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Sheerwater Regeneration

Equality Impact Assessment

Sheerwater Compulsory Purchase Order

Report to Woking Borough Council

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Executive Summary

Introduction: In October 2017, Woking Borough Council (WBC) commissioned Dr Sophia Skyers of CIBS IQ Research to undertake a predictive Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) on a planning Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). The CPO is necessary to implement proposals that have been developed as part of WBC's plans for the regeneration of Sheerwater. In tandem with its statutory planning obligations, WBC has a statutory responsibility, under the Equality Act, 2010, to consider the impact of its decisions in relation to age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership. A full EqIA and Action Plan have been presented to the Council at various stages, and have been continually revisited and updated, mirroring the process of development of the regeneration plans, and action taken by WBC. WBC's Planning Committee approved the Sheerwater CPO on July 30, 2020.

Approach to the EqIA: An EqIA provides a systematic and comprehensive tool to assist the Council in fulfilling its statutory obligations. In the case of the Sheerwater CPO, it is by assessing the impact of the regeneration proposals, and implementation of them, through the prism of equality, and the steps that have been taken to mitigate any potential negative impacts and unlawful discrimination and enhance positive impacts.

The EqIA has been structured around an appraisal of WBC Council and Executive papers relating specifically to the regeneration proposals for Sheerwater and other documents. This has provided some of the relevant background detail. The approach to the assessment has also centred on a desk review of relevant equality and planning legislation and guidance, local and national policies and strategies, and an examination of the results of two Sheerwater Master Planning consultation exercises and processes. In addition, there is a wider body of knowledge on urban and suburban inequalities and regeneration schemes, and health inequalities, and this has also been examined as it has salience for areas like Sheerwater in enabling broader equality implications to be drawn about the potential impact of the regeneration proposals. A comparative analysis of demographic data across groups with protected characteristics living in Sheerwater at Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level, and an analysis of data from the available results of the most recent 2018 Housing Needs Analysis Survey has also been undertaken. This has been used to identify the key groups and the potential issues likely to arise from implementing the CPO. The Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team has also undertaken a qualitative inquiry into tenants' experiences of relocation, and the service provided to inform and strengthen the processes as the regeneration moves forward.

In addition to the desk research, a number of in-depth interviews have been carried out with WBC officers and Councillors, including the Leader of the Council who is the portfolio holder for regeneration, one of the three Canalside ward members for the borough, a Surrey County Councillor, Halo, independent consultation and engagement specialists who were appointed in November 2017 by WBC to undertake a statutory consultation on the proposed changes to existing tenancy agreement for secure tenants, Woking Access Group, Woking Asian Business Forum, the Vice Chair of Sheerwater Together, and a member of Sheerwater Residents Association. In addition,

site visits with members of the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team and ThamesWey Developments Limited have been undertaken at various stages, and focused discussions with members of the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team. The focused discussions with the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team have included joining a housing officer on a single home visit to a tenant which was part of the Council's Housing Needs Assessment process. This approach has formed part of an ongoing and pre-emptive approach to assessing the development of the Sheerwater regeneration proposals, the incorporation of changes throughout the process, and the potential impact of the process as the proposals are implemented going forward, following approval of the CPO.

The EqlA has focused its analysis on a set of questions, structured around the following EqlA framework. These are set out in the following table:

EqlA Assessment Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the current situation in Sheerwater? • What is the existing situation in relation to all groups, in particular those with protected characteristics? • What is the potential negative impact of the regeneration on residents? • How can potentially negative impacts be effectively mitigated and in what way(s)? • Are there any protected groups that are disadvantaged and if so in what way(s)? • Are there any protected groups on which there is a positive impact and if so in what way(s)? • What is the potential for positive medium and longer-term impacts of the regeneration on residents in Sheerwater? • How can potentially positive impacts be enhanced and in what way(s)? • What is the specific impact on commercial and owner-occupiers, leaseholders, and tenants who share protected characteristics within the footprint of the proposed regeneration area and proposed development? • To what extent do the regeneration proposals potentially reduce the degree and/or the extent of disadvantage among and between groups with protected characteristics in Sheerwater? • How will the regeneration directly impact and contribute to the realisation of the potential equality effects of the planned regeneration? • What is the potential impact of the regeneration proposals on community cohesion in Sheerwater? • How will the results of the EqlA be publicised and monitored?

