



Rowlands Castle Neighbourhood Plan

Equalities Impact Assessment

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Equality Act (2010) places a duty on all public authorities in the exercise of their functions to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between persons who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not.
- 1.2 Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 1.3 This report assesses the Submission Rowlands Castle Neighbourhood Plan (NP) to ensure that Rowlands Castle Parish Council (as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the Rowlands Castle NP) is satisfying its statutory duties in this regard.
- 1.4 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a systematic analysis of a policy or policies, in order to explore the potential for an adverse impact on a particular group or community. It is a method of assessing and recording the likely differential and/or adverse impact of a policy on people from different groups. If a policy results in unfairness or discrimination then changes to eliminate or lessen the impact should be considered.
- 1.5 The purpose of the analysis is to increase participation and inclusion, to change the culture of public decision-making and to place a more proactive approach to the promotion of equality and fairness at the heart of public policy. The processes involved in conducting the analysis should not be looked on as an end in themselves. Instead, it should be borne in mind that the aim is the promotion of fairness and equality of opportunity and thus it is the outcomes that are of primary concern. In undertaking the EIA, it is important to keep in mind why the Rowlands Castle NP is needed, what the intended outcomes are, and how it will be ensured that the policies will work as intended.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 An assessment has been made on whether the Rowlands Castle NP has a positive, negative or neutral impact on each of the protected characteristics (in so far as data is available). The vision and objectives of the NP have been assessed, and individual policies are highlighted where they are considered likely to have a negative impact.

2.2 No data are available for the following protected characteristics: gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation.

3. Baseline data

3.1 Data for the Parish of Rowlands Castle are available from the 2011 Census for the following protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, marriage and civil partnership, race and religious belief. Data are not yet available from the 2021 Census at parish level.

3.2 No data are available for the following protected characteristics: gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation.

		Rowlands Castle NP area	East Hampshire DC	England
Population		2,747	115,608	53,012,456
Age profile	Aged 17 or less	16.4%	21.5%	21.4%
	Aged 18-64	56.5%	59.2%	62.3%
	Aged 65 and over	27.1%	19.3%	16.3%
	Mean age	47.6	42.0	39.3
	Median age	51.0	44.0	39.0
Sex	Males	48.3%	48.6%	49.2%
	Females	51.7%	51.4%	50.8%
Main language in households	English	98.2%	96.6%	90.9%
Country of birth	United Kingdom	93.5%	91.7%	86.2%
	EU	2.0%	3.3%	4.4%
	Other countries	4.5%	5.1%	9.4%
Ethnicity	White	97.7%	96.6%	85.4%
	Other	2.3	3.4%	14.6%
Religion	Christian	63.5%	64.7%	59.4%
	Other religions	1.2%	1.5%	8.6%
	No religion	26.3%	26.3%	24.7%
	Not stated	9.0%	7.5%	7.3%
Marriage and Civil Partnerships	Married	60.1%	55.9%	46.6%
	Single	20.9%	25.5%	34.6%
	Same sex civil partnership	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%
	Separated or divorced	10.3%	11.1%	11.7%
	Widowed	8.5%	7.4%	6.9%

Health	Very good or good health	83.3%	85.2%	81.4%
	Bad or very bad health	5%	3.7%	5.4%
	Day to day activities not limited	83.3%	85.1%	82.4%
	Day to day activities limited a little	9.2%	8.5%	9.3%
	Day to day activities limited a lot	7.5%	6.4%	8.3%

4. **Processes of Community Consultation**

- 4.1 All communications were in English and it was not considered necessary to translate them into any other language. English is the main language in virtually all the households in the Parish.
- 4.2. Throughout the plan preparation process, the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group has sought to ensure that local residents, their representatives, local businesses, interest groups and wider interested parties, including statutory and regulatory bodies, have been actively consulted and their views sought.
- 4.3 Agendas, key reports and updates have been provided regularly online on the Rowlands Castle Parish Council website.
- 4.4. The overarching principles of the stakeholder engagement process has been to engage in a manner that is extensive, effective, inclusive, fair, transparent and proportionate.
- 4.5. Widespread consultation was carried out during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Steering Group has made every effort, using a variety of methods, to reach all members of and organisations in the local community.
- 4.6. Many community consultation events, including interviews, questionnaires and public meetings, were carried out between 2016 and 2023, while the development of the Rowlands Castle Neighbourhood Plan was taking place. They are summarised below:
- Regular consultations with and reports to Rowlands Castle Parish Council – since December 2016
 - Articles in Rowlands Castle “Village and Valley” Magazine, published quarterly by the Rowlands Castle Association - 18 in total from Winter 2016 to present.
 - Establishment of electronic communication systems, including Facebook entries, web pages and on-line reports of meetings on the Parish Council

website – from 2017 onwards. Regular use of the village “electronic “Grapevine” to communicate with residents – since 2017.

