



Equality Impact Analysis

Title of policy, function or service	Final Green Spaces Strategy 2013 – 2023
Lead officer	Paul Rabbitts
Person completing the EIA	Paul Rabbitts / Kathryn Robson
Type of policy, function or service:	Existing (reviewed) <input type="checkbox"/> New/Proposed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Background

This analysis considers the potential impacts, both positive and negative, of Watford Borough Council's Green Spaces Strategy 2013-23 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

The analysis also considers how we can achieve the positive effects and reduce or mitigate the negatives. This will be established by:

- Understanding of the role of green space to the quality of life of Watford, the current level and quality of provision and where improvements could be made
- Understanding of the wider Watford context
- Consultation results and any other resident feedback.

Green Spaces in Watford

The Green Spaces Strategy 2013-2023 covers the following types of accessible green space - see below. Much of it is owned and managed by Watford Borough Council but some areas are either privately owned or outside the control of local governments. This is based on the typology of open space in Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17).

■ Parks, Gardens and Recreation Grounds (PGRG)

These areas of land are normally enclosed, designed, managed and maintained as a public park or garden or recreation ground. Their primary purpose is to provide accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.

■ Amenity Green Spaces (AGS)

These are landscaped areas that are a visual amenity and/or have separate land uses e.g. major areas of grass within housing areas and business parks that are usable for informal recreation, social activities and informal play. Their primary purpose is to provide opportunities for informal recreation close to home or work, or to enhance the appearance of residential and other areas.

■ **Green Corridors (GC)**

These are green routes/linkages including river and canal corridors, major road verges and hedgerows connecting different areas within urban and rural areas and joining green spaces together. Their primary purpose is for walking, cycling or horse riding routes and for wildlife migration.

■ **Natural and Semi-Natural Green Spaces (NGS)**

These are areas of undeveloped or previously undeveloped land with residual natural habitats. Their primary purpose is for wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.

■ **Allotments and Community Gardens (ACG)**

Areas of land rented for growing vegetables, fruits or flowers. Their primary purpose is to provide opportunities for people to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.

■ **Churchyards and Cemeteries (CC)**

This category includes municipal cemeteries, churchyards and other burial grounds with legitimate public access. Their primary purpose is for burial of the dead and quiet contemplation, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

■ **Civic Space (CS)**

Includes squares and streets, predominantly of hard landscaping that provide a focus for pedestrian activity and civic or cultural events, and can make connections for people and for wildlife.

■ **Play Space for Children and Young People (CYP)**

This includes equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and multi use games areas (MUGA) for children and young people. Where these are within larger parks and gardens or areas of amenity space they will be recorded as a subtype to the predominant type.

■ **Outdoor Sports Facilities (OSF)**

These are large and generally flat areas of grassland or specially designed surfaces used for designated sports e.g. playing fields, tennis courts and bowling greens – areas which can generally be booked and whose primary purpose is for playing of sport. Where these are within parks or large recreation grounds they will be recorded as a subtype to the predominant type.

■ **School Grounds/Playing Fields (EDUC)**

These are large areas of open space associated with primary and secondary schools and are generally flat areas of grassland with a combination of playing fields, play grounds, play facilities or other areas of sport such as tennis, cricket or football. Most are inaccessible to the public but several have

multi-use purposes and are used by the public after school hours and at weekends.

The aim and purpose of the Green Spaces Strategy 2013-23

The aims and objectives are;

- To provide and enhance a strategic network of accessible, high quality green space throughout Watford;
- To provide guidance for the effective planning and protection of open space, sport and

recreational facilities which meet local needs by;

- providing appropriate green space planning policies and standards which provide clarity and reasonable certainty for developers and landowners, which will be taken forward as part of the Core Strategy;
- promoting good green space design and management principles in all new and existing developments.
- To strengthen local community involvement and interest in Watford's green spaces by:
 - encouraging community participation in the design, management and care of their local green spaces;
 - promoting the value of green space as a major contributor to health and social well being, via its use for recreational, educational and sporting activities;
 - ensuring green spaces are locally valued and well used community assets.
- To improve green spaces by:
 - ensuring green spaces are high quality and locally accessible, clean, attractive, well maintained, fit for purpose and safe;
 - improving the existing green spaces contribution to the landscape, biodiversity and cultural value of Watford;
 - providing a sustainable approach to green spaces management and maintenance.

The benefits of green spaces to the community

Green spaces are widely accepted as offering lasting social, economic, cultural, educational, environmental and health benefits and this was endorsed by detailed research carried out by CABE Space. This is summarised below.

