

**Sandwell Towns Fund Superboard  
Towns Fund Draft Town Level Equality Impact Assessments**

**22 July 2021**

<b>Subject:</b>	Towns Fund Town Level Equality Impact Assessments
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**1. Recommendations**

- 1.1. That the Superboard receive and note the Town Level Equality Impact Assessments for Rowley Regis, Smethwick and West Bromwich Town Deals.

**2. Purpose of the report**

- 2.1. To receive an Equality Impact Assessment for the three Town Deals
- 2.2. To outline the equality impact requirements of the Towns Fund Programme and individual projects.
- 2.3. To note that the Town-level equality impact assessments will be updated following the completion of all project-level equality impact assessments.

**3. Background and Main Consideration**

- 3.1. There is a duty for Public Sector Bodies to fulfil the requirements placed on them by the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010

The PSED requires the council to pay due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

- 3.2. The Equality Act 2010 does not require public authorities to carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). However, case law indicates that some form of documentary evidence is valuable to public authorities to demonstrate compliance with the PSED. EIAs are one way do this and many public sector bodies undertake EIA's, including government departments.

- 3.3. EIAs are in many cases an ongoing process as projects or policies are developed and refined, EIA document/s can be updated on a regular basis to reflect new information and data as and when required.

- 3.4. It is important to understand that the assessed impact and outcomes for any project or policy might be different to the actual impact and outcomes. As part of the regular monitoring and evaluation of the projects in the three Town Deals it would be useful to build in, where appropriate and feasible, equalities monitoring, so that any adverse impact or otherwise can be identified.
- 3.5. The Towns Fund Guidance, December 2020, outlined that an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) should be conducted at Town Level, along with an assessment being undertaken for each project.
- 3.6. Producing a version of the Town-level EqIA during this project development phase enables consideration to be given to the findings of the assessment and to make adjustments to projects, if required. The Town-level EqIAs appended to this report have been compiled based on information to date around the projects within each Town Deal.
- 3.7. Each Towns Fund Project will also conduct an individual equality impact assessment. This will be presented to Superboard alongside the project Full Business Case.
- 3.8. When all projects have completed their individual EqIAs, the overarching Town-level EqIA will be reviewed and updated to reflect the expected cumulative impact of delivering the projects. This will provide further opportunity to amend plans, if required.

### **Rowley Regis Equality Impact Assessment**

- 3.9. The Rowley Regis Town Deal projects are intended to bring economic benefits to all groups including those with protected characteristics through improvements being made to connectivity, the local skills offer, maintaining a vibrant High Street in Blackheath and improvements to a local green space.
- 3.10. No adverse impacts have been identified for any group with protected characteristics as a result of the Rowley Regis Town Deal proposals.
- 3.11. The Rowley Regis projects are not specifically targeted/ tailored to groups with protected characteristics. At this stage in the project development process, specific benefits are expected to be achieved for the following groups with protected characteristics: Age (older and younger), and disability.

#### **Age**

- 3.12. A positive impact is likely to be realised for older people through the projects to improve Britannia Park, improvements to walking routes, and improvements to Blackheath Town Centre.
- 3.13. Younger residents are likely to benefit from new facilities at Britannia Park and in Blackheath Town Centre.
- 3.14. Residents of working age are specifically targeted through the Satellite Education Hub project.

### **Disability**

- 3.15. The Rowley Regis Town Deal proposals are likely to improve mobility and accessibility for disabled users in the public realm specifically through the Blackheath Bus Interchange Project, and improvements to the walking and cycling network.

### **Rowley Regis Local Board Considerations**

- 3.16. Local Board members were satisfied with the Town Level Equality Impact assessment.

### **Smethwick Equality Impact Assessment**

- 3.17. The Smethwick Town Deal projects are intended to bring economic benefits to all groups including those with protected characteristics through improvements being made to connectivity, the local skills offer, bringing forward sites for new housing and improvements to a local green space.
- 3.18. No adverse impacts have been identified for any group with protected characteristics as a result of the Smethwick Town Deal proposals.
- 3.19. The Smethwick Town Deal projects are not specifically targeted/ tailored to groups with protected characteristics. At this stage in the project development process, specific benefits are expected to be achieved for the following groups with protected characteristics: Age (working age and younger), and disability.

### **Age**

- 3.20. Specific benefits are anticipated for younger age groups and those of a working age through a large growth in the local skills offer through 3 Town Deal projects. Benefits are also likely to be achieved for people in younger age groups and families through the mixed tenure of the new housing that will be delivered as a result of the Rolfe Street and Grove Lane projects.

### **Disability**

- 3.21. The Smethwick Town Deal proposals are likely to bring benefits for Smethwick residents with a disability through the new sports and community education facility which will specialise in alternative provision for disadvantaged, disabled and BAME students.
- 3.22. Other benefits for people with disabilities are likely to be achieved through providing safe walking and cycling routes to improve connectivity in Smethwick to key transport hubs.

### **Smethwick Local Board Considerations**

- 3.23. Local Board members expressed the importance of the assessment to ensure impacts have been considered and agreed the Town Level Equality Impact Assessment is comprehensive.

### **West Bromwich Equality Impact Assessment**

- 3.24. The West Bromwich Town Deal projects are intended to bring economic benefits to all groups including those with protected characteristics through improvements being made to connectivity, the local skills offer, and maintaining a vibrant High Street.
- 3.25. No adverse impacts have been identified for any group with protected characteristics as a result of the West Bromwich Town Deal proposals.

- 3.26. The West Bromwich projects are not specifically targeted/ tailored to groups with protected characteristics. At this stage in the project development process, specific benefits are expected to be achieved for the following groups with protected characteristics: Age (older and younger), and disability.

#### **Age**

- 3.27. A positive impact is likely to be realised for older people through improvements made to the High Street Retail, the Town Hall Quarter and through improved walking connectivity.
- 3.28. Younger and working age residents are likely to benefit specifically from the increase in skills provision delivered by the Mechanical Engineering Centre project.

#### **Disability**

- 3.29. The West Bromwich Town Deal proposals will improve mobility and accessibility for disabled users in the public realm. In the design stage, proposals will consider residents and visitors with disabilities, including street furniture accessibility and the improved access to buildings to ensure DDA compliance.

#### **West Bromwich Local Board Considerations**

- 3.30. Consideration to include additional reference to data around unemployment and its relation to groups with protected characteristics.

#### **4. Appendices**

Draft Equality Impact Assessment Rowley Regis  
Draft Equality Impact Assessment Smethwick  
Draft Equality Impact Assessment West Bromwich

#### **5. Source Documents**

- Towns Fund Business Case Guidance, December 2020
- Heads of Terms for Rowley Regis, Smethwick and West Bromwich Town Deals