



**WATFORD  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

# Equality Impact Analysis

<b>Title of policy, function or service</b>	Watford's Environmental Strategy: addressing the climate and ecological emergency 2023-2030  Associated delivery plan 2023-2025
<b>Lead officer</b>	Susheel Rao, Sustainability Officer
<b>Person completing the EIA</b>	Susheel Rao, Sustainability Officer
<b>Type of policy, function or service:</b>	Existing (reviewed) <input type="checkbox"/>  New/Proposed                      x <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Version &amp; Date</b>	Version 1  21/2/23

## **1. Background**

The council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and an ecological emergency in 2021. It has committed to achieve net zero carbon for the council by 2030 and do all in its power to achieve net zero for the borough also by 2030.

In 2020 the council approved the Sustainability Strategy Part 1, which runs until March 2023. Watford's Environmental Strategy: addressing the climate and ecological emergency will run from 2023 to 2030. Alongside this, there will be a delivery plan which is reviewed annually and updated every 2 years. The proposed delivery plan will run from April 2023 to March 2025.

Watford's Environmental Strategy has been developed with liaison between both internal and external parties. A consultation exercise was held between 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022. This included face to face focus groups, virtual meetings and an online consultation questionnaire. As part of the focus group meetings we contacted organisations working with people from a range of different interest groups, from disability, to religion to race. While not successful in getting a response and chance to meet with them, we did hold sessions with Watford deaf club, and the blind society, as well as sessions with West Herts College and Westfield Academy.

The impacts of climate change, mitigation and adaptation solutions can have a greater impact on disadvantaged people, either within Watford or globally. Climate justice is an internationally recognised issue, which we all need to address. The strategy is seeking to mitigate the impacts of climate change, through reducing the carbon equivalent impacts both within the council and across the borough, seeking to help those who are experiencing fuel poverty, ensuring we have adequate natural habitat areas, providing benefit for nature, and also for those without access to their own private gardens, and reducing the resources we use, such as making it easier and more acceptable to reuse and repair things.

The strategy sets out the council's targets to be achieved by 2030, while the delivery plan sets out the actions to be taken in the next two years.

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

This EIA, therefore, considers the potential equality related impacts, both positive and negative of Watford's Environmental Strategy and Delivery Plan 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**

**RESPONDENTS' PROFILE SHOULD BE INCLUDED HERE AND WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT FROM ENGAGING AND CONSULTING WITH THE COMMUNITY.**

**Speak to Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications for advice on engagement and consultation to be undertaken to support your EIA. For some cases demonstrating that you have engaged / consulted is critical to developing an effective and robust EIA that meets legal requirements.**

To ensure we provided opportunity for the greatest amount of people to provide their feedback on the Environmental Strategy, we took the following approach:

- Consultation on CommonPlace, with copies of the strategy, both in full and in chapters there.
- In person or virtual focus groups or meetings.
- Snap Survey
- Social media posts
- Having people at the Green Market and also in CSC to ask people's views.

We promoted the consultation through:

- 16 digital posters on the Watford High Street;
- Feature article in About Watford Winter edition 2022;
- Social media campaign;
- Articles in WBC's email newsletter for residents;
- Article in Elected Mayor's email newsletter
- Article in the Economic Development newsletter
- Direct emails and sharing requests to 19 organisations and our sustainability mailing list of 700 people;
- 12 focus groups.

We had face to face meetings where we engaged with 238 people, these included:

- Watford Blind Centre (12)
- Watford Deaf Association (10)
- Sustainability Managers (15)
- Sustainability Forum (35)
- GBGW attendees (35)
- Facebook Live (15)
- Water Quality Forum (42)
- Session with W3R FoE (10)
- Meeting with BID (2)
- Lunch & Learn with staff (18)
- West Herts College (25)

- Westfield school: (13)
- Watford Football Club: (2)
- Face-face interviews at CSC (4)

Through this process, we engaged with people of different ethnicity, gender, and age, as well as with people who had a recognised disability.

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

##### UP TO DATE INFORMATION ON WATFORD'S POPULATION AND PROFILE

Speak to Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications for advice on this area and for relevant up to date information.

#### 5. How will the council ensure equality is promoted through Watford's Environmental Strategy

Under the Equality Act 2010, three areas need to be considered when analysing the equality impact of Watford's Environmental Strategy:

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

#### A. Positive impacts

Implementing the strategy should have a long term benefit to all, especially the disadvantaged and those on low income as it will help to:

- mitigate against energy and resource cost rises;
- reduce pollution and congestion;
- provide access to nature as well as green space;
- prepare the borough for changes resulting for climate change.

## **B. Negative impacts**

The potential negative impacts relate to costs of implementing changes, whether for individuals, within the council or within the borough.

Other negative impacts relate to perceptions that some things are now off limits, without an alternative.

## **6. Overall conclusion**

Overall, Watford's Environmental Strategy should have a positive impact across all the protected characteristics, although short term there may be some negative impacts or perceived negative impacts, especially as we will all need to make changes in how we do things. Climate change and ecological destruction across the globe will affect all of us, and is starting to already. It is likely to affect those who are disadvantaged more, whether in the UK or globally. Therefore taking action to limit, mitigate and adapt to this will have a positive impact, both short and long term.

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

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
Reduced money spent on energy, water and other resources.	Age, disability, ethnicity, belief, gender	Work with fuel poor to facilitate better energy efficiency in homes; Work with partners to promote ways to safely reduce energy, water and other resource bills, with low cost measures. E.g. water saving devices, draught proofing, etc.
Improved air quality and reduced pollution and congestion	Potentially all, but specifically Age, disability, ethnicity, belief, gender	Ensure that TTIW actions recognise the implications to certain groups, such as those with disabilities
Improved access to nature	Potentially all, but specifically Age, disability, ethnicity, belief, gender	Ensure that when managing for nature, there are still areas which are also accessible for people, such that they can experience nature positively within Watford.
Ensure we are prepared for changes in weather patterns due to increase in average global temperature, e.g. due to flooding, extreme heat, drought and cost of heating homes	Potentially all, but specifically Age, disability, ethnicity, belief, gender	Ensure that where individual homes or work places cannot be adapted there are accessible alternatives Look at how urban heat island effect can be mitigated in dense urban areas.

## 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
Cost of implementing measures	Potentially all, but specifically Age, disability, ethnicity, belief, gender	Look for grant funding for cash poor and fuel poor households to implement measures.
Actions seen as anti car, and so those who need a car discriminated against.	disability	<p>Ensure that dialogue on moving away from cars and towards active travel reflects diverse population;</p> <p>Ensure that active travel options are safe for the wide range of users, and minimise conflict between different users;</p> <p>Ensure alternatives to the car outside active travel are also discussed, such as public transport, but also use of cars through a car club.</p>

**This EIA has been approved by:**

..... **Date** .....