HORAM PARISH COUNCIL

HORAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2023 – 2040

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

AUGUST 2023

Horam Parish Council

Horam Neighbourhood Plan, 2023-2040

Equalities Impact Assessment

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Horam Parish Council

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1. Introduction

1.1 This document is the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) that has been prepared to accompany the submission version of the Horam Neighbourhood Plan (NDP).

1.2 The Equalities Act places a duty on public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between persons who have a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not. 'Protected characteristics' are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

1.3 This report assesses the submission version of the Horam NDP to ensure that Horam Parish Council (as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the Horam NDP) is satisfying its statutory duties in this regard.

1.4 EqIA is a systematic analysis of a policy or policies, in order to explore the potential for an adverse impact on a particular group or community. It is a method of assessing and recording the likely differential and/or adverse impact of a policy on people from different groups. If a policy results in unfairness or discrimination, then changes to eliminate or lessen the impact should be considered.

1.5 The purpose of the analysis is to increase participation and inclusion, to change the culture of public decision-making and to place a more proactive approach to the promotion of equality and fairness at the heart of public policy. The processes involved in conducting the analysis should not be looked on as an end in themselves. Instead, it should be borne in mind that the aim is the promotion of fairness and equality of opportunity and thus it is the outcomes that are of primary concern. In undertaking the EqIA, it is important to keep in mind why the Horam NDP is needed, what the intended outcomes are, and how it will be ensured that the policies will work as intended.

1.6 For this purposes of this EqIA an assessment has been made on whether the Horam NDP has a positive, negative or neutral impact on each of the protected characteristics (in so far as data is available).

2. Baseline Data

2.1 Data for the Horam NDP area is available from the 2021 Census for the following protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, and religious belief. These are summarised in the box below and Illustrated overleaf (Figure 1).

2.2 No data is available for the following protected characteristics: gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation.

Horam Neighbourhood Area – Population Characteristics

Total Population: 3,100

Age: 19.6% of the population are children aged 17 or less, 54.8% are in the working age groups (ages 18-64), with 25.6% in the older age groups (over 64).

Sex: 1,500 (48.1%) males; 1,601 (51.9%) females.

Country of Birth: 94.9% of residents were born in the UK; 2.2% were born elsewhere in the EU. 2.9% were born in other countries.

Ethnic group: 98% of residents are White; 1.2% of residents are Mixed/multiple ethnic groups; and 0.8% are other ethnic group.

Religion: 48.3% of residents are Christian; 44.8% of residents do not have a religion; 6% of residents chose to not answer the question; 0.9% of residents are of other religious affiliations.

