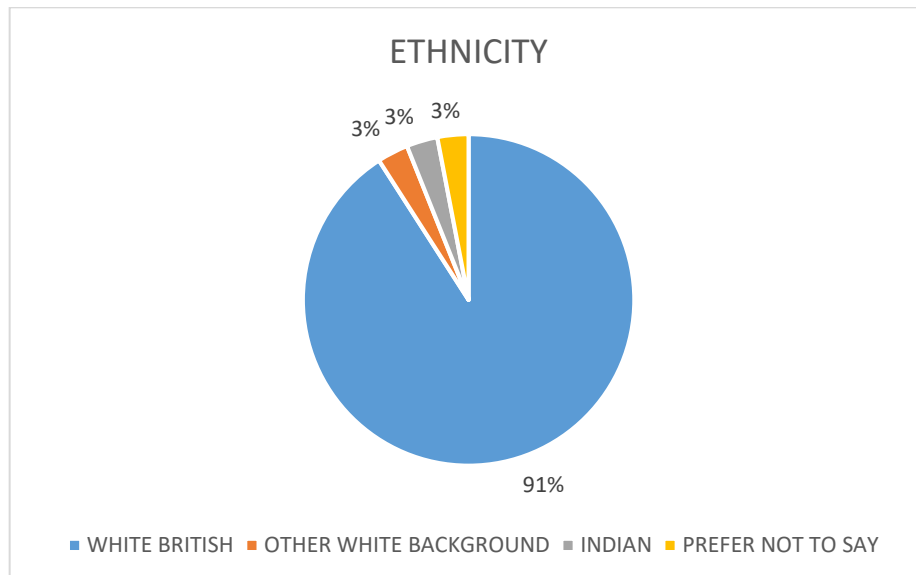
- 3.1. As part of the CPO a referencing exercise was carried out. The purpose of this exercise was to ascertain the occupiers, lessees and those with rights over the land within the red line of the Gateway Zone.
- 3.2. The council appointed Ardent Management Ltd. to carry out this exercise. Their methodology to collect the equalities data was as follows;
  - 3.2.1. Review the current land usage for the site and its leases creating a comprehensive and rational properties database covering the land, its rights, usage and titles held by persons affected by the CPO.
  - 3.2.2. Apply to the Land Registry for title information and ascertain contact details for the titles provided in preparation for serving notices.
  - 3.2.3. Issue a Section 16 'Requisition for Information' (RFI) notice along with the council's standard Equalities Monitoring questionnaire (Appendix A) served on all known interest holders in accordance with statutory provisions, including Statutory Undertakers and mortgagees.
  - 3.2.4. Upon expiry of the statutory return period for RFI's capture any outstanding information, by following up by post, telephone and property visits as appropriate (including site notices).
- 3.3. Following this initial data gathering exercise and follow up site visits, Ardent Management collected the equalities data from 33 individuals who will be affected by the CPO.
- 3.4. With regard to age, the largest category represented was 45-54 year olds with 31% of respondents within this age group, followed by 35-44 year olds representing 24% of respondents. All other age groups were represented by less than 10% of total respondents and 12% either did not state their age or would 'prefer not to say'.



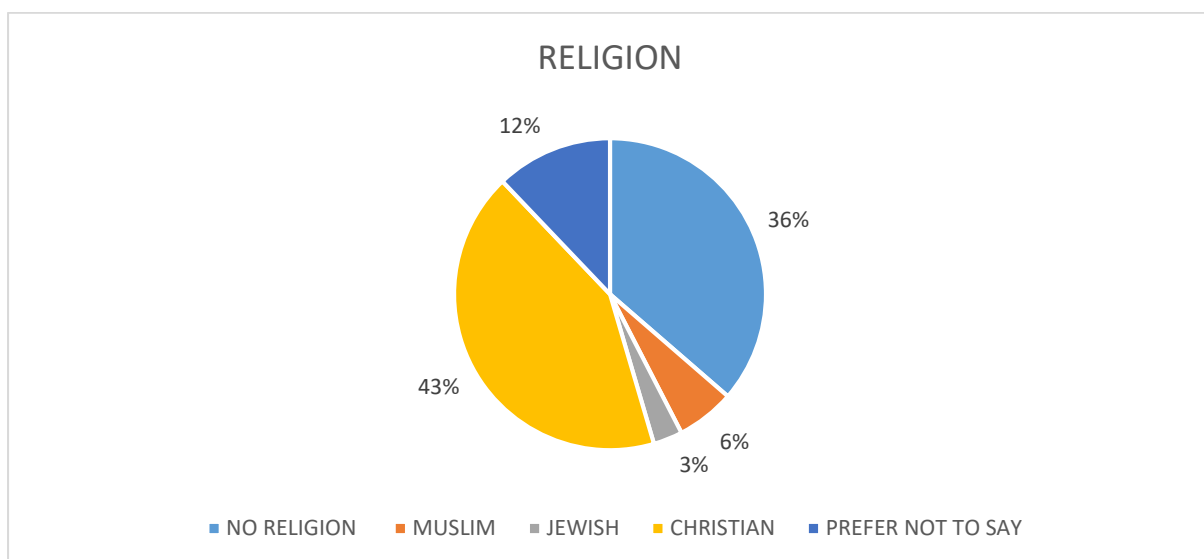
- 3.5. With regard to disability, 97% of respondents stated that they did not consider themselves to have a disability. 3% of respondents said that they were 'limited a little'. 0% of respondents said that they were 'limited a lot'.