- Regular consultations with officers of East Hampshire District Council and the South Downs National Park Association - since January 2018
- Rowlands Castle Village Fair displays and consultation - 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2022.
- Consultation with local businesses and organisations, 26 in total, - January 2017 to February 2022
- Rowlands Castle Housing needs Survey - 2018
- Presentations at Rowlands Castle Annual Parish Meetings in April 2019 and April 2022
- Consultations with landowners of land in the proposed “Gap”, Protected Open Spaces and Local Green Spaces - January to July 2022
- Consultation with owners of Non-Designated Heritage Assets - February 2022
- On-line Parish-wide Neighbourhood Plan survey - June to July 2021
- Formal consultation with Statutory Consultees - June to July 2022
- Public exhibition and Consultation at Rowlands Castle Parish Hall - July 2022
- Rowlands Castle Neighbourhood Plan On-line Survey - June 2021 to July 2021

4.7 The NPSG has been mindful throughout the processes of consultation that not all residents of the Parish will have had access to effective systems of electronic communication. This was thought to have been a particular issue in Rowlands Castle Parish given the relatively older profile of the residents. Accordingly, the following approaches have been used to ensure that access to the processes of consultation have not been unduly restricted by this issue:

- Widespread availability of NP documentation in printed formats at the Parish Office, at the Bumblebee Café in the Village centre, at a Public House in Finchdean and at exhibitions, consultation events and Village Fairs.
- All on-line surveys and consultations have been made available in paper form and arrangements were made for them to be submitted handwritten or typed.
- All interviews with business and community organisations were conducted in face-to-face meetings or in a very few cases by meetings online.

5. Assessment of Impact on Groups with Protected Characteristics

5.1 The **Vision** of Rowlands Castle NP is stated as follows:

“To conserve and enhance the Parish of Rowlands Castle as an attractive community, whilst maintaining its separate identity, character and distinctiveness.”

This Vision focusses on the distinct nature of Rowlands Castle in comparison with the extensively developed and coalesced communities in the neighbouring areas of Havant, and the conurbation of Waterlooville, Purbrook, Cowplain and Horndean. The term character refers to the characteristic of Rowlands Castle as a separate, distinct village community, now unique in the local area outside of the South Downs National Park. As such, the Vision of the Rowlands Castle NP applies equally to all those with protected characteristics.

5.2 Rowlands Castle NP contains a series of **Strategic Objectives**, these set out how the Parish proposes to deliver its vision for Rowlands Castle up to 2031. Delivery of the objectives will be through both planning policies and community action. The objectives have been reviewed to assess whether they are likely to have an impact on groups within the Parish with protected characteristics:

- To retain the character of the Parish of Rowlands Castle.
- To maintain and, where possible, improve the quality of the built environment through high quality design and layout of development together with conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.
- To enhance the green and open character of the Parish and its village, providing green areas, habitats and open space, particularly in association with development.
- To promote a Parish that retains a sense of distinct settlements having their own character and social identity and the gaps between them, through the location of development and community provision and improved walking and cycling access.
- To enhance community life, by enabling provision of housing for local needs, promoting local employment and supporting retail, community and sports provision, working with EHDC on housing allocations to meet local needs.
- To locate development within good walking and cycling access to retail, community and sports provision and to the countryside, minimising car usage and the need for additional local parking and demands on other infrastructure.
- To minimise the impact of development on landscape and wildlife and to promote their protection.

As noted in relation to the Vision for the Rowlands Castle NP, these Objectives focus on the environment of Rowlands Castle and its location in a rural environment. The Objectives apply equally to all those with protected characteristics.

5.3 The Rowlands Castle NP contains a number of Policies through which it is expected that the Strategic Objectives will be met and the Vision achieved. Each policy is assessed for its impact on those with protected characteristics.

5.4 Overall it is expected to have a positive likely impact on groups with protected characteristics. It recognises and supports access for the whole community to local social, cultural, sporting and environmental amenities.