1. Social Benefits and Opportunities

Perhaps the most obvious benefits and opportunities that green spaces provide for urban living are social – they create opportunities for people to do things, take part in events and activities or just to be.

- **Children's Play** – children's play is one of the main reasons for visiting open spaces. The importance of play for a child's development is supported by a wide range of research and is now increasingly accepted by professionals as well as ordinary people. Despite the importance of play for a child's development, there are some issues in the urban context that restrict the opportunities for play in the external environment for many children including parental anxiety about children's safety to poor provision of play facilities;
- **Passive Recreation** – walking the dog, watching your children play, wildlife, people, looking at views, reading or resting or just meeting people. Research has shown the importance of passive recreation is far more important to individuals lives than active recreation and most parks and open space users will use an open space for passive use rather than sport or events;
- **Active Recreation** – organised sport, children's play, music, events. Despite being the minority user of parks and open spaces, nationally it is estimated that up to 16% of park users will visit for active recreation alone and account for 7.5 million visitors each year;
- **Community Focus** – festivals, meeting people formally or informally. Research in recent years

has confirmed the importance of parks and open spaces as a focus for the community, or as places for people to meet each other, both formally and informally. This may be through organised events which may increase the sense of community. However, it is not only large and formally organised events that are important to the community. Studies have shown that about one third of people entering parks do so on their own, one third with a friend and one third with a large group;

- **Cultural Focus** – different ethnic backgrounds have different requirements from open spaces. There may be approaches related to design and management of parks and open spaces that could be investigated that would encourage wider use of these areas by these groups;
- **Open Spaces as Educational Resources** – The benefits to children have included sensory perception, children's behaviour, outdoor learning opportunities, different patterns of play.

2. Health Benefits and Opportunities

Research shows that contact with the natural world can benefit mental and physical health. Access to a quality green environment not only benefits health in preventative terms, but speeds recovery and plays a vital part in our mental well being.

Physical inactivity has been estimated to cost the NHS about 2-3% of its total budget, according to Dr. William Bird medical advisor to the British Heart Foundation.

Keeping active greatly reduces the risk of dying from coronary heart disease, and of developing diabetes, hypertension, obesity and certain cancers and helps maintain health and independence in older adults.

3. Environmental Benefits and Opportunities

Our green spaces and street trees can ameliorate urban environments, making it feel more liveable by screening eyesores, reducing noise and absorbing harmful pollutants. They support diverse wildlife habitats in our town, connecting people with nature close to home, school or work. The environmental benefits of urban open spaces and adjacent countryside are there for all regardless of social class, creed, ethnic background or gender.

4. Wildlife – Opportunities for Habitats and Human Experience

Watford is a busy and active town and as a result there are significant pressures on wildlife and therefore habitats for wildlife are much more significant. Watford has a range of habitats including two river corridors, a number of Local Nature Reserves as well as Whippendell Wood which is our only Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Within these are many habitats and designated wildlife spaces across the town that are managed by the Council and its partners, including Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT), Trust for Conservation Volunteers (TCV) and a number of Friends Groups such as the Friends of Cassiobury Park and Friends of Harebreaks Woods who continue to improve our sites for wildlife as well as accessibility, management and visitor potential.

5. Economic Value of Green Spaces

There has been significant research over recent years between the link of having high quality green spaces and benefits to economic vitality particularly by CABI Space and GreenSpace. It is recognised that a clean attractive green environment not only gives social, recreational and health benefits to our citizens but is a vital part of attracting investments.

“Environmental enhancement not only makes places more attractive and pleasant but green space initiatives can result in community strengthening and local economic stimulation as well as improvement to local environmental quality

How the 2013 – 2023 Green Spaces Strategy promotes equality

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

The 2013-2023 Green Spaces Strategy now provides an opportunity to promote equality through ensuring that everyone within the Watford community is able to access and enjoy the benefits of green spaces. The assessment of this has involved understanding the Watford context and considering this against any feedback from consultation and engagement that is available so that there is a clear alignment between the new strategy and the needs, aspirations and expectations of Watford residents.

In addition, it considers how the strategy might foster good relations within the Watford community. As a valuable community asset, green spaces play a significant role in bringing a community together and this focus is reflected within the new strategy.