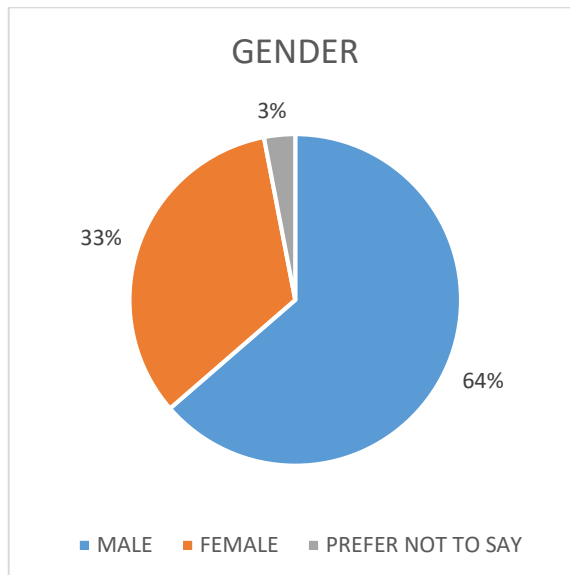
- 3.6. With regard to Gender reassignment, 88% of respondents said that they were same the gender that they were assigned at birth. 12% of respondents did not provide this information or would 'prefer not to say'.
- 3.7. With regard to race and ethnicity, 91% of respondents categorised themselves as 'White British'. 3% categorised themselves as 'Other White Background', 3% as 'Indian' and 3% did not provide this information or would 'prefer not to say'.



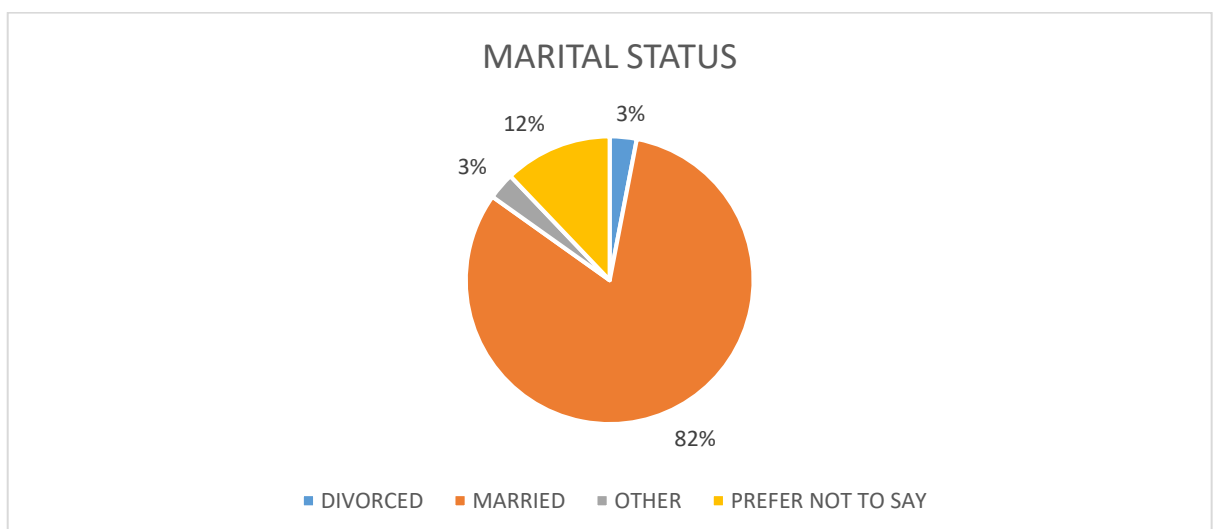
- 3.8. With regard to religion and beliefs, 43% of respondents stated that they were Christian, 6% stated they were Muslim and 3% stated they were Jewish. 36% of respondents said they had no religion and 12% did not provide this information or would 'prefer not to say'.



- 3.9. With regard to sex, 64% of respondents were male and 33% of respondents were female. 3% of respondents did not provide this information or would 'prefer not to say'.



- 3.10. With regard to sexual orientation, 88% of respondents identified as Heterosexual and 12% did not provide this information or would 'prefer not to say'. There were no respondents identifying as homosexual, bisexual or any other sexual orientation.
- 3.11. With regard to marriage and civil partnership, 82% of respondents were married. 3% were divorced and 3% stated other in response to this question. 12% did not provide this information or would 'prefer not to say'



#### **4. What we know about the Watford population**

##### **Ethnicity / Race**

For Watford, the Census 2011 shows the following breakdown in terms of ethnicity:

White British (61.9%), White other (7.7%), Pakistani (6.7%), British Indian (5.5%) and British other Asian (4.4%).

