



Conversion & Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings Draft Policy

Equality Impact Assessment

**North Norfolk District Council
Planning Policy Team**

Telephone: 01263 516318

E-Mail: planningpolicy@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Write to: Planning Policy Manager,

North Norfolk District Council,

Holt Road, Cromer, NR27 9EN

www.northnorfolk.org/ldf

**All of the LDF Documents can be made
available in Braille, audio, large print or in other languages.
Please contact 01263 516318 to discuss your requirements.**



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

CORE STRATEGY SINGLE POLICY REVIEW: CONVERSION & RE-USE OF RURAL BUILDINGS AS DWELLINGS DRAFT POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006 require an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to be carried out for all services and policies delivered by Local Authorities.
- 1.2 The purpose of the EqIA is to highlight the likely impact of the strategy and policies on the target groups and to take action to improve the policies where appropriate as a result.
- 1.3 This document sets out the EqIA of the Conversion & Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings Policy.
- 1.4 For the purpose of this assessment, the following equality issues have been considered:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender
 - Race
 - Religion or Belief
 - Sexual Orientation

Directorate	Service	Author	Date Completed
Community	Planning Policy	Colin Reuben	February 2010
Title of the policy being assessed	Conversion & Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings Draft Policy		
The status of the policy	<p>The Conversion & Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings Draft Policy is due to be submitted for independent examination in the Spring of 2010, and formally adopted at the end of 2010.</p> <p>The Planning Policy Service incorporates equality and diversity issues into their work, aiming to promote equal, inclusive and diverse neighbourhoods in North Norfolk, in support of the corporate values of the Council. The draft policy has undergone a Sustainability Appraisal and Public Consultation process which allowed equality and diversity issues to be addressed, and which has ensured that members of the community have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals put forward.</p>		
1) What are the aims, objectives and purposes of the policy?	<p>The Conversion & Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings Policy will replace the saved Local Plan Policy 29 contained within the Core Strategy (adopted September 2008), which is part of the Local Development Framework for North Norfolk. The purpose of the policy is to set out a single development control policy for the conversion and re-use of rural buildings as dwellings in North Norfolk, and will be used in assessing planning applications in the District up until 2021. The policy seeks to support the Core Aims set out in the Core Strategy and in particular to: help support the sustainability of rural communities and services and; secure the future of traditional rural buildings that positively contribute to the local distinctiveness of North Norfolk. The policy has been prepared following a Sustainability Appraisal, Appropriate Assessment and local consultation</p> <p>The Sustainability Appraisal process is used to appraise the possible social, economic and environmental impacts of the policy. It is used throughout the process to ensure that these considerations are embedded in the policy rather than being added on at the end. It should ensure that the policy meets locally identified needs in a manner that accords with the principles of sustainability.</p> <p>Various stages of public and stakeholder consultation have been carried out during preparation of the policy. The Council has gone beyond the minimum requirements of the Regulations in an attempt to ensure that interested parties have an opportunity to get involved. Further details are provided under questions 8 and 9, and within the Consultation Statement and Statement of Community Involvement.</p>		

<p>2) Does the policy support other objectives of the council?</p>	<p>The policy supports the Council’s corporate vision contained within the ‘Changing Gear’ Corporate Plan as follows:</p> <p>“Our vision for North Norfolk is of a place where everyone can enjoy a high quality of life and where the unique and attractive environment is sustained into the future.</p> <p>It is a place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where people feel safe and live in decent homes • where equality and diversity are valued and celebrated • where people have diverse career and training opportunities, and jobs which add value • where residents choose healthy lifestyles in sustainable communities and can access a wide range of activities which meet everyone’s needs • where the environment is protected and where the identity and special character of the area is retained” <p>The ‘North Norfolk Community Strategy’ identified 3 priorities for the District which are integral to the aims of the Core Strategy. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved housing; - Better jobs and prospects; and - Sustaining a high quality of life – a nice place to live, work and visit. <p>These themes are integral to the Core Strategy aims and inherent throughout the document. The policy seeks to deliver these themes through identifying suitable locations within which the conversion and re-use of rural buildings as dwellings could be acceptable.</p> <p>High levels of affordable housing need is a particular issue which is reflected in the Corporate Plan, Community Strategy and the Core Strategy. The policy offers the possibility for delivery of affordable housing in the District.</p>
<p>3) Who is intended to benefit from the policy, and in what way?</p>	<p>The policy applies to particular identified locations and could apply to new and existing residents of North Norfolk (new homes, market and affordable), and local services and facilities providers (supporting local transport and infrastructure).</p>
<p>4) What outcomes are anticipated from the policy being in place?</p>	<p>The policy will offer new opportunities for a variety of development as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New housing, including affordable housing, to meet required needs. • Where possible, safeguarding existing significant employment uses and support a variety of local businesses and key facilities/services such as schools, local convenience stores