Policy	Assessment of impact of policy on those with protected characteristics
<p>Policy 1 – Gaps between Settlements Policy objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a clear break between the settlements of Rowlands Castle and Havant.... • To preserve the individual identity of Rowlands Castle and the integrity of the predominantly open and undeveloped land between it and Havant by preventing coalescence. • Protect the important sequential views which unfold when travelling along the roads and railway between Havant and Rowlands Castle. • Protect important landscape and ecological features of the land between Rowlands Castle and Havant. 	<p>Applies equally to all those with protected characteristics.</p>
<p>Policy 2 – Landscape Character and Views To conserve and enhance the parish landscape together with the setting of each of the main residential centres of Rowlands Castle, Finchdean and Idsworth House/Park within it. • To maintain the distinctive landscape vistas and the visual connectivity between the surrounding countryside and the built environment.</p>	<p>Applies equally to all those with protected characteristics.</p>
<p>Policy 3 – Local Green Spaces and Protected Open Spaces Objectives: The character of Rowlands Castle Parish owes much to its close relationship with the surrounding countryside and to green areas within the village.... It is a key objective of the plan to protect and enhance the green and open character of the Parish. The green spaces and open spaces contribute to the quality of the built environment, enhancing community life and protecting landscape and wildlife.</p>	<p>Applies equally to all those with protected characteristics. Sufficient and high-quality provision of open space is vital to all ages and is important to the Health and Wellbeing of the community. This Policy applies equally to all members of the community.</p>

<p>Policy 4 – Historic Environment: Non-Designated Heritage Assets</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To conserve and enhance the heritage assets, both designated and non-designated, together with the historic significance of their setting within the Plan area. •To supplement the historic environment record for Rowlands Castle Parish by identifying the Non-Designated Heritage Assets that are of local historic importance and which merit consideration in planning decision 	<p>Applies equally to all those with protected characteristics.</p>
<p>Policy 5 – Design and Local Character</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the design of new development respects the local character and makes a positive contribution to the overall parish character and appearance. • Ensure that development contributes to local distinctiveness and sense of place while preserving the distinct rural setting and separation from adjoining communities. • Ensure that the three main residential centres - Rowlands Castle village, Finchdean and Idsworth House/Park - retain their distinct settlement characteristics. 	<p>Applies without detriment to all protected characteristics, with particular positive aspects for the protected Age and Disabled Groups. Design standards require accessible layouts of property and developments ensure an acceptable level of amenity in terms of garden space and accessible and usable open space. This is particularly relevant to the young, the physically disabled and the elderly. Development layout integrates and strengthens neighbourhoods assisting with cohesion and social interaction; it ensures that all protected characteristics have an equal opportunity to integrate into the community.</p>
<p>Policy 6 – Over 55s’ Housing</p> <p>To facilitate the provision of accommodation suiting the needs of over 55s.</p>	<p>This policy applies without detriment to all those with protected characteristics and in particular, the policy has a positive impact on the protected characteristic of age in that it seeks to enhance the provision of suitable accommodation for this group. This is a group identified</p>

	through the Housing Survey as having a recognised need for the provision of specialised housing in later life. The issue is particularly relevant in Rowlands Castle because of the age profile of the residents.
<p>Policy 7 – Rowlands Castle Village Centre – Non-Residential Development</p> <p>Policy Objective: To ensure that the village centre continues to contribute to the overall character of the village while retaining its local provision of businesses and services.</p>	This policy applies equally to all protected characteristics. It will be of benefit to all groups in that it seeks to ensure that a wide range of services continues to be available in the village centre.
<p>Policy 8 – Parking</p> <p>Policy Objective: Maintaining the adequate provision of parking in residential developments together with maintaining, protecting, and where possible improving, the provision of public parking serving the village core and railway station is an important need.</p>	This policy provides particular benefits for the Age and Disability protected groups in that it may improve, or at the least sustain access to the core services in the centre of the village of Rowlands Castle. The policy applies equally to all those with protected characteristics.
<p>Policy 9 – Flood Risk and Groundwater Management</p> <p>Policy Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that new development is protected from flood risk. • To ensure that new development does not add to, or worsen, existing flooding risk. • To ensure that new development does not have an adverse risk on groundwater sources. 	Applies equally to all those with protected characteristics.
<p>Policy 10 – Community and Sports Facilities</p> <p>Policy Objective: To support the important designated community and recreation and sporting facilities to ensure their long-term viability and availability.</p>	Applies equally to all those with protected characteristics.
<p>Policy 11 – Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding Access</p> <p>To improve the provision of safe walking, cycling and horse-riding access throughout the parish, in particular between residential developments and local parish facilities and services and to improve access to surrounding countryside.</p>	Applies equally to all those with protected characteristics.

6. **Conclusion**

- 6.1 All of the Rowlands Castle NP objectives are considered to have a positive or neutral impact on those with protected characteristics. There are no individual policies that are considered likely to have a negative impact. The Rowlands Castle NP provides a suite of objectives and policies to respond to the vision for the benefit of the local community as a whole including those with protected characteristics.
- 6.2 In preparing the Rowlands Castle NP, Rowlands Castle Parish Council and the NP Working Group have sought to engage widely with all of the local community.
- 6.3 In conclusion, the assessment finds the Rowlands Castle NP to be appropriate and that the duty of care prescribed by the Equalities Act (2010) is met.