Census information is now nearly 10 years old and it is likely that the ethnic profile of the borough has changed during this time. For example, it would not have captured the more recent EU arrivals to the borough (EU2 countries – Romania and Bulgaria, who were given residency rights in 2014).

We know from other data such as National Insurance Registration that Watford has experienced a relatively high increase in nationals from the EU2 countries applying for National Insurance registrations as Watford residents. This follows a period of a high number from EU8 countries (including Poland, Latvia, Lithuania) who were given freedom of movement to the UK from 2004. Throughout the period the arrival of new residents from south Asia (e.g. Pakistan / India) has remained relatively constant.

### **Age**

With regard to Age, the largest populations by age band in Watford are:

- 25-44 (31,700)
- 45-59 (18,100)

The numbers in each successive age-band fall progressively until there are estimated to be 6,000 who are 75+. We know that the borough has a younger profile than the rest of England.

### **Disability / Health**

Around 85% of the population of Watford state that they have 'good health' and just under 14% record a disability. We do not have details as to what these disabilities are but are aware that these will range across a wide range of both physical disabilities and disabilities related to mental health and impairment.

### **Religion / belief**

In Watford, the religious breakdown in the Census 2011 of top five religions in Watford was: Christian (54.1%), Muslim (9.8%), Hindu (4.8%), with no religion stated at 21.4%.

### **Sexual orientation**

Sexual orientation was not collected as part of Census 2011 and so there is no reliable data on the sexual orientation of the Watford community.

### **Transgender**

Watford has no specific data on the transgender community within the borough.

## 5. How will the council ensure equality is promoted through the CPO and redevelopment of Watford Business Park Gateway Zone.

Under the Equality Act 2010, three areas need to be considered when analysing the equality impact of the Watford Business Park Gateway Zone CPO and redevelopment:

1. **eliminate** discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
2. **advance** equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
3. **foster** good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not.

## 6. Potential for positive impacts

With regard to age, the majority (55%) of respondents were between the ages of 35-54. Younger people of working age were under represented, with only 3% of respondents in the 16-24 category. This could indicate that there is a lack of employment opportunities, such as apprenticeships, available for younger people. The CPO and subsequent redevelopment has the potential to provide more job opportunities for younger people. By supporting business growth in Watford by ensuring there is sufficient, fit for purpose, industrial premises.

With regard to disability, the large majority of respondents stated that they did not consider themselves to have a disability. In Watford, approximately 14% of the population would consider themselves to be a disability. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that those with disabilities are underrepresented within the Business Park. This may be because the current commercial premises is over 50 years and provides a number of accessibility issues to those with disabilities affecting mobility.

The proposed redevelopment of the site will be in accordance with current disability legislations and create an environment much more conducive to providing accessible options to people with disabilities to seek employment within the Business Park.

## 7. Negative impacts

With regard to religion and belief, it is understood that one of the tenants within the Gateway Zone is a practicing church organisation. Unfortunately, despite best efforts, equality information was not received from this organisation. However, it can be assumed that the CPO has the potential to give rise to negative impacts on this protected characteristic. It is therefore essential that the council works on a relocation strategy.

## 6. Overall conclusion

In summary, the CPO of Watford Business Park Gateway zone and subsequent redevelopment of the site has the opportunity to give rise to a number of positive benefits with regard to protected characteristics. It also has the potential to negatively affect protected characteristics which the council will endeavour to mitigate as detailed in the table below.

The assumptions made in this report are based on the data collected as part of the referencing exercise. The data provides a useful baseline in order to carry out an initial Equalities Impact Assessment and highlight the potential effects of the proposed CPO and redevelopment. However, it would be prudent to assume that not everyone directly affected by the CPO provided their data. Therefore, prior to making the CPO it is proposed that an external consultant is appointed to review this document and gather further information from affected individuals and provide an update to this assessment. This will ensure that the council's approach to mitigating and negative factors is sufficient.

## Summary of potential positive impacts and ways in which they can be ensured

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
More accessible premises	Disability	The development will be designed with disability and accessibility in mind. There is currently a limited provision of Blue Badge parking spaces and few of the units have level access into them of lifts to upper floors. This may discourage some people from working for businesses located within the current site. The new scheme will seek to maximise opportunities for accessibility and reduce or remove where possible all barriers that may inhibit or discourage those with disabilities from employment opportunities in the Gateway Zone.
New jobs and entry level opportunities	Age	Considering that Watford has a younger than average populations (Census, 2011), there are opportunities as part of the redevelopment to address the low representation of younger people working in the business park. It may be that there are a lack of apprenticeships and entry level jobs at present. Through the procurement approach and letting strategy, the council will be able to favour organisations that are able to achieve entry level job creation and apprenticeships.

## Summary of potential negative impacts and ways in which they can be removed or mitigated

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to mitigate the negative impact
Redevelopment of premises currently occupied by a place of worship	Religion / Belief	It is important that the relocation strategy addresses this unique use within the Gateway Zone. It will seek to provide all existing tenants with a tailored packages of support but will ensure that the unique requirements of a place of worship are recognised and taken into account when assisting with the relocation.

**This EIA has been approved by:**

**...Martin Jones..... Date .....20 February 2019...**