	<p>and post offices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development which is sustainable, close to existing developments and with good access to services. 			
5) Identify and select your assessment team.	Name	Role	Responsibilities	
	Mark Ashwell	Planning Policy Manager	Management of the Planning Policy team. Primary role in the production of Planning Policy documents and providing policy advice.	
	Tracy Armitage	Senior Planning Officer	Primary role in the development of this policy and providing advice around the policy.	
	Colin Reuben	Planning Assistant	Assists in the production of Planning Policy documents and provision of policy advice.	
6) What data have you gathered for this assessment? How have you analysed this data?	Source and Age of Data	Owner	Findings	Data Gaps
	LDF Consultation Database	Planning Policy	Contact details of relevant groups who are regularly updated on the progress of the LDF.	None as far as NNDC is aware (the database is continuously updated)
	Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	Planning Policy	How different groups like to be kept involved in the consultation process.	None
	Census	Office for National Statistics (ONS)	Information on the characteristics of the North Norfolk population.	None
	Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)	Planning Policy	Information on key statistics/targets for North Norfolk, for example housing, sustainable	None

			development, environment and economy.	
7) Who are the main stakeholders of this policy?	Community	Staff/Members		Partners
	Could affect residents and community groups in selected settlements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities • Development Control • Strategic Housing • Countryside • Emergency Planning 		Any relevant organisations in North Norfolk.
8) What consultation was involved in the preparation of the policy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy involved a range of consultation events during its preparation. This included two key stages - an initial consultation with statutory bodies and a subsequent public consultation. • The Council has gone beyond the minimum requirements of the Regulations in an attempt to ensure that interested parties have an opportunity to get involved. This has included contact with 'hard to reach' groups and a variety of engagement methods, including distribution of consultation material, an on-line consultation system, a public exhibition at the Council offices and articles in the local media, Outlook magazine (sent to all households in North Norfolk) and the LDF Newsletter sent to all contacts on our consultation database. More details are contained in the Consultation Statement. 			
9) Were all minority groups included and able to access consultations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of different methods were used to try and ensure that minority groups have had an opportunity to get involved as described above, and more details are provided in the Statement of Community Involvement and the Consultation Statement. • The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was prepared at the outset of LDF preparation, and sets out how the council will seek to engage the public, existing groups and 'hard to reach' groups. Discussions were held with specific groups during preparation of the SCI document, about how to engage with different groups of the population, and the document itself was subject to consultation and independent examination. • The Planning Policy team maintains a 'Consultation Database' of individuals, organisations, Parish Councils, businesses and voluntary groups, many of which represent minority groups, who wish to receive regular updates on the progress of the LDF and be notified of key stages of consultation. This ensures that they are aware of the consultation and the different methods they can use to get involved. • Analysing which minority groups have or have not responded 			

	to consultation events could prove useful for trying to improve the number of responses in future consultation events.	
10) Are there any concerns that the policy could have a negative impact with regard to race and ethnicity?	No	What evidence (actual data or assumptions) do you have to support this?
		Consultation on the policy did not raise any particular issues in terms of race and ethnicity and it is not expected to have a negative impact on any particular group. The 2001 Census found that approximately 97.8% of the North Norfolk population are White British. Different ethnic groups have had equal opportunities to influence the content of the policy. Contacts for ethnic groups are on our LDF consultation database which is continuously updated. As such, they are sent our newsletter detailing the progress of the policy, and information on how to get involved in the process.
11) Are there any concerns that the policy could have a negative impact with regard to gender?	No	What evidence (actual data or assumptions) do you have to support this?
		Consultation on the policy did not raise any particular issues in terms of gender and it is not expected to have a negative impact on any particular group. Different genders have had equal opportunities to influence the content of the policy. The Sustainability Appraisal criteria included consideration of a number of factors such as distance to schools, local shops and pedestrian access.
12) Are there any concerns that the policy could have a negative impact with regard to disability?	No	What evidence (actual data or assumptions) do you have to support this?
		Consultation on the policy did not raise any particular disability access issues and it is not expected to have a negative impact on any particular group. Prior consultation on the Core Strategy did raise issues in terms of requiring all new places and buildings to be accessible to all, and the Design policy was altered to reflect comments received. Proposals for residential conversion will need to comply with all other relevant policies of the adopted Core Strategy including Policy H01 (where development is of appropriate scale). This policy requires a proportion of new dwellings to be suitable or easily adaptable for occupancy by the elderly, infirm or disabled. Disability groups have had equal opportunities to influence the content of the policy. Contacts for organisations representing disabled people are on our LDF consultation database which is continuously updated. As such, they are sent our newsletter detailing the progress of the policy, and information on how to get involved in the process. Different methods of engaging people have been used, many of which are suitable for those with disabilities.

