

Inverness City Centre Development Brief:
Supplementary Guidance

Equalities Impact Assessment – Screening Report

February 2017

Service
Development and Infrastructure

Person Responsible
Peter Wheelan

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Last Review
01/02/2017

Status
Screened

Next Review
01/02/2017

Screening Data

1. Please give the title/description of the policy. The word "policy" will be used throughout as shorthand for policy, service, function or proposal.

This screening report has been produced for the replacement Inverness City Centre Development Brief: Supplementary Guidance (the Brief).

2. Name of the person carrying out the screening

Peter Wheelan

3. Date of screening

01/02/2017

4. What are the aims and objectives of the policy?

The purpose of the Brief is to guide planning application and investment decisions for Inverness city centre for up to the year 2030 and supplements the principles that are set out in policies within the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP), Adopted April 2012 and policies and allocations within the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP), Adopted July 2015.

Given that the Brief will become a statutory part of the development plan and will be influential in decision making on new development, a very wide range of individuals and groups could have an interest in and wish to express an opinion on what the Brief should include.

The Brief reflects an outcome based approach that shows how the new brief could help deliver an overarching vision for Inverness city centre. To realise the vision, the Brief proposes five thematic outcomes – a great place for business; a great place to visit; a great place to live; accessible, easy and safe to move around, distinctive and attractive. Under each thematic outcome a series of priorities are set out together with development assessment criteria and next steps to assist delivery.

5. Which parts of the public sector duty is the policy relevant to? Refer to guidance if necessary.

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

6. Is the policy relevant to equality groups? The protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 are listed below. Socioeconomic status, homelessness and Human Rights are also included. Please tick if there is potential for this policy to affect any of these groups differently? The effect could be positive or negative.

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Homelessness
- Socioeconomic

7. If you ticked any group in Question 6, is there any evidence of, or potential for, negative impact?

YES

The consultative draft Brief will be published online and in paper form. The consultation will be publicised through both media and direct mailing.

At least one public consultation event will be held and contacts provided for enquiries to be directed to the Council's Service Centre and passed, where necessary, to the Development Plans Team.

The process of consultation will encourage the majority of respondents to make online comments through Objective consultation software. There will be a guide for registering online and there will also be guidance for other formats of submission available. Additionally a press release that explains the process to the public will be issued to media and placed on the Council's website.

There is potential that the consultation could be of different degrees of accessibility to various different groups. For example, we may make efforts to engage with the old and the young, but there is potential to be less accessible to people in full time employment if our event was solely held during normal working hours.

There is the potential that the primary response method, namely online, could exclude certain groups. The online format requires access to a computer and the internet with users requiring a basic level of computer literacy and keyboard skills. Furthermore there is the potential that use of English language only may exclude non-English language participation. The consultation will be in the English language as will all of the guidance for providing representations.

There is the potential that development in line with the guidance set out within the Brief could fail to meet the requirements of the population, for example the housing and servicing requirements of an ageing population or access requirements of those with disability. However, the Brief seeks to develop assessment criteria to ensure that these needs are fully addressed.

8. Is there evidence that the policy contributes positively to the promotion of equality on any particular group?

YES

Age: Use of social media, public events, local press to widely publicise the process in an attempt to publicise and involve as many age groups as possible. Whilst we are encouraging the use of Objective software where that option is accessible to people, there is also the option of submitting comments in different formats and the opportunity to get assistance. On request we can also produce the brief in different formats (e.g. large print).

Disability: Use of social media, public events (with an emphasis on workshop format rather than formal public meeting), local press to widely publicise the process in an attempt to involve people of all abilities. There is the option of providing feedback in different formats and the opportunity to get assistance with this process. On request we can also produce the brief in different formats (e.g. large print).

Race: Colour, nationality ethnic or national origins. This would include Gypsies and Travellers. For those whose first language is not English, further assistance with providing comments in Objective and access to the translation service may be required. On request we can also produce the Brief in different formats or translated if necessary.

Religion or Belief: We will contact a wide range of services/organisations that have expressed an interest in the Development Plan previously. This will be inclusive of a wide range of representatives with varied backgrounds, religions and beliefs to encourage participation in the process.

The publication of the Brief will be publicised across the Highland area. The Brief will be available online and can be accessed from local library and Council Service Point computers. The online submission of comments is through the Objective software and means that it can be filled in at any time and any location with internet access. In addition to the process mentioned above the Council will be directly contacting groups that represent those with protected characteristics directly to make them aware of the Brief and how to comment on it. This process enables a wide variety of people to get involved without the need to attend a public event.

The proposed outcomes for the Brief such as making the city centre a great place to live; a great place to visit; and accessible, easy and safe to move around will also help to safeguarded and promote certain aspects of equality between groups.

An accessible venue in a central part of the development brief area will be used to host at least one public event.

9. If there is evidence of, or the possibility of, negative impact, can immediate remedial or mitigating action be taken without the need for a full EQIA?

YES

The Brief will be available online and can be accessed from local library and Council Service Point computers. Different formats of the Brief are available on request. In addition to the online representation format there is also the option to get in touch with the Council via email, telephone, post or at a service point to request alternative formats (e.g. large print) and alternative arrangements for making a representation (e.g. via post). This means that those that do not have access to a computer with internet access or are not computer literate are able to take part.

The online software as well as assistance from the translation service will also be available. This is designed to help people with physical or learning disabilities as well as those who do not have English as a first language.

With respect to Data Protection, those responding to the consultation will be made aware that the Brief process is a public process and their names may appear in some public documents and online. However the addresses and other personal details of all contributors will be redacted. This is in line with Highland Council's data protection policy and would also protect against any harassment of protected groups.