

Improving People's Lives

Equality Impact Assessment / Equality Analysis (Version 4)

Item name	Details
Title of service or policy	B&NES Community Energy Network – Community Renewables
Name of directorate and service	Sustainable Economy – Energy Transformation
Name and role of officers completing the EqIA	Ellena Bryant – Project Manager
Date of assessment	04/07/2025

Equality Impact Assessment (or 'Equality Analysis') is a process of systematically analysing a new or existing policy or service to identify what impact or likely impact it will have on people and different groups within our community. The main aim is to identify any adverse impacts (i.e. discriminatory or negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community, and to identify areas where equality can be better promoted). Equality impact Assessments (EqIAs) can be carried out in relation to services provided to customers and residents as well as employment policies/strategies that relate to staffing matters.

This toolkit has been developed to use as a framework when carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) or Equality Analysis. **Not all sections will be relevant – so mark N/A any that are not applicable**. It is intended that this is used as a working document throughout the process, and a final version will be published on the Council's website following relevant service lead approval.

1.1 Identify the aims of the policy or service and how it is implemented

Key questions	Answers / notes
 1.1 Briefly describe purpose of the service/policy e.g. How the service/policy is delivered and by whom If responsibility for its implementation is shared with other departments or organisations Intended outcomes 	The B&NES Community Energy Network is a partnership project that will be delivered by B&NES Council (Energy Transformation Team), Bath & West Community Energy, Bath University, the Community Wellbeing Hub (including Citizens Advice and Age UK). Commencing in February 2025 the project will run for 3 years and is funded by the National Lotteries Climate Action Fund. There are two parts to the project; one focusing on delivering Home Energy Advice to local residents, both to those living in fuel poverty and to those who may be interested in retrofitting their properties and another developing Community Renewable projects using the Future Energy Landscape process which has been developed by the Centre for Sustainable Energy. This form will focus on the Community Renewables; there is another for Home Energy Advice. An initial press release with further details can be found here . Community Renewables This will be delivered by the Energy Transformation Team within B&NES, BWCE, who are highly experienced in delivering community energy projects and working with community groups, and the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) who have developed the Future Energy Landscapes process. There are two parts of the

process which are take place through a series of activities including workshops within the selected local communities, these are FEL and FEL+. B&NES council and CSE will deliver the initial FEL workshop which will focus on engaging the local community on views of their local area and community renewable opportunities. Then BWCE and CSE (with support from B&NES) will deliver the follow up FEL+ workshop which will focus more on feasibility and taking ideas into reality. The project aims to be part of the Just Transition that is needed to decarbonise in a fair and equitable way across the district.

The intended outcomes are to work with 6 areas/communities across B&NES, and to have 5MW of community owned renewable energy projects in the pipeline by the end of the project in 2028.

Three areas were part of a pilot project in 2022, these are listed below. BWCE and CSE will reengage with these areas.

- Stowey Sutton and East & West Harptree
- 2. Temple Cloud and Hinton Blewett
- 3. Peasedown and Wellow

In addition to the 3 areas above we will be selecting 3 new areas to work with. Based on CSE's priority matrix we have created our own set of criteria for this selection process. This will consider feasibility and capacity for projects within the local area, other existing solar projects, enthusiasm from residents and community groups. In line with the council's core policy of 'giving people more of a say' there will be a 'Community Energy Network Registration Form' for groups and individuals to register their interest in being involved in the project.

The implementation is shared with the above mentioned partners, B&NES holds the responsibility of coordinating the partners, managing the budget and feeding back to the National Lottery.

Bath University will be designing and managing the monitoring and evaluation for the project.

1.2 Provide brief details of the scope of the policy or service being reviewed, for example:

This is a new project that sits within the work of the Energy Transformation Team, which is within the Sustainable Economy service. The project is funded by the national lottery under the Climate Action Fund. It is a new project and partnership,

Is it a new service/policy or review of an existing one?

Is it a national requirement?).

How much room for review is there?

but many of the organisations have been doing similar or linked work in B&NES previously.

It is not a national requirement.

Regular review of the project will take place as it aims to be responsive and adaptive throughout the 3 years. We are required by the National Lottery to report every 6 months, in particular reflecting on learning, at this point we can also review the Equalities Assessment.

The project has quarterly board meetings with board members made up of the different partners, the Equalities Assessment will also be reviewed by the board.