Information and evidence

The Watford population

We know from the Census 2011 that:

Population	The size of Watford's population at the time of the census was 90,300 . This is around a 13% increase in population since the last census in 2001 when the population was 79,726. The current mid-year estimate (2012) puts the population at 91,732 .
Population density	The population density for Watford is 4,215 people per square kilometre (based on 2011 Census). This makes it the most densely populated district in England and Wales. However, in comparison with some metropolitan boroughs, particularly those in and around the outskirts of London, the density is relatively low. The council recognises that, as a densely populated area, open spaces are of great value to local people.

<p>Age bands</p>	<p>Watford continues to be a relatively young population - particularly in comparison to the rest of Hertfordshire.</p> <p>The largest populations by age band in Watford are (from the 2011 Census):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25-29 (8,000) • 30-34 (8,100) • the numbers in each successive age-band fall progressively until there are estimated to be 1,600 who are 85+. <p>The median age in Watford is 35 - no change since 2001. This is the lowest median age in Hertfordshire and is the fifth lowest median age in the Eastern region (47 local authority areas in total). The median age for the UK is 39.</p> <p>Watford has the fourth highest percentage population of 0-4 year olds in the Eastern region and the sixth highest 0-14 year olds. In comparison, Watford has the third lowest percentage population of 65+ in the region.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="403 685 1110 1211"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Number</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total population</td> <td>90,301</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>0-4 years old</td> <td>6,730</td> <td>7.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5-9 years old</td> <td>5,436</td> <td>6.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10-14 years old</td> <td>5,298</td> <td>5.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15-19 years old</td> <td>5,302</td> <td>5.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20-24 years old</td> <td>5,711</td> <td>6.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25-29 years old</td> <td>8,053</td> <td>8.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30-44 years old</td> <td>22,469</td> <td>24.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>45-59 years old</td> <td>16,155</td> <td>17.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>60-64 years old</td> <td>3,996</td> <td>4.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65-74 years old</td> <td>5,743</td> <td>6.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>75-84 years old</td> <td>3,829</td> <td>4.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>85-89 years old</td> <td>1,013</td> <td>1.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>90+ years old</td> <td>566</td> <td>0.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Number	Percentage	Total population	90,301		0-4 years old	6,730	7.5%	5-9 years old	5,436	6.0%	10-14 years old	5,298	5.9%	15-19 years old	5,302	5.9%	20-24 years old	5,711	6.3%	25-29 years old	8,053	8.9%	30-44 years old	22,469	24.9%	45-59 years old	16,155	17.9%	60-64 years old	3,996	4.4%	65-74 years old	5,743	6.4%	75-84 years old	3,829	4.2%	85-89 years old	1,013	1.1%	90+ years old	566	0.6%
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<p>Disability</p>	<p>Watford's population enjoys better health than the Eastern Region and England overall with nearly 85% of the population stating that they have 'good health' and just under 14% recording a disability -(from the 2011 Census)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="403 1509 1289 1821"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Number</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>All people</td> <td>90,301</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Good health</td> <td>76,653</td> <td>84.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fairly good/fair health</td> <td>9,911</td> <td>11.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not good/bad/very bad health</td> <td>3,737</td> <td>4.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>People with a long-term limiting illness or disability</td> <td>12,480 (not part of total)</td> <td>13.7%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Number	Percentage	All people	90,301		Good health	76,653	84.9%	Fairly good/fair health	9,911	11.0%	Not good/bad/very bad health	3,737	4.1%	People with a long-term limiting illness or disability	12,480 (not part of total)	13.7%																											
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Race

The White British population has decreased from 2001 to 2011 and is now 62% of the Watford population (2011 Census).

All ethnic categories except for White British and White Irish have increased over the time period, with notable percentage increase in White Other, Indian, Pakistani and Black African.

White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	61.9% (55,875)
White Irish	2.3% (2,063)
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.1% (61)
White: Other White	7.7% (6,947)
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black Caribbean	1.1% (990)
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black African	0.5% (412)
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Asian	1.0% (939)
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: Other Mixed	0.8% (763)
Asian/Asian British: Indian	5.5% (4,923)
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	6.7% (6,082)
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.4% (362)
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	0.9% (822)
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	4.4% (3,981)
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	3.5% (3,142)
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	1.7% (1,558)
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black	0.6% (529)
Other ethnic group: Arab	0.3% (294)
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	0.6% (558)

