

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** (Section 149 of the Equality Act) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making – it encourages public bodies to be more efficient and effective by understanding how different people will be affected by their activities, so that their policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people’s needs. The Council’s Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) includes an assessment of the community safety impact assessment to comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and will enable the Council to better understand the potential impact of proposals and consider mitigating action.

Name or Brief Description of Proposal	Southampton City Council Green Infrastructure Strategy Delivery Plan
Brief Service Profile (including number of customers)	
<p>Two new strategies were adopted by Southampton City Council in January 2024, the Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy. These strategies are council's response to the climate emergency and provide the framework to address the council's statutory duty to halt the decline of biodiversity, protect and re-connect habitats, conserve, restore and enhance species populations and deliver connected GI in a response to the challenges posed by both climate change and the increase in the city's population.</p> <p>The GI Strategy explains the importance of habitats and GI, the principles for achieving no net loss of habitat and retain and enhance biodiversity, what needs to be considered to achieve those goals and provides the framework for how the council can meet its enhanced Biodiversity Duty under the requirements of the Environment Act, 2021.</p> <p>The GI Strategy Delivery Plan provide more detail about specific targets we want to achieve, assigns actions for lead officers or teams and timeframes for meeting those actions. The GI Strategy Delivery Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and the GI Strategy will be reviewed every three years.</p> <p>Our world is warming causing more extreme weather events and sea level rise. The scientific consensus is that human induced climate change has already started. The further warming of the atmosphere threatens our planet including our natural environment, but also human health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The consequences include increased flooding, more frequent and severe heat waves, water scarcity, more pollution, and loss of biodiversity. There will be a detrimental impact on people's lives including health, and damage to homes and</p>	

businesses. Climate change is already having an impact, with parts of the UK reaching over 40°C in July 2022, the UK's hottest year on record.

Southampton is a bustling multi-cultural city with a growing prosperous economy and population. With continually evolving attractive investment opportunities bringing more people and businesses into the region, it is essential that social, economic, and environmental sustainability (sustainable development) is not lost for the sake of economic growth; a city lacking green infrastructure, and healthy ecosystems is not sustainable or climate change adaptable, in turn, risking future economic growth.

Summary of Impact and Issues

The GI Strategy Delivery Plan seeks to optimise the full range of benefits that our natural assets can offer. This includes offering outdoor amenity space, safe and attractive routes for travel, local flood management, improving local air quality, capturing carbon and providing habitat to support wildlife. The GI Strategy has been developed following a thorough process of internal and external engagement; the GI Strategy Delivery Plan has undergone rigorous internal consultation. This consultation will ensure our approach remains ambitious whilst also being achievable in scale and scope, striking the right balance for SCC and those service areas who have a more direct responsibility for delivering the actions needed to implement the strategy.

The costs and impacts of a failure to do anything in the face of climate change will be significant, and the primary role of the GI Strategy Delivery Plan is to help mitigate these impacts by taking action. There will be many positive co-benefits from the GI Strategy Delivery Plan such as better air quality, flood alleviation, improved wellbeing, improved habitats and species diversity/populations and a city more adapted to climate change.

The GI Strategy will affect the way that most council services operate, given the wide-ranging services which may be affected by loss and degradation of habitat, declines in species diversity and numbers, loss of GI and challenges faced by a changing climate. There may be impacts on the way people need to behave, so more inclusive participation is imperative. There will also be changes to planning and city infrastructure and technologies and any impacts of these on different groups of people.

Individual projects arising from the GI Strategy Delivery Plan may have unintended consequences. We have tried to future proof the GI Strategy Delivery Plan by being mindful of what these impacts may be however, individual projects which fall out of the GI Strategy Delivery Plan, may also require an assessment of impacts. The nature of the projects, improving the city for its residents by seeking to make it more resilient to climate change and providing better quality and more green space, however, are very unlikely to have a negative impact on the objectives set out in s149 of the Equality Act 2010.

Potential Impacts

The implementation of the strategies will have many environmental, social, and economic benefits such as equity and social cohesion, health and wellbeing, resilience, and citizen engagement. In the absence of a GI Strategy Delivery Plan or, where there is a delay in its introduction, the council will be unable to demonstrate how it intends to deliver its obligations under the strengthened Biodiversity Duty in

the Environment Act, 2021 or the goals set out in the Corporate Plan or the Green City Plan. Penalties for failing to deliver statutory duties are currently unclear, however, there is a risk of reputational damage in addition to incurring higher future costs in adapting to the impacts of climate change and coping with loss of GI and continued loss and degradation of habitats and wildlife.

Potential positive impacts against the objectives set out in s149 of the Equality Act 2010, however, are very likely.

Responsible Service Manager	Ian Collins
Date	16 th October 2024
Approved by Senior Manager	Debbie Ward
Date	16 th October 2024

Potential Impact

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
Age	No negative impact identified. Improved GI will make the city more resilient to the effects of climate and improve the health, wellbeing and prosperity of Southampton for everyone.	
Disability	No negative impact identified. Improvements to green spaces and encouraging more access to and the use of our green spaces will be beneficial for everyone, including those with mental and physical disabilities.	
Gender Reassignment	No negative impact identified. The GI Strategy Delivery Plan aims to encourage better use of our green spaces across the city, by everyone.	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No negative impact identified. The GI Strategy Delivery Plan aims to encourage better use of our green spaces across the city, by everyone.	
Pregnancy and Maternity	No negative impact identified. The GI Strategy Delivery Plan aims	

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
	to encourage better use of our green spaces across the city, by everyone.	
Race	<p>No negative negative impact identified.</p> <p>Improvements to and promotion of our green spaces will put these spaces “on the map” and encourage everyone to visit who may currently not do so. We will continue to work collaboratively with the council’s Community Cohesion and Diversity Officer to achieve this goal.</p>	
Religion or Belief	<p>No negative impact identified.</p> <p>Improvements to and promotion of our green spaces will put these spaces “on the map” and encourage everyone to visit who may currently not do so. We will continue to work collaboratively with the council’s Community Cohesion and Diversity Officer to achieve this goal.</p>	
Sex	<p>No impact identified.</p> <p>The GI Strategy Delivery Plan aims to encourage better use of our green spaces across the city, by everyone.</p>	
Sexual Orientation	<p>No impact identified.</p> <p>The GI Strategy Delivery Plan aims to encourage better use of our green spaces across the city, by everyone.</p>	
Community Safety	<p>No negative impact identified.</p> <p>With improved access and better infrastructure within our green spaces, they will more widely used and in turn become safer places for all to visit.</p>	
Poverty	No impact identified.	

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
Health & Wellbeing	<p>No negative impact identified.</p> <p>Improvements in public health will be delivered as our green spaces become will become more accessible. People’s relationships with green space will increase and in turn, deliver benefits to physical and mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>We will work more closely with Public Health colleagues to ensure strategies which enhance health and wellbeing, through improving opportunities for exercise and contact with nature, improving air quality and improving green spaces for mental and physical wellbeing, align.</p>	
Other Significant Impacts	None identified.	