

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING/EVIDENCE TEMPLATE

Business area	Net Zero
Team/Unit	Biodiversity
Date	07/10/25

<b>Name of Policy/Guidance/Operational activity</b>	
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Habitat Banks - Pilot Scheme	
<b>What are the aims, objectives &amp; projected outcomes?</b>	
<p>This assessment reviews the impact of our proposal to pilot and roll out the development of Habitat Bank sites in Brighton and Hove.</p> <p>Habitat banks use land to restore habitats which are required for off-site development units, so that the developer can meet planning obligations by achieving the required 10% biodiversity gains. Our objective is to pilot the creation and maintenance of a Habitat Banks at St Micheal's Field, Patcham, with a view to register further sites in the future.</p> <p>The aim of the policy is to deliver reliable and long-term financing for biodiversity improvements in the city, in line with the Environment Act (2021). The policy will also support the delivery of City Plan Part 1 and 2 policies, our draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy, our City Downland Estate Plan and Open Spaces Strategy, and Public Rights of Way Plan.</p> <p>The outcomes of this policy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved Biodiversity within the City</li> <li>- Improved access to nature through improved biodiversity and interpretation</li> <li>- Delivery of our enhanced Biodiversity Duty</li> <li>- Long term financing for improving and maintaining nature</li> </ul>	
This is a <b>new</b> policy/guidance/operational activity.	<b>Y/N</b>
This is a <b>change</b> to an existing policy/guidance/operational activity (Check original policy was equality impact assessed. If so, review and update action plan).	<b>Y/N</b>
This is an <b>existing</b> policy/guidance/operational activity.	<b>Y/N</b>
Will the policy/guidance have an impact on national or local people/staff?	<b>Y/N</b>
Are particular communities or groups likely to have different needs, experiences and/or attitudes in relation to the policy/guidance?	<b>Y/N</b>
Are there any aspects of the policy/guidance that could contribute to equality or inequality?	<b>Y/N</b>
Could the aims of the policy/guidance be in conflict with equal opportunity, elimination of discrimination or fostering good relations?	<b>Y/N</b>

If your answer to any of these questions is **YES**, go on to the full **EIA**. **Or** Where you are satisfied that the requirement to have due regard has already been met through the policy development process, give details of the findings/outcomes and provide the evidence below.

If you have answered **NO** to all of these questions, then please provide appropriate evidence and sign-off.

**This policy/guidance was screened for impact on equality. The following evidence has been considered.**

The equality impacts of the delivery of this policy has been considered through the Public Rights of Way Plan (PRoW 2018), City Downland Estate Plan (CDEP 2021) and Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS due 2026). Together these strategies have reviewed who uses this land, who currently has access, who faces barriers to access, and who would benefit most from improved access to nature. Equalities considerations significantly shaped these policies, and all have defined outcomes to improve accessibility, including PRoW's "Aim: improving accessibility for diverse users in Brighton & Hove", CDEP's "Amenity for All", and LNRS's core "Priority: Create new opportunities for access to nature in urban, periurban and rural areas to support health and wellbeing."

Currently, St Michael's Field pilot site is designated Public Access, accessible by the general public. Users of Public Access spaces are 95% walkers (often dog walkers), 19% cyclists and 6% horse riders. 4% of PRoW survey responders said they don't access for health reasons and 2.5% because of poor surfacing.

Our proposal may affect some visitors' experience, for example dogs will be required to be on the lead at certain times. However this is already provided for in the Countryside Code and not a change of policy. Consideration of access will guide our procurement and management of any gates to ensure they are high-quality and best practice in terms of accessibility, and will be managed with adequate communication and engagement (as per CDEP "Amenity for All" objectives).

Our proposal may also affect the experience of residents local to the sites, including the community of St Michael's Way Traveller site. We have engaged with these residents through our Communities Team to ensure there will not be any unexpected adverse impacts. This is in line with our Traveller Commissioning Strategy (2015) objectives on improving community cohesion.

Our proposal will improve accessibility by improving the quality of the environment of these spaces, and offer additional interpretation - and this will support delivery of the "Amenity for all" objectives of the CDEP, and the "Nature, health and wellbeing" objectives of the LNRS. We know from our CDEP and LNRS consultations that access to nature provides health and wellbeing benefits to all visitors, but particularly to those who face health and poverty-related barriers.

**I have read the preliminary screening and I am satisfied that given the available evidence, a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.**

<b>SCS or senior manager signoff</b>	Alice Berry. Head of Net zero 
<b>Date</b>	12/12/25
<b>Review Date (where applicable)</b>	NA