1.3 Do the aims of this policy link to or conflict with any other policies of the Council?

The Council declared a Climate Emergency in March 2019, and an Ecological Emergency in July 2019, pledging to achieve Carbon Neutrality in our area by 2030. Our overarching strategic plan, the B&NES Council Corporate Strategy, sets out our two core policies to improve the lives of local people: Tackling the Climate Emergency and Giving people a bigger say. The aims of the project link to these overarching policies through developing work to support the energy transition away from fossil fuel reliance, to be more locally resilient and reliant on renewable energy. Additionally the process is centred around community led decision making and leading with community engagement.

There are no direct known conflicts with policies however, the new housing requirements may lead to conflicting priorities for land use and create challenges within local communities that may influence the project.

2. Consideration of available data, research and information

Key questions	Data, research and information that you can refer to

2.1 What equality focussed training have staff received to enable them to understand the needs of our diverse community?	B&NES Council team - have received mandatory Equalities and Diversity training and will be taking part in Equality and Inclusion Training in July 2025 provided by the B&NES Corporate Equalities team. Project Manager will take part in Action Learning Sets sessions designed to tackle any issues with Equity for the project.		
	BWCE team – have not done equalities training at the start of the project but will be attending the Equality and Inclusion Training in July 2025 provided by B&NES		
	CSE team – Team compulsory internal EDI online modules, and our key delivery team contacts have team-specific Unconscious Bias training from a consultant.		
	University of Bath Team - The team has completed 'Be The Change – Tackling Harassment' is a University Programme which is mandatory for all staff. The programme aims to tackle all forms of harassment, bullying and discrimination at the University of Bath through a series of training opportunities and awareness raising events. We want to help and encourage all members of our community to 'Be The Change'.		
	In addition, Nick Nash who is the project lead has completed the following non-mandatory training: <u>Diversity in the Workplace (also called Diversity and Inclusion in HE)</u>		
2.2 What is the equality profile of service users?	The profile of service users could include all residents and service users of B&NES. Details regarding the profile of the district's population can be found in the Strategic Evidence Base report, at https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/strategic-evidence		
	Once geographical areas for the 6 community renewables projects have been identified, local ward data can be reviewed to establish a more detailed profile of service users for each area.		
2.3 Are there any recent customer satisfaction surveys to refer to? What were the results? Are there any gaps? Or differences in experience/outcomes?	Not any to refer to Will monitor this throughout the project		

2.4 What engagement or consultation has been undertaken as part of this EIA and with whom? What were the results?	No known consultation has taken place for this project.
2.5 If you are planning to undertake any consultation in the future regarding this service or policy, how will you include equality considerations within this?	No known consultation planned for the future of this project.

3. Assessment of impact: 'Equality analysis'

Based upon any data you have considered, or the results of consultation or research, use the spaces below to demonstrate you have analysed how the service or policy:

- Meets any particular needs of equalities groups or could help promote equality in some way.
- Could have a negative or adverse impact for any of the equality groups

Key questions	Examples of what the service has done to promote equality	Examples of actual or potential negative or adverse impact and what steps have been or could be taken to address this
3.1 Issues relating to all groups and protected characteristics	This is a new project, so promotion and activities have not yet started (Feb 2025). However, the project managers from	Exclusion of marginalised groups: Community engagement activities may inadvertently exclude marginalised groups due to barriers such as language, accessibility, or cultural differences from having a say within the project or engaging with the Community Renewable groups.
	different partners are working together on delivering the project in line with Equality	 Steps to Address: Ahead of events identify and address barriers. Put a note on all comms that other formats can be requested If requested provide materials in different languages and formats.

quidelines and are working to design the various stages of the project to minimise any issues relating to EqIA, particularly in relation to community engagement, communications, workshop delivery and evaluation. The projects aim to connect members of the community around community renewable projects, improving resilience to climate change.

- Where possible host events at venues to be accessible to disabled people, in any comms around the events communicate whether the space is accessible.
- In event sign-ups ask whether anyone has any specific accessibility needs or requirements so that adjustments can be made.
- Developing strong engagement plans to collaborate with a broad range of stakeholders
- Use a multichannel approach to comms
- When a specific location or area is being targeted, review local demographic information to take any barriers to communication, such as non english speakers and disabilities, into considering when planning the engagement
- Provide funding to support people to participate in the workshops (eg a voucher for their time)
- Wherever possible spaces should be accessible by public transport and parking should be available near by
- Equalities and Inclusion Training to be undertaken by delivery teams

People being excluded due to current or existing knowledge or views on renewables, which can be a contentious topic.

- Clear messaging, inclusive language, not assuming knowledge
- Clear explanations of any technical information
- Have written material to explain concepts as well as verbal presentations

Expectations of the purpose of the activities and workshops not explained clearly, leading to a misunderstanding of follow on activities/ how the information from the workshops will be used.

