

APPENDIX 2

Equality Impact and Needs Analysis for Cabinet Report: “First Consideration of the Strengthened Biodiversity Duty, arising from the Environment Act 2021”

From Joint Equality and Healthy Analysis template

Section 1: Equality analysis details

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|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------------|--|
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| Department | Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth | Division | Parks and Natural Environment | | |
| Period analysis undertaken | August 2024 | | | | |
| Date of review (if applicable) | N/A | | | | |
| Sign-off | | Position | | Date | |

Section 2: Brief description of policy/decision/business plan

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| 1.1 Brief description of policy/decision/business plan |
| <p>This assessment covers the Council’s requirement to meet the strengthened Biodiversity Duty introduced by the Environment Act 2021, including the statutory First Consideration and reporting requirements of the Duty.</p> <p>Meeting the Biodiversity Duty is a corporate responsibility that cuts across all council departments, actions, and decision making, covering too large a range of activities to assess individually. Thus, this assessment provides an opportunity to evaluate the impact of meeting the Biodiversity Duty generally - by protecting and enhancing biodiversity - on any group or protected characteristic as outlined in the Equalities Act 2010 or the Public Sector Equality duty (PSED), in alignment with a just transition for our residents in tackling the climate emergency.</p> |

Section 3: Pre-implementation equality analysis

This section considers the potential impacts (positive and negative) on groups with ‘protected characteristics’, the equality information on which this analysis is based and any mitigating actions to be taken.

The first column on the left is for societal and economic issues (discrimination, higher poverty levels) and the second column on the right for health issues, physical and mental. As the two aspects are heavily interrelated it may not be practical to fill out both columns on all protected characteristics. The aim is, however, to ensure that health is given special consideration, as it is the council's declared intention to reduce health inequalities in the borough. The Public Health Team can assist with research and data.

| Age - Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds). | |
|---|---|
| Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan | Potential health impacts (positive and negative) |
| <p>Complying with the Biodiversity Duty will have a positive impact on people of different ages. Actions for the conservation and promotion of biodiversity promote community cohesion by connecting people with nature, providing volunteering opportunities, and fostering positive interactions between people from different age groups.</p> <p>Many activities to conserve and enhance biodiversity provide novel opportunities for participation with physical activity for members of the public who may not be able to participate in other forms of physical exercise due to age. This increases representation in outdoor activities and promotes resident health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Access to nature is well documented as beneficial to both mental and physical health. Biodiversity also benefits the health of communities in its own right through improving air quality, reducing urban temperatures, reducing noise and calming traffic, managing flood risks, and providing amenity value, recreation space and cultural services.</p> <p>Community gardening initiatives, such as through the Allotment Expansion Guarantee, and Great Estates programme, can create highly biodiverse spaces, while increasing access to fresh food, exercise and social interactions, all of which contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents within different age groups, while meeting the requirements of the biodiversity duty.</p> | |
| Mitigating actions to be taken | |
| <p>Southwark continues to develop regular volunteering with community volunteers and promote volunteering in our open spaces. This includes specific opportunities for both schools, and older people. Volunteering supports local economic wellbeing by providing valuable services to local communities, while boosting the skillsets and employability of young volunteers, and the health and wellbeing of volunteers from all age groups.</p> | |

| Disability - A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. | |
|---|---|
| Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan | Potential health impacts (positive and negative) |
| <p>Complying with the Biodiversity Duty is expected to have a positive impact for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Access to nature is well documented as beneficial to both mental and physical health. Biodiversity</p> | |

also benefits the health of communities in its own right through improving air quality, reducing urban temperatures, reducing noise and calming traffic, managing flood risks, and providing amenity value, recreation space and cultural services.

Many activities to conserve and enhance biodiversity provide novel opportunities for participation with physical activity for members of the public who may not be able to participate in other forms of physical exercise due to a disability. This increases representation in outdoor activities and promotes resident health and wellbeing.

For example, community gardening initiatives such as through the Allotment Expansion Guarantee, and Great Estates programme, can create highly biodiverse spaces, increasing access to exercise and social interaction, contributing to health in wellbeing, while meeting the requirements of the biodiversity duty.

Mitigating actions to be taken

Southwark continues to consider to develop volunteering opportunities and promote volunteering in our open spaces which are accessible to people of varying ability. Volunteering supports local economic wellbeing by providing valuable services to local communities, while boosting the skillsets, employability, health and wellbeing of volunteers.

Southwark continues to consider accessibility in the design of biodiverse spaces, to make nature accessible to all in the borough. This includes, but not limited to, wheelchair friendly pathways in nature areas, multimedia interpretation material, and planting sensory gardens to allow residents with sensory or mental disability to experience nature to its fullest extent.

Gender reassignment - The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

| Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan | Potential health impacts (positive and negative) |
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There is limited data available for this characteristic, but no detrimental impacts are expected from meeting the Biodiversity Duty. Access to nature is well documented as beneficial to both mental and physical health.

Mitigating actions to be taken

Southwark continues to support and works with third-sector organisations wherever possible that engage underrepresented groups with biodiversity and the nature sector.