Source: ONS – 2021 Census

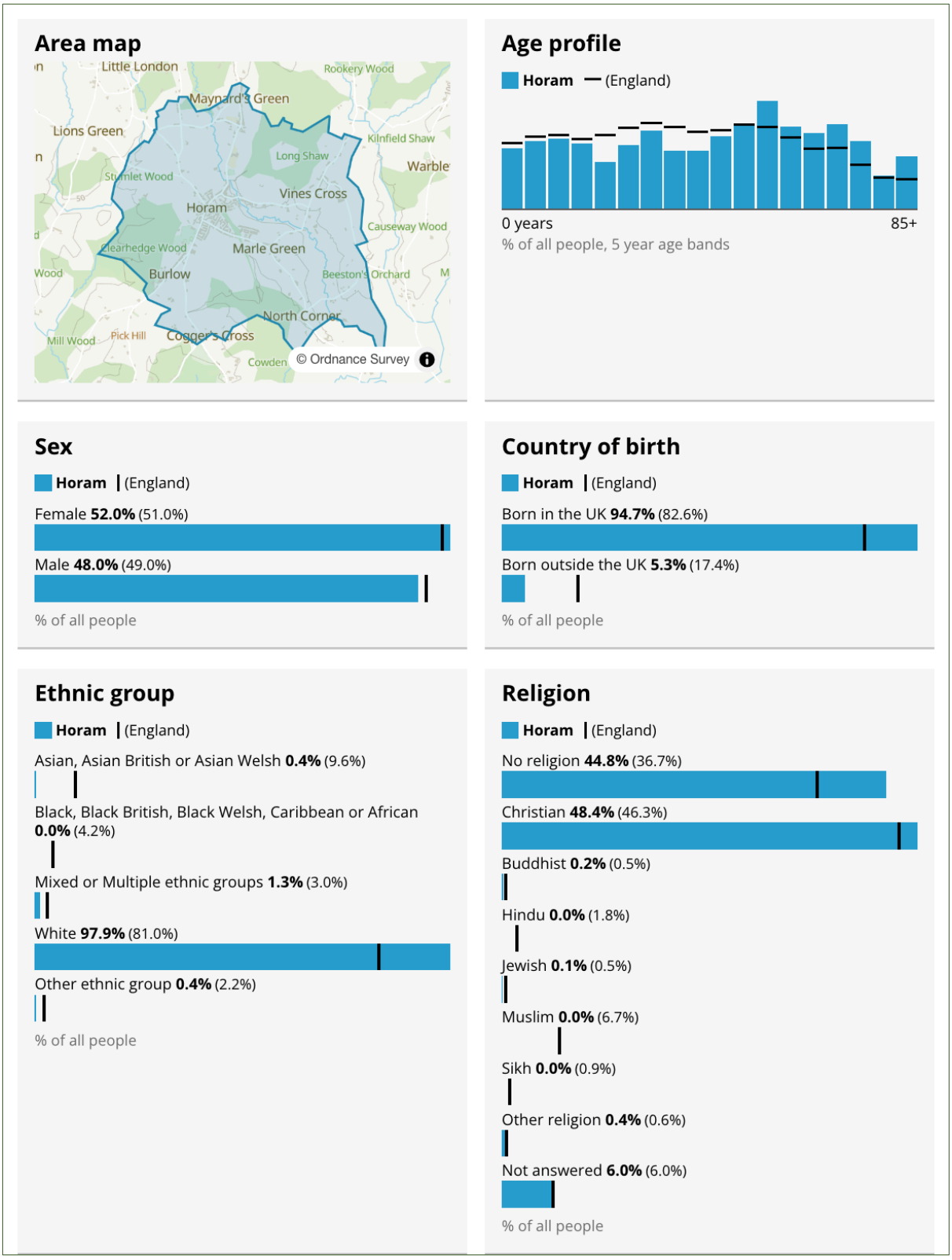

Figure 1: Horam Neighbourhood Area – Population Characteristics

3. Process of Community Consultation

3.1 All written communications were in English. It was not considered necessary to translate them into any other language.

3.2 Throughout the Plan preparation process the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has sought to ensure that local residents, their representatives, local businesses, interest groups and wider interested parties, including statutory and regulatory bodies, have been actively consulted and their views sought.

3.3 Agendas, key reports and updates have been regularly provided online on the Horam Parish Council website.

3.4 The overarching principles of the stakeholder engagement process has been to engage in a manner that is extensive, effective, inclusive, fair, transparent and proportionate.

3.5 Various communication channels have been used to keep residents informed, invite participation and share views. These include:

- Regular updates on the Parish Council website.
- Updates included within the Parish 'Village Diary' publication.
- Public meetings of the Steering Group and updates at Annual Parish Meetings.
- Use of social media (Facebook) to provide updates on the Plan and consultation stages.
- Production of posters and flyers distributed in advance of consultation activities and events.

3.6 Widespread consultation was carried out during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Steering Group made every effort, using a variety of methods, to reach all of the local community. This included the following:

- A Parish survey used to launch the Neighbourhood Plan and seek feedback on a wide range of issues and opportunities for inclusion in the Plan, including a 'Place Check' form of questions seeking feedback on (i) things people like about the Parish, (ii) things they don't like, and (iii) things that need to be worked on.
- Exhibitions and survey seeking views on proposed objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan which had been generated from a combination of feedback from the initial Parish survey and wider background research into the issues and challenges facing the area.

- A poster competition for primary school age pupils seeking their ideas around the future of the Parish, with winning entries being used to create a logo for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Exhibitions and survey seeking views on initial policy ideas, including presentation of supporting background material.
- Ongoing liaison with Wealden District Council to seek input and advice on the emerging Plan.
- The Regulation 14 consultation including an exhibition and surveys.

3.7 More on the above can be found in the Consultation Statement prepared and submitted alongside the Neighbourhood Plan. Information is also available online via the Horam Parish Council website

3.8 Consideration has been given to all comments and responses made in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. In particular, the responses to events and surveys in the early stages of the plan-making process were used to shape the vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan.