- Setting clear aims and parameters for the workshops
- Clear communication and messaging around the purpose of the workshops

Evaluation of the project, by the University of Bath

		 Ensure that personal data is recorded in line with DPA and GDPR Ensure non bias evaluation especially when analysis is taking place in line with reviewing any personal data, which the University of Bath be trained to deliver.
3.2 Sex – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on women and men.	Same as 3.1	 Sex Bias: Activities may unintentionally favour men or women, leading to unequal participation or benefits. Steps to Address: Implement sensitive planning for men and women within the evaluation processes. Ensure equal representation and participation opportunities for both women and men. Provide sex-specific support where necessary, such as childcare facilities to enable participation. Risk of underrepresentation of one sex depending on types of engagement. Ensure engagement is aimed at people of both sexes, consider engaging with specific groups that work with different demographics Use inclusive language within comms Ensure events are safe spaces for attendees Ensure zero tolerance policy at any events on sexist behaviour or misogyny
3.3 Pregnancy and maternity	Same as 3.1	Accessibility Issues: Pregnant people and new parents may face challenges in accessing events and workshops due to physical limitations or childcare needs. Steps to Address: Offer flexible scheduling and virtual participation options if requested Provide on-site childcare and breastfeeding facilities.

		 Ensure venues are accessible and comfortable for pregnant people and new parents.
3.4 Gender reassignment – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on transgender people	Same as 3.1	In addition to 3.1 Exclusion: Transgender individuals may feel excluded Steps to Address: • Ensure that language on comms and at events is inclusive and respectful with regards to transgender individuals • Ensure a zero tolerance policy of transphobia or discrimination
3.5 Disability – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on disabled people (ensure consideration of physical, sensory and mental health needs/differences)	Same as 3.1	In addition to 3.1 Accessibility Barriers: Physical, sensory, and mental health needs may not be adequately considered, leading to exclusion. Steps to Address: • Check with workshop attendees ahead of events whether they have any accessibility needs and provide suitable support • Provide alternative formats for communications on request (e.g., braille, large print, audio). • Ensure a zero tolerance of discrimination based on disability
3.6 Age – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on different age groups	Same as 3.1	In addition to 3.1 Age-Specific Exclusion: Activities may not cater to the needs and preferences of all age groups, particularly the very young or elderly. Steps to Address: Design activities that are inclusive of all age groups. Engage with representatives from different age groups to gather input and feedback (e.g. schools, age uk)

3.7 Race – identify the impact/potential impact on across different ethnic groups	Same as 3.1	 In addition to 3.1 Exclusion: Individuals may feel excluded based on race. Steps to address: Where relevant engage with community groups representing racially diverse groups. Ensure a zero tolerance policy on racism or discrimation based on race. Cultural Insensitivity: Activities may not reflect the cultural diversity of the community, leading to feelings of exclusion. Steps to Address: If requested provide materials in multiple languages and consider cultural norms and practices. Where relevant be mindful to avoid religious holidays If providing food, be aware of cultural requirements for diet
3.8 Sexual orientation – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, questioning people	Same as 3.1	 In addition to 3.1 Exclusion: Individuals may feel excluded due to their sexual orientation Steps to Address: Use of correct pro-nouns Ensure that language on comms and at events is inclusive and respectful regarding sexual orientation Avoid using titles (Mr, Mrs, Etct) to reduce assumptions and bias Ensure a zero-tolerance policy or homophobia or discrimination based on sexual orientation.
3.9 Marriage and civil partnership – does the	Same as 3.1	In addition to 3.1

policy/strategy treat married and civil partnered people equally?		No known specific impacts, this should be reviewed regularly throughout the project.
3.10 Religion/belief – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on people of different religious/faith groups and also upon those with no religion.	Same as 3.1	 In addition to 3.1 Religious Insensitivity: Activities may not be accomodating to religious practices or beliefs leading to exclusion Steps to address Ensure that workshops are held in welcoming secular spaces (if unavoidable ensure that events are marketed to be inclusive and that the space is open to anyone) Where relevant schedule events to avoid any religious holidays or known times for regular worship If requested ahead of the event, provide prayer spaces If providing food, ensure there are sufficient options, being mindful of allergies/ intolerances and religious dietary restrictions. Where relevant engage with religious groups and leaders to promote inclusion ahead of events.
3.11 Socio- economically disadvantaged* — identify the impact on people who are disadvantaged due to factors like family background, educational attainment, neighbourhood, employment status	Same as 3.1	 In addition to 3.1 Financial Barriers: Risk of exclusion to events due to costs associated with attendance Steps to address Where possible, provide vouchers or reimbursement for attendees travel expenses and costs to reduce barriers to participation In addition to the workshops do other engagement that is less time intensive and goes to where people already are, so that it does not add costs to residents Ensure venues are easily accessible Consider the timing of events to ensure people can attend