Marriage and civil partnership – In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between same-sex couples. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples and must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. **(Only to be considered in respect to the need to eliminate discrimination.)**

| Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan | Potential health impacts (positive and negative) |
|--|--|
| There is limited data available for this characteristic, but no detrimental impacts are expected from meeting the Biodiversity Duty. | |
| Mitigating actions to be taken | |
| None | |

| Pregnancy and maternity - Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding. | |
|---|--|
| Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan | Potential health impacts (positive and negative) |
| There is limited data available for this characteristic, but no detrimental impacts are expected from meeting the Biodiversity Duty. | |
| <p>Access to nature is well documented as beneficial to both mental and physical health. Biodiversity also benefits the health of communities in its own right through improving air quality, reducing urban temperatures, reducing noise and calming traffic, managing flood risks, and providing amenity value, recreation space and cultural services.</p> <p>Many activities to conserve and enhance biodiversity provide novel opportunities for participation with physical activity for members of the public who may not be able to participate in other forms of physical exercise, such as when pregnant.</p> | |
| Mitigating actions to be taken | |
| None | |

| Race - Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. N.B. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller are recognised racial groups and their needs should be considered alongside all others | |
|--|--|
| Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan | Potential health impacts (positive and negative) |
| <p>Complying with the Biodiversity Duty is expected to have a positive impact on all communities. Actions for the conservation and promotion of biodiversity promote community cohesion by connecting people with nature, providing volunteering opportunities, and fostering positive interactions between people from different communities.</p> | |
| <p>However, Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities experience lower greenspace provision nationally, greater inequality in access to nature, are at greater risk of negative impacts from climate risks.</p> | |

Action to conserve and enhance biodiversity aligns with a just transition for our residents in tackling the climate emergency. Many measures to improve biodiversity, such as urban greening, also protect the Borough against effects of climate change, such as overheating and flooding. The Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy focuses such actions on residents and communities who are most vulnerable to climate risks.

Much of the wildlife assets of Southwark are in parks and public spaces, free to all users, and accessible year round. Actions taken to improve and diversify the habitats of these spaces provides improved access to a wider variety of nature, particularly for residents without a private garden or balcony, which are disproportionately from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities.

Mitigating actions to be taken

Addressing inequality in access to nature is a central element to several of the biodiversity policies and actions in place to meet the Biodiversity Duty. The first theme of the Southwark Nature Action Plan is centred on “Making Nature Accessible for All”, with guidance to promote public events, improve site access, provide interpretation and education, and seek new venues to reach new audiences.

The Council supports and works with third-sector organisations wherever possible that engage underrepresented groups from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities with biodiversity and the nature sector, including Blak Outside and Black Girls Hike.

The Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature map, updated by Greenspace Information for Greater London, is used as a decision-making factor in strategically deciding where to prioritise action for biodiversity. Implementing biodiversity conservation and enhancements in areas of deficiency, which are linked to areas of socio-economic deprivation, but also Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities who experience lower greenspace provision nationally, aims to address some of these inequalities and target communities currently less able to benefit from engaging with nature.

Religion and belief - Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan

Potential health impacts (positive and negative)

Complying with the Biodiversity Duty is expected to have a positive impact on communities of different religions and beliefs. Actions for the conservation and promotion of biodiversity promote community cohesion by connecting people with nature, providing volunteering opportunities, and fostering positive interactions between people from different communities.

Mitigating actions to be taken

Southwark continues to support and works with third-sector organisations wherever possible that engage underrepresented groups with biodiversity and the nature sector.

Sex - A man or a woman.

| Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan | Potential health impacts (positive and negative) |
|--|--|
| There is limited data available for this characteristic, but no detrimental impacts are expected from meeting the Biodiversity Duty. | |
| Mitigating actions to be taken | |
| None | |

| Sexual orientation - Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes | |
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| Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan | Potential health impacts (positive and negative) |
| There is limited data available for this characteristic, but no detrimental impacts are expected from meeting the Biodiversity Duty. Access to nature is well documented as beneficial to both mental and physical health. | |
| Mitigating actions to be taken | |
| Southwark continues to support and works with third-sector organisations wherever possible that engage underrepresented groups with biodiversity and the nature sector. | |

| Socio-economic disadvantage – although the Equality Act 2010 does not include socio-economic status as one of the protected characteristics, Southwark Council recognises that this continues to be a major cause of inequality in the borough. Socio economic status is the measure of an area's, an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, health, living conditions and occupation. | |
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| Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan | Potential health impacts (positive and negative) |
| <p>Complying with the Biodiversity Duty is expected to have a positive impact on all communities. Actions for the conservation and promotion of biodiversity promote community cohesion by connecting people with nature, providing volunteering opportunities, and fostering positive interactions between people from different communities.</p> <p>However, socio-disadvantaged communities experience lower greenspace provision nationally, greater inequality in access to nature, and are at greater risk of negative impacts from climate risks.</p> <p>Action to conserve and enhance biodiversity aligns with a just transition for our residents in tackling the climate emergency. Many measures to improve biodiversity, such as urban greening, also protect the Borough against effects of climate change, such as overheating and flooding. The Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy focuses such actions on residents and communities who are most vulnerable to climate risks.</p> | |

Much of the wildlife assets of Southwark are in parks and public spaces, free to all users, and accessible year round. Actions taken to improve and diversify the habitats of these spaces provides improved access to a wider variety of nature, particularly for residents without a private garden or balcony, disproportionately linked to socio-economic disadvantage.

Mitigating actions to be taken

Addressing inequality in access to nature is a central element to several of the biodiversity policies and actions in place to meet the Biodiversity Duty. The first theme of the Southwark Nature Action Plan is centred on “Making Nature Accessible for All”, with guidance to promote public events, improve site access and disabled access, provide interpretation and education, and seek new venues to reach new audiences.

The Council supports and works with third-sector organisations wherever possible that engage underrepresented or disadvantaged groups with biodiversity and the nature sector, including Global Generation, Walworth Garden, Future Gardeners, and more.

The Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature map, updated by Greenspace Information for Greater London, is used as a decision-making factor in strategically deciding where to prioritise action for biodiversity. Implementing biodiversity conservation and enhancements in areas of deficiency, which are linked to areas of socio-economic deprivation, aims to address some of these inequalities and target communities currently less able to benefit from engaging with nature.