4. Likely Impact on Groups with Protected Characteristics

4.1 The Horam NDP Vision states that:

*"The essentially **rural character** of Horam parish and its settlements, which is a primary attribute for local people, is **retained**.*

*The parish's landscape character, that reflects its location in the 'Southern slopes of the High Weald', with high woodland and tree cover and hedgerows, enclosing generally smaller fields as well as settlements, is retained and enhanced, including through a **"landscape - led" approach to development.***

*The influence of the Parish's topography on **the pattern and form of settlements**, on visual linkages with the surrounding countryside, and on the tendency for flash flooding of the Waldron Ghyll, have been recognised and reflected in development proposals.*

*The general **"greenness" of the Parish**, not only the fields and woodlands of its countryside but also in terms of its trees, hedges and green spaces within built - up areas, are retained and enhanced, including by identification of a 'green infrastructure' network that **promotes biodiversity and reinforces connections with the surrounding countryside.***

*Opportunities for **walking, cycling and horse riding**, provided notably by the Cuckoo Trail as well as the Public Rights of Way (PROW) network and highways, continue to be encouraged, including through new and improved links and routes, in ways that increase access to the countryside and to local shops and services.*

*The **distinct identities of individual settlements** have not been further eroded.*

*Horam retains a core of businesses and community **facilities that well serve the surrounding area**, which has been supported by a range of initiatives to encourage their use by both residents and visitors.*

*The nature and mix of development have clearly helped meet **local needs**.*

*The **local vernacular** of building forms and materials has been effectively reflected in new buildings, whilst also contributing to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.*

*The **heritage of the parish** has been respected, while references to Horam's historical ties with the railway and the wider parish's ties with iron making and brick making are recognised"*

4.2 The vision of the Horam NDP is expected to have a positive likely impact on groups with protected characteristics. It recognises and supports the conservation of Horam's rural character and supports access for the whole community to local social, employment, leisure and environmental amenities.

4.3 The Horam NDP contains a series of objectives that set out how the Parish Council proposes to deliver its vision for Horam up to 2040. Delivery of the objectives will be through a combination of planning policies, projects and community action. Each objective is reviewed to assess whether it is likely to have an impact on groups within the Parish with protected characteristics:

Objective	**Likely Impact**	**Commentary**
Objective 1: To ensure that future development is consistent with protecting and maintaining the largely rural character of the Parish.	Neutral	This objective will help maintain and protect Horam's rural character. Although considered beneficial for the community as a whole there is no clear impact or focus on residents with protected characteristics.
Objective 2: To safeguard the Parish character and heritage with particular regard to design.	Neutral	This objective promotes the retention of Horam's character and heritage assets. However, there is no clear impact or focus on residents with protected characteristics.
Objective 3: To ensure new developments are in sustainable locations and supported by access to sufficient local infrastructure.	Positive	This objective promotes sustainably located developments so is expected to have a positive impact on residents with protected characteristics.
Objective 4: To promote a balance of social mix and age distributions within the Parish.	Positive	This objective promotes a balance of social mix and age distributions in Horam and is expected to be of benefit for residents, including older residents and younger families.
Objective 5: To protect and enhance the natural environment and tranquillity of the Parish.	Neutral	This objective promotes the protection and enhancement of Horam's natural and tranquil environments. However, there is no

		clear impact or focus on residents with protected characteristics.
Objective 6: To conserve and enhance areas of natural habitat.	Neutral	This objective promotes the conservation of Horam's natural habitats. However, there is no clear impact or focus on residents with protected characteristics.
Objective 7: To help address climate change.	Neutral	This objective will have a neutral impact. There is no clear impact or focus on residents with protected characteristics.
Objective 8: To avoid flood-risk caused by new developments.	Neutral	This objective seeks to avoid or mitigate flood-risk caused by new developments. There is no clear impact or focus on residents with protected characteristics.
Objective 9: To encourage businesses within the Parish that help to meet local needs & are compatible with the character and amenities of the Parish.	Positive	This objective promotes supporting local businesses that meet a local need so is expected to have a positive impact on residents with protected characteristics.
Objective 10: To encourage cycling, walking and public transport services.	Positive	This objective encourages active and sustainable travel. It is expected to be of benefit for residents, supporting safe travel for all irrespective of age, sex or ability.
Objective 11: To maintain and foster Horam's community spirit.	Positive	This objective promotes the retention and enhancement of Horam's community spirit. It is expected to be of benefit for residents, supporting an inclusive community with a range of accessible services and facilities to meet everyday needs.

4.4 Five of the objectives are considered to have a positive likely impact on those with protected characteristics. Six of the Horam NDP objectives are considered to have a likely neutral impact due to a lack of clear impact or focus on residents with protected

characteristics. There are no individual objectives that are considered likely to have a negative impact.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The Horam NDP provides a suite of objectives and policies to respond to the vision for the benefit of the local community as a whole including those with protected characteristics.

5.2 In preparing the Horam NDP, Horam Parish Council and the NDP Steering Group have sought to engage widely with all of the local community. They have gone beyond minimum consultation requirements to gather the views of the community.

5.3 In conclusion, the assessment finds the Horam NDP to be appropriate and that the duty of care prescribed by the Equalities Act (2010) is met.

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