

Equality Analysis

Birmingham City Council Analysis Report

EA Name	Natural Rivers And Green Corridors ERDF Project
Directorate	Place
Service Area	Place - Parks & Nature Conservation
Type	New/Proposed Function
EA Summary	The Natural Rivers and Green Corridors project will deliver the first phase of a large, landscape-scale approach to green and blue infrastructure improvements at strategic locations in Birmingham. The three year project will involve activities to restore and enhance habitats and improve ecological connectivity within public open space corridors of the upper River Rea catchment in south-west Birmingham and along the River Tame corridor at Sandwell Valley Country Park and Hilltop / Manwoods in west Birmingham. The project will support the delivery of strategic green and blue infrastructure objectives set out in Birmingham's Green Living Spaces Plan, the Environment Agency's Humber River Basin Management Plan and Birmingham and Black Country Nature Improvement Area's (B&BC NIA) ecological strategy.
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Introduction

The report records the information that has been submitted for this equality analysis in the following format.

Initial Assessment

This section identifies the purpose of the Policy and which types of individual it affects. It also identifies which equality strands are affected by either a positive or negative differential impact.

Relevant Protected Characteristics

For each of the identified relevant protected characteristics there are three sections which will have been completed.

- Impact
- Consultation
- Additional Work

If the assessment has raised any issues to be addressed there will also be an action planning section.

The following pages record the answers to the assessment questions with optional comments included by the assessor to clarify or explain any of the answers given or relevant issues.

1 Activity Type

The activity has been identified as a New/Proposed Function.

2 Initial Assessment

2.1 Purpose and Link to Strategic Themes

What is the purpose of this Function and expected outcomes?

The Natural Rivers project will deliver a catchment-based approach to blue and green infrastructure improvements in Birmingham, focusing on the upper River Rea sub-catchment in south-west Birmingham and the River Tame corridor at Sandwell Valley. The project will support the establishment of a high quality ecological network, to enable around 150 hectares of land (POS and watercourses) and to attain better conservation status, as well as delivering socio-economic benefits. The project complements the Environment Agency's programme of flood risk alleviation works in these catchments. The three year programme of activity will include works to improve channel morphology (resulting in reduced flood risk and contributing to Water Framework Directive requirements), as well as habitat enhancements to improve habitat quality and connectivity within public open space corridors along the River Rea and its tributaries (Stonehouse Brook, Bourn Brook, Merritts Brook/Griffins Brook/The Bourn and Callow Brook) and along the River Tame corridor at Hilltop / Manwoods.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding is being sought to deliver the project. A full application was originally submitted in September 2016; this was subsequently revised and re-submitted in October 2017. The overall cost of the project is c. £1.6m, with 50% of the project funding coming from ERDF. Match funding is required for the remaining 50%, the majority of which will be provided by the Environment Agency (c. £737k). Additional match funding will be provided through BCC officers' input (Place Directorate, Parks and Nature Conservation; Economy Directorate, City Design; c. £65k) and the Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country (c. £10k). Additional capacity for project management and compliance will be provided by BCC's European and International Affairs Team, through the involvement of a ESIF Monitoring Officer; their involvement will be funded through ERDF. BCC would act as accountable body for the project.

As part of the Council's involvement with the Natural Capital Roundtable, Birmingham and Black Country Local Nature Partnership and B&BC NIA, officers are working with public, private and third sector partners to highlight the importance of natural capital in delivering the City's (and the wider GBSLEP and WMCA) priorities for economic and social growth. The availability of European Structural and Investment Funds to support this work presents a key opportunity for the City to secure significant resources to invest in enhancing Birmingham's natural assets and biodiversity, which underpin the natural capital approach. Such an approach is in line with the Government's recently published 25 Year Environment Plan (A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment).