		<p>20% of the North Norfolk population have low literacy levels, for whom the standard consultation material and forms may have been difficult to understand. At the Core Strategy stage, a number of exhibitions were held around the district to enable people to come and talk about the proposals and seek further guidance on getting involved, and representations were accepted by letters, rather than use of the official form, to enable as many people as possible to engage.</p> <p>The policy has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placed emphasis on reducing the need to travel, and on improved accessibility. It has aimed to ensure that residential conversions of rural buildings will be allowed in locations with reasonable access to public transport and local facilities/services.
<p>13) Are there any concerns that the policy could have a negative impact with regard to age?</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>What evidence (actual data or assumptions) do you have to support this?</p> <p>The policy is not expected to have a negative impact on any particular group. Prior consultation on the Core Strategy did identify the need for suitable housing for elderly people and affordable housing for young people. Proposals for residential conversion will need to comply with all other relevant policies of the adopted Core Strategy including Policy H01 (where development is of appropriate scale). This policy requires a proportion of new dwellings to be suitable or easily adaptable for occupancy by the elderly, infirm or disabled. In addition the policy offers the possibility for delivery of affordable housing in the District. Different age groups have had equal opportunities to influence the content of the policy. Contacts for organisations representing older and younger people are on our LDF consultation database which is continuously updated. As such, they are sent our newsletter detailing the progress of the policy, and information on how to get involved in the process.</p> <p>The policy has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed the potential for the provision of a range of homes for families, couples and single people, as well as affordable housing for both old and young. Some homes could be Lifetime Standard or residential homes/assisted living units; placed emphasis on reducing the need to travel, and on improved accessibility. It has aimed to ensure that residential conversions of rural

		buildings will be allowed in locations with reasonable access to public transport and local facilities/services.
14) Are there any concerns that the policy could have a negative impact with regard to religion/belief?	No	<p>What evidence (actual data or assumptions) do you have to support this?</p> <p>Consultation on the policy did not raise any particular issues in terms of religion/belief and it is not expected to have a negative impact on any particular group. The 2001 Census found that approximately 77.5% of the North Norfolk population are Christian and 13.9% are of no religion. Religious groups have had equal opportunities to influence the content of the policy. Contacts for local churches and religious organisations are on our LDF consultation database which is continuously updated. As such, they are sent our newsletter detailing the progress of the policy, and information on how to get involved in the process.</p> <p>The policy has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aimed to ensure that the conversion and re-use of rural buildings will, where possible, be located close to existing town and village centres, so as to support local organisations and promote better integration with the existing community.
15) Are there any concerns that the policy could have a negative impact with regard to sexual orientation?	No	<p>What evidence (actual data or assumptions) do you have to support this?</p> <p>Consultation on the policy did not raise any particular issues in terms of sexual orientation and it is not expected to have a negative impact on any particular group. Different groups representing sexuality have had equal opportunities to influence the content of the policy.</p>
<p>16) Could the negative impact you have identified in questions 10 - 15 lead to the potential for adverse impact if the policy is implemented?</p> <p>Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting</p>		<p>Where possible impacts were identified, for example the need for particular types of housing, these were able to be incorporated into the Core Strategy policies that apply across the District.</p> <p>The Core Strategy Policies are monitored regularly through the Annual Monitoring Report. This will allow the identification of any negative impacts that had not been anticipated, and in addition to this, the LDF system allows for the review of policies where necessary.</p>

<p>equality of opportunity for one group?</p> <p>Or any other reason?</p> <p>Can the impact be mitigated by existing means?</p> <p>If yes, what actions will you undertake to mitigate these impacts and revise the policy?</p>			
<p>17) Describe the arrangements for reporting and publishing this assessment.</p>	<p>This assessment was undertaken by officers in the Planning Policy team, in consultation with the Equality and Diversity team.</p>		
<p>Has this assessment been undertaken by a minimum of two staff?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Has this assessment been scrutinised by your Directorate Steering Group?</p>	<p>This assessment has been looked at by two board members, the board meeting was after the submission date.</p>
<p>If the policy is new, or requires a decision by Councillors to revise, has this Equality Impact Assessment been included with the report?</p>		<p>The policy was approved for consultation purposes in September 2009. The Cabinet report included consideration of equality issues.</p>	
<p>Have any actions identified in this assessment been included in your service equality and diversity action plan?</p>		<p>No</p>	
<p>Completed by:</p>	<p>Colin Reuben</p>	<p>Signed off by:</p>	<p>Mark Ashwell</p>