can influence life chances (this is not a legal requirement, but is a local priority).		 Engage with community organisations to reach disadvantaged groups. Due to limited time people that are socio-economically disadvantaged may not be interested in attending the workshops, one benefit of the project is the opportunity to raise funds for the community. Ensure this message is clear and shared with community groups.
3.12 Rural communities* identify the impact / potential impact on people living in rural communities	In addition to 3.1 - Due to the nature of the project, a significant amount of the project will be spent engaging with Rural communities, aiming to actively tackle challenges they face.	In addition to 3.1 Geographical Barriers: People living in rural areas may face difficulties accessing events and activities. Steps to Address: Offer some events online Host events in multiple locations, including rural areas.
3.13 Armed Forces Community ** serving members; reservists; veterans and their families, including the bereaved. Public services are required by law to pay due regard to the Armed Forces Community when developing policy, procedures and making decisions, particularly in the areas of public	Same as 3.1	No known additional impacts, but this is to be reviewed throughout the project.

housing, education and healthcare (to remove disadvantage and consider special provision).		
3.14 Care Experienced *** In B&NES, you are 'care-experienced' if you spent any time in your childhood in Local Authority care, living away from your parent(s) for example, you were adopted, lived in residential, foster care, kinship care, or a special guardianship arrangement.	Same as 3.1	No known additional or specific impacts relating to this project but this should be reviewed regularly Aim to connect with the councils' social care team – to promote the project and investigate this further.

^{*}There is no requirement within the public sector duty of the Equality Act to consider groups who may be disadvantaged due to socio economic status, or because of living in a rural area. However, these are significant issues within B&NES and have therefore been included here.

** The Equality Act does not cover armed forces community. However, the Armed Forces Bill (which came in on 22 Nov 2022) introduces a requirement to pay 'due regard' to make sure the Armed Forces Community are not disadvantaged when accessing public services.

***The Equality Act does not cover care experienced people. B&NES adopted this group as a protected characteristic in March 2024 alongside over 80 other Local Authorities. Although we have data for care leavers and children/young people who are currently in the care of B&NES we do not have wider data on disadvantage experienced through being in care.

4. Bath and North East Somerset Council Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan

Please list actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment/analysis. These actions should be based upon the analysis of data and engagement, any gaps in the data you have identified, and any steps you will be taking to address any negative impacts or remove barriers. The actions need to be built into your service planning framework. Actions/targets should be measurable, achievable, realistic and time framed.

Issues identified	Actions required	Progress milestones	Officer responsible	By when
Exclusion of individuals through comms materials	 Develop comms materials that take local needs into consideration, use the strategic evidence base to identify the democraphics within the areas that workshops are due to take place. Use Inclusive Language: Ensure that the language used is gender-neutral and culturally sensitive. Avoid jargon and technical terms that may not be understood by everyone. This is particularly important as not everyone understands the concept of 'Community Energy' or terms like 'renewables' Diversify Visual Content: 	Milestone 1: Initial Assessment and Planning Research community Set Up Feedback Mechanism: Establish a system for collecting ongoing feedback from the community. Milestone 2: Initial development of Comms Develop materials that use inclusive language Milestone 3: Accessibility and	Elllie Bryant	End March 2025 End of April 2025
		Multilingual Support		