Sex	(2011 Census).			
	Males	44,828	49.6%	
	Females	45,473	50.4%	
Religion or belief	(2011 Census).			
		Number	Percentage	
	Total people	90,301		
	Christian	48,891	54.1%	
	Buddhist	659	0.7%	
	Hindu	4,348	4.8%	
	Jewish	1,023	1.1%	
	Muslim	8,905	9.9%	
	Sikh	566	0.6%	
	Other religion	489	0.5%	
	No religion	19,330	21.4%	
Religion not stated	6,090	6.7%		
Marriage or civil partnership	All Usual Residents Aged 16 and Over		Count	71693
	Single (Never Married or Never Registered a Same-Sex Civil Partnership)		Count	26911
			Percentage	37.5
	Married		Count	32982
			Percentage	46
	In a Registered Same-Sex Civil Partnership		Count	128
			Percentage	0.2
	Separated (but Still Legally Married or Still Legally in a Same-Sex Civil Partnership)		Count	1962
			Percentage	2.7
	Divorced or Formerly in a Same-Sex Civil Partnership which is Now Legally Dissolved		Count	5680
			Percentage	7.9
	Widowed or Surviving Partner from a Same-Sex Civil Partnership		Count	4030
			Percentage	5.6

<p>Households</p>	<p>The average household size in Watford is 2.4. This is average for the region.</p> <p>Number of households The ONS data, based on the census, says that there were 36,681 households in Watford at the time of the Census; this does not match the figure from council tax, which was 36,916 as of March 31 2011 (and is 37,169 as of 23.07.12). This is likely to be down to empty properties which are still eligible for council tax but would not have returned a census form.</p> <p>Watford had the fourth highest percentage change in households - +14.6% - in the Eastern region from 2001 to 2011.</p> <p>Household Composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most frequent household = single people aged under pensionable age. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grown from 17.5% in 2001 to 21.1% in 2011 (overtaken married couples with children) • Lone parents - significant rise in the number and % of lone parents (from 4.9% in 2001 to 7.2% in 2011) • One person pensioner households – declined in both numbers and percentage (from 12.2% 2001 to 10.0% in 2011) <p>Household tenure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privately rented housing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased from 3,170 homes in 2001 to 7,371 homes in 2011, from 9.8% to 20.1% of the housing stock • Homes owned outright: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decreased from 26.1% to 24.4% • Homes being purchased with a mortgage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decreased from 46.1% to 37.2% • Social housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remained static as % of the total housing stock (16.3% in both 2001 and 2011) yet it has increased in number from 5,266 in 2001 to 5,987 in 2011 • Accommodation type <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of purpose built flats in Watford has increased from 6,583 in 2001 to 10,139 in 2011, a percentage increase from 19.9% to 27.0% of the total housing stock. Although there have been modest numerical increases in all types of houses (detached, semi-detached and terraced), they have fallen as a percentage of the total housing stock <p>(2011 Census).</p>
<p>Projections</p>	<p>The ONS interim 2011-based subnational population projections are an indication of the future trends in population over the next 10 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watford's population is projected to be 95,000 by 2021 • Births are projected to be double deaths each year

Watford Green Spaces Consultation

As part of the development of this new Green Spaces Strategy, some early, but limited consultation was carried out.

The initial analysis recognised this as a weakness of the strategy at draft stage as any feedback is a significant element of understanding how the community feels about any given service area and can identify how this might link to protected characteristics. For example, we could not say with any certainty who is, or who isn't, using Watford's green spaces.

However, the draft strategy (and the associated EIA) identified the need for further consultation as work that needed to be done before it could be finally agreed and adopted. Within this, it considered the groups that might require targeted engagement – including younger people, older people, ethnic minority communities, people with disabilities – as well as consultation with the wider community. In terms of the early EIA, this approach recommended ensuring that relevant equalities questions were included within any questionnaires that were developed.

Given that there needed to be further consultation and engagement done on the draft strategy, it was recommended that the initial EIA was reviewed regularly as information was received and further consultation carried out. This is summarised below.

Findings from the consultation

The Green Spaces Strategy included questions relating to some of the protected characteristics. The responses are outlined below.