The project would deliver biodiversity enhancements on c. 150 hectares of publicly accessible land and watercourses in the following wards: Bartley Green, Bournville, Brandwood, Edgbaston, Harborne, Kings Norton, Longbridge, Moseley and Kings Heath, Northfield, Quinton, Selly Oak, Weoley and Handsworth Wood. In addition, the project will deliver wide-ranging socio-economic benefits to local communities, such as reduced flood risk and enhanced health and well-being.

The project supports the delivery of the key priorities of Health and Jobs and Skills, as set out in the Council's Corporate Delivery Plan (approved in 2017) and Council Business Plan and Budget 2018+ (draft), helping to achieve the Council's vision to create a healthier environment for Birmingham, with the city being renowned as an enterprising, innovative and green city. The project will also contribute to achieving cross-cutting measures relating to improved cleanliness and reductions in health inequality.

The project aligns with strategic objectives in the Birmingham Development Plan relating to improving health and well-being, conserving the natural environment and securing infrastructure to support future growth and prosperity. In particular, the project will support the delivery of BDP policies GA9, TP2, TP6, TP7 and TP8. The project is consistent with Birmingham's approach to supporting ecosystem services and improving natural capital set out in the Council's Green Living Spaces Plan.

For each strategy, please decide whether it is going to be significantly aided by the Function.

Children: A Safe And Secure City In Which To Learn And Grow	No
Health: Helping People Become More Physically Active And Well	Yes

Comment:

The project would create opportunities for volunteering and reducing health inequalities. The Wildlife Trust T has a track record of community engagement in conservation projects.

Housing : To Meet The Needs Of All Current And Future Citizens	No
Jobs And Skills: For An Enterprising, Innovative And Green City	Yes

Comment:

The project will advertise opportunities for delivery of activities through Find it in Birmingham (the councils procurement portal) and through best value tendered contracts.

2.2 Individuals affected by the policy

Will the policy have an impact on service users/stakeholders?	Yes
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Comment:

The Environment Agency and Wildlife Trust are key stakeholders and are involved as project partners.

Will the policy have an impact on employees?	Yes
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Comment:

BCC will act as the project lead and accountable body for the project. Project management will be delivered by BCC, with input from Parks and Nature Conservation (Conservation and Woodland Manager) and City Design (Principal Ecology Officer). Additional capacity will be required in terms of project monitoring and administration; this support will be provided by the European and International Affairs Team (ESIF Monitoring Officer), and will be funded wholly via ERDF funding. On-the-ground project activities (woodland and tree works and control of invasive plant species) to be delivered by Conservation and Woodland Team officers will also be funded via ERDF funding.

Will the policy have an impact on wider community?	Yes
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Comment:

The project should deliver environmental, economic and social benefits for local communities within the River Rea and River Tame catchments.

2.3 Relevance Test

Protected Characteristics	Relevant	Full Assessment Required
Age	Not Relevant	No
Disability	Not Relevant	No
Gender	Not Relevant	No

Gender Reassignment	Not Relevant	No
Marriage Civil Partnership	Not Relevant	No
Pregnancy And Maternity	Not Relevant	No
Race	Not Relevant	No
Religion or Belief	Not Relevant	No
Sexual Orientation	Not Relevant	No

2.4 Analysis on Initial Assessment

Delivery of Natural Rivers and Green Corridors is expected to enhance the quality of the natural environment, and promote health and wellbeing and other socio-economic benefits for communities in the project area. Negative impacts on service users/stakeholders and employees are not anticipated. As such, project delivery would not be detrimental to any of the protected characteristics and therefore there is no need to progress to a Full Assessment.

3 Full Assessment

The assessment questions below are completed for all characteristics identified for full assessment in the initial assessment phase.

3.1 Concluding Statement on Full Assessment

Due regard has been demonstrated through the completion of this assessment. There is no need to proceed to a Full Assessment.

Review date 28/9/2018

4 Review Date

28/09/18

5 Action Plan

There are no relevant issues, so no action plans are currently required.