	de images and graphics that	Review Accessibility: Ensure all		End of May
	esent the diversity of the	new materials are accessible to		2025
	nunity (e.g., different ages,	people with disabilities (e.g., alt		
	cities, abilities).	text, transcripts).		
	d stereotypes and ensure that all	Multilingual Materials: Begin		
•	os are portrayed positively.	translating key materials into		
Accessibility		multiple languages spoken within		
	re that materials are accessible ople with disabilities (e.g., use alt	the community.		
text for	or images, provide transcripts for	Milestone 4: Community		
video	os).	Engagement		
- Use I	arge fonts and high-contrast	Engage Community		June 2025
colors	s for readability.	Representatives: Hold focus		
- Take	the council comms teams advice	groups or workshops with		
on ac	ccessibility	representatives from different		
Multilingual S	Support:	community groups to review and		
- Provi	de a note that states that if other	provide input on materials.		
langu	lages are required they can be	Collect Feedback: Gather		
provi	ded (ideally this phrase would be	feedback from the community on		
writte	en in relevant languages)	the changes made so far.		
- Use o	clear and simple language to			
make	e translation easier and more			
accui	rate.	Milestone 5: Review and Adjust		
Engage Com	nmunity Representatives:	Evaluate Feedback: Review the		
- Involv	ve representatives from different	feedback collected and identify		July 2025
comm	nunity groups in the creation and	areas for improvement.		•
revie	w of communication materials.	Update Materials: Make necessary		
- Hold	focus groups or workshops to	adjustments to communication		
gathe	er input and ensure diverse	materials based on feedback.		
persp	pectives are considered.			
Feedback M	echanism:	Milestone 6: Continuous		
- Estab	olish a system for partners and	Improvement		
	nunity members to provide	Monitor Effectiveness: Regularly		Ongoing
ongo	ing feedback on communication	monitor the effectiveness of		throughout
mate	•	communication materials in		the project
- Regu	larly review and update materials	reaching and engaging all		until 2028
base	d on this feedback.	community members.		

	 Training for Communicators: Provide training for staff and volunteers on inclusive communication practices. Encourage continuous learning and awareness of inclusivity issues. Monitor and Evaluate: Regularly monitor the effectiveness of communication materials in reaching and engaging all community members. Evaluate the impact of changes and make adjustments as needed. 	Ongoing Training: Continue providing training and awareness sessions for staff and volunteers. Regular Updates: Keep updating materials and practices based on ongoing feedback and evaluation.	
Exclusion of individuals from in person engagement events including the FEL workshops.	When individuals sign up to workshops request information about any disability requirements so that suitable support can be provided. Venue Accessibility: - Choose venues that are accessible to people with disabilities (e.g., ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms). If	Milestone 1: Initial Assessment and Planning Research community Set Up Feedback Mechanism: Establish a system for collecting ongoing feedback from the community. Milestone 2: Initial development of	End March 2025 End of April
	this is not possible ensure this is clear on comms. If possible, ensure the venue is easily reachable by public transportation and has adequate parking. Inclusive Scheduling: Schedule events at various times to	engagement events, planning and logistics that are inclusive Milestone 3: Accessibility and Multilingual Support Review Accessibility: Ensure all venues are accessible to people	End of May 2025 and ongoing throughout
	accommodate different work schedules, caregiving responsibilities, and other commitments. Consider offering events on weekends or evenings to increase accessibility.	with disabilities Milestone 4: Deliver activities	project June 2025 onwards

Diverse Communication Channels:	Milestone 5: Review and Adjust	Ongoing
 Use multiple communication channels 	Evaluate Feedback: Review the	
(e.g., social media, flyers, community	feedback collected and identify	
bulletin boards) to reach a broader	areas for improvement.	
audience.	Update Materials: Make necessary	
 Ensure that information about the 	adjustments to communication	
events is available in multiple	materials based on feedback.	
languages spoken within the		
community.	Milestone 6: Continuous	Ongoing
Cultural Sensitivity:	Improvement	
 Be mindful of cultural and religious 	Monitor Effectiveness: Regularly	
practices when planning events (e.g.,	monitor the effectiveness of	
dietary restrictions, prayer times).	communication materials in	
Engage Community Leaders:	reaching and engaging all	
- Involve community leaders and	community members.	
representatives in the planning and	Ongoing Training: Continue	
promotion of events.	providing training and awareness	
- Seek their input to ensure the events	sessions for staff and volunteers.	
are relevant and inclusive.	Regular Updates: Keep updating	
Feedback Mechanism:	practices based on ongoing feedback and evaluation.	
- Establish a system for participants to	reedback and evaluation.	
provide feedback on the events. - Use this feedback to make continuous		
improvements and address any		
exclusionary practices.		
Training for Facilitators:		
- Provide training for event facilitators		
on inclusive practices and cultural		
competency.		
- Ensure facilitators are aware of and		
sensitive to the diverse needs of		
participants.		
Flexible Participation Options:		
- Offer hybrid or virtual participation		
options for those who cannot attend in		
person.		

 Ensure that virtual participants have equal opportunities to engage and contribute. 		

5. Sign off and publishing

Once you have completed this form, it needs to be 'approved' by your Divisional Director or their nominated officer. Following this sign off, send a copy to the Equality Team (equality@bathnes.gov.uk), who will publish it on the Council's website. Keep a copy for your own records.

Signed off by: Jackie Clayton (Divisional Director or nominated senior officer)

Date: 10/07/25