Compared to the Watford profile overall, there were some gaps in responses to the survey and these will need to be considered as part of the on going consultation programme on the strategy. The recommendation would be to do some targeted consultation / engagement with those groups not strongly represented in the feedback such as the non-White community, younger people (under 24)

Of those responding to the Green Spaces Strategy:

Age bands	Number	Percentage
	153	
0-15 years old	0	0%
15-19 years old	0	0%
20-24 years old	0	0%
25-34 years old	7	4.6%
35-44 years old	33	21.6%
45-54 years old	37	24.2%
55-64 years old	36	23.5%
65-74 years old	32	20.9%
75-79 years old	6	3.9%
80+ years old	2	1.3%

Disability	Number	Percentage
	151	
Yes, limited a lot	6	4.0%
Yes, limited a little	8	11.9%
No	127	89.1%

Race	<p>The White British population has decreased from 2001 to 2011 and is now 62% of the Watford population (2011 Census).</p> <p>All ethnic categories except for White British and White Irish have increased over the time period, with notable percentage increase in White Other, Indian, Pakistani and Black African.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="403 367 1243 1173"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British</td> <td>83% (122)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White: Other White</td> <td>7.5% (11)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed/multiple ethnic group: Other Mixed</td> <td>0.7% (1)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian/Asian British: Indian</td> <td>0.7% (1)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian/Asian British: Pakistani</td> <td>2.0% (3)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian/Asian British: Chinese</td> <td>0.7% (1)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian/Asian British: Other Asian</td> <td>1.3% (2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African</td> <td>1.4% (2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean</td> <td>0.7% (1)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group</td> <td>2.0% (3)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	83% (122)	White: Other White	7.5% (11)	Mixed/multiple ethnic group: Other Mixed	0.7% (1)	Asian/Asian British: Indian	0.7% (1)	Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	2.0% (3)	Asian/Asian British: Chinese	0.7% (1)	Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	1.3% (2)	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	1.4% (2)	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	0.7% (1)	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black	0%	Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	2.0% (3)
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Muslim	4	2.7%																							
Other religion	10	0.5%																							

Summary of Green Spaces Consultation

A questionnaire was devised that sought local people's views on their local green spaces and in Watford as a whole and was . This included specific questions on quality, accessibility and quantity of open space. Questions were also asked in relation to the kind of activities local people engaged in green spaces.

- The most popular activity is walking with 92% of respondents taking part in it regularly, followed by 71% meeting friends, 37% observing wildlife, and 32% cycling.

Quality

- Within their **local areas**, 43% felt allotments were good to very good with only 12% saying they were poor or very poor; 83% said children's play areas were good to very good; 89% said that parks were good to very good and 73% said that recreation grounds were good to very good.
- 79% of respondents replied that woodlands and natural green spaces were good to very good.
- Facilities in open spaces was variable, with sports pitches (56%) good to very good but youth facilities, tennis courts and changing facilities poor to very poor.
- Within **Watford as a whole**, 49% felt allotments were good to very good, with 12% poor to very poor. 79% said children's play areas were good to very good, 94% said that parks were good to very good; 74% felt that recreations grounds were good to very good; 84% also said that woodlands and natural green spaces were good to very good. In relation to facilities, the results reflected the local areas results.

Quantity

In relation to quantity of green spaces in their local areas, most respondents felt that there were enough allotments, play areas, parks and recreation grounds, but many felt that there was not enough woodlands or natural green spaces. Youth facilities were significantly lacking in most respondents views. These responses were echoed within Watford as a whole.

Accessibility

A question was asked in relation as to how long a user would be willing to walk to certain green spaces facilities. Most allotment tenants were prepared to spend up to 10 minutes (44%) and 20 minutes (20%). Children's play areas were primarily within 10 minutes (42%), natural green spaces up to 20 minutes (49%); a local park within 10 minutes (55%); Recreation ground, between 10 and 20 minutes (70%).

Comments

Many comments were made in relation to green spaces ranging from the love of Cassiobury Park to the perceived development threats on open spaces and the high quality of children's play areas.

Key Issues arising from the consultation

- Quality of green spaces is high especially parks and children's play areas;
- Quality of changing facilities, some sports and youth facilities is variable;
- Quantity of most green spaces is about right although youth facilities is an issue along with natural green spaces.

Most users were prepared to walk between 10 and 20 minutes to a local green space depending on the typology.

The response profile is attached as an appendix to this EIA.

Impacts of the Green Spaces Strategy

Many impacts of the Green Spaces Strategy have been outlined as above, this has been reviewed in light of the feedback received from further consultation and engagement on the previous draft strategy:

1. Negative impacts of the Strategy

Without good contextual information from the community on their views of Watford's green spaces there was the potential for the strategy to miss both issues (such as barriers to accessing open spaces and associated benefits) and opportunities to promote equality and foster good relations.

The consultation conducted during the summer 2013, has helped build better understanding of the needs and aspirations of the Watford community in terms of green spaces but it has also identified some gaps that will need to be addressed over the lifetime of the strategy.

The final strategy, therefore, acknowledges the need for ongoing consultation and the recommendation is endorsed by this updated EIA. In particular, the recommendation would be to ensure those groups under-represented in the consultation feedback are encouraged to respond either through targeted consultation or through more qualitative methods.

2. Positive impacts of the strategy

The 2013-2023 Green Spaces Strategy recognises the benefits of green spaces as outlined in this EIA. These benefits need to be accessible to the whole community. This can best be achieved through understanding the Watford context and aligning this with the resulting feedback and information received from consultation and engagement.

The final strategy has a good analysis of the Watford context and so demonstrates that its approach, final recommendations and agreed action plans have been developed to meet the needs of the borough and its aspirations and expectations in terms of the provision of green, open space. It has considered this analysis against other areas, good practice and current national frameworks.

This analysis is aligned with feedback and information received from the further consultation and engagement carried out on the draft strategy during the summer of 2013 and which ultimately fed into the final strategy. Specific issues are identified for certain groups within the community and that, overall, the potential for fostering good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not through green spaces is demonstrated.

The Green Spaces Strategy Action Plan has identified 'Use' as a significant theme. It has linked this to the delivery of Watford BC's corporate priority of:

Promoting an active, cohesive & well informed town

Actions have been identified which promote the theme of 'Use' and these consider the positive impacts the Strategy will have for the Watford and wider community.

3. Overall conclusion

The development of this EIA is timely as it supports the Green Spaces Strategy's recommendation for ongoing consultation and engagement with green spaces users throughout the lifespan of the strategy. It also acknowledges that actions have been identified within the Strategy that should have

positive impacts for the wider community but, again, these need to be tested through ongoing engagement throughout the lifespan of the strategy.

4. Recommendation

1. The main recommendation arising from this updated EIA is for on-going consultation and engagement to be conducted on the delivery of the Strategy action plans, in particular in relation to the identified groups with the Strategy.

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The table summarises potential negative impacts and ways in which they can be removed or mitigated:

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to mitigate the negative impact
<p>Although good general feedback has been received from the Watford community as to their needs, aspirations and expectations for green spaces in the borough and from some protected characteristics there needs to be further work through the lifespan of the strategy. Where there is less feedback from certain groups, this limits understanding of any issues or specific opportunities.</p>	<p>All but particularly identified are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-White population • Younger people 	<p>.Programme of consultation and engagement throughout the strategy.</p>

The table summarises potential positive impacts and ways in which they can be ensured

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
<p>Action Plan – theme 2 ‘Use’ and associated outcomes. This should support fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don’t and improve access amongst all community groups</p>	<p>All – a number specifically mention impacts on the younger age group</p>	<p>Theme 2 ‘Use’ – key actions identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council and other green space stakeholders will develop a ‘<i>Community Involvement Action Plan</i>’ to engage and involve local communities through development of Friend’s Groups in particular. • The Council will develop, in partnership a system to develop volunteering opportunities on council managed green space, particularly in Cassiobury Park and natural green space corridors. • The Council will develop, in partnership a system to develop volunteering opportunities on council

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
		<p>managed green space, particularly in Cassiobury Park and natural green space corridors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will work with health partners to investigate, assess and promote new ways of using green spaces to improve health and wellbeing, particularly Cassiobury Park. This will include investigating any possible funding opportunities. • The Council will develop publicity material to publicise both strategic green space sites to all sectors of the community who need improved access to information on their local green spaces. • The Council will consult and involve local communities on green space issues and developments to include the following in line with the Council’s Strategy for Community Engagement and Consultation. These will include : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Children; ○ Older People; ○ People with Disabilities; ○ Carers; ○ People with Learning Difficulties; ○ Black and Minority Ethnic groups; and ○ Other excluded groups. • The Council will make “access for all” an integral part of all policy, strategy and activity in the

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
		<p>planning development and management of Watford's green spaces in line with the '<i>BT Countryside for All</i>' standards and their accompanying approach as an integral part of any physical access policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will continue its promotion of parks and open spaces through signage improvement programme, noticeboards, leaflets, way-marked walks and interpretation boards. Update existing website for parks and open spaces. • The Council develop fitness trails and outdoor gyms at specific sites throughout Watford. • The Council will consider and explore opportunities for extreme sports facilities in Watford, in particular introduce a BMX facility in an agreed location.

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Monitoring the review

This analysis will be reviewed as part of the development of the Green Spaces Strategy 2013-23.

This EIA has been approved by:

Lesley Palumbo.....,..... Date

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