Key Conclusions: The CPO effects have been considered from an equality perspective in relation to the following key themes:

- Housing development and redevelopment
- Community recreational and leisure facilities
- Employment and training
- Local businesses
- Public realm, open space, and safety and security
- Travel, transport, and connectivity
- Community cohesion

There have been unprecedented national developments that have taken place as the EqIA has developed, specifically, the implications of COVID-19 as they relate to equality issues that are relevant and a brief section has been included. The regeneration is considered overall to be positive in its impact on the local population. The implementation of the regeneration and the phasing of the housing proposals were designed with the specific objective of enabling residents to remain in Sheerwater. The regeneration is also considered to have a positive impact because it will stimulate inward investment by transforming the physical fabric of the area and will re-empowering economic and social progress. The rationale underpinning the scheme recognises the inbuilt contradictions that arise from the regeneration improving the urban environment, but thereby making it more expensive and giving rise to higher house prices. It is for this reason that a profit cap has been put in place, alongside a compensatory and support measures for home owners, tenants, and private rented tenants to mitigate the potential for negative impact, particularly on low-income groups, among which, groups with protected characteristics are disproportionately represented.

The implementation of the scheme has been led by the community recreation and leisure provision and this is positive in providing residents with tangible expressions of progress, prior to the implementation of the housing proposals. The scheme will deliver a net increase in affordable housing, including provision for some of the most vulnerable residents currently living in Sheerwater. There will be some loss of open space but this will be minimal, and the open space that will be re-provided will be of higher quality, more useable, and will be in sympathy with measures that are designed to improve the general environment. This is also considered to be positive in terms of its impact on the health and future well-being of residents. The proposals in relation to employment and training arising from the redevelopment are also considered to be positive as they are part of specific interventions to support local people. Any proposal to support local people into employment and training interventions will however need to specifically target local people and those groups that may be harder to reach to be effective. As an illustration, targeting areas such as construction for example will require a positive action approach around recruitment and retention,

where some protected groups are under-represented in order, to ensure that the benefits of the regeneration will be shared evenly.

The consultation underpinning the scheme has been extensive and intensive. The opportunity arising from the revised timescale for the CPO has meant that WBC has been able to undertake more and varied kinds of consultation with groups that are traditionally harder to hear, and who, through a variety of access needs, are not able to engage with the more formal approaches to consultation or the more obvious tools of self-expression. The process began with the face-to-face work of the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team and Halo, an independent contractor appointed to deliver the statutory housing consultation and continued with a range of drop-in sessions, focus groups across the regeneration area using community, recreation, leisure, and educational facilities. The retail and food outlets operating in the area have also been actively engaged on a one-to-one basis, as well as through focus groups and drop-in sessions. It is the case that some of the retail and food outlets will relocate within the existing development, while others that are financially less viable, and have not been so for some time, may very well close. As many of these businesses are black and minority ethnic owned, the Council is putting in place measures to monitor the end destination of these retail and food outlet owners, and where possible relocation strategies are being pursued.

The equality implications of COVID-19 centre on concerns for the welfare and well-being of older people, black and minority ethnic people, vulnerable people facing challenging mental health issues, and for those with underlying long term health conditions. These groups are at risk of major complications and death if they contract the virus. The official advice continues to be for people to take precautions to enhance safety, with an increased emphasis on hygiene, having limited contact with others, and at the present time, maintaining social distance. This has implications for regeneration schemes such as Sheerwater in that, there are pressing decisions that need to be made particularly given the timescales for the regeneration on the one hand, and crucially, the impact of relocation decisions for example on mental and physical health, given that the official advice was to remain in situ where at all possible in the case of more vulnerable groups. Alongside official advice, there is a wealth of information emanating from a variety of sources including social media on COVID-19, some of it contradictory. This therefore provides a fertile space in which misinformation can breed, thus adding to the existing fears of residents who are already prone to anxiety, about the impact of the regeneration on them personally. The Council recognises it is important that communication with residents remains key and this forms the central component of its targeted welfare response strategy for engaging residents and supporting vulnerable residents during the pandemic in the borough and which includes Sheerwater.

The S106 agreement was signed on 17 April 2019 and the development commenced on site with works at Bishop David Brown School to build the new leisure centre, swimming pools and sports pitches, and which, as promised in the regeneration proposals, lead the development. That phase is now nearing completion and handover. The initial residential phase has now started. There are a number of recommendations resulting from the EqIA of the Sheerwater regeneration proposals that

are relevant, and these are set out below. A summary table of the EqIA, potential impacts, and mitigation measures is set out in a separate Appendix D.

Recommendations: It is recommended that:

1. As implementation of the regeneration continues, the approach to community engagement should continue to take account of groups who are *'harder to hear'*, building on the extensive engagement undertaken to date, and ensure that effective communication remains key.
2. The Council continue to ensure that Woking Access Group is engaged.
3. The Council should make the EqIA available to the stakeholders cited in this report and make the EqIA publicly available.
4. The Council continue to enhance the cohesiveness of Sheerwater by continuing to promote the area as a welcoming place, and the potential benefits of the regeneration as being inclusive.
5. The Council keep EqIA under review as the regeneration proceeds, and along predicted key milestones over the lifetime of the project.

1. Introduction and context

1.1 **Background to the EqIA and its purpose:** In October 2017, Woking Borough Council (WBC) commissioned Dr Sophia Skyers of CIBS IQ Research to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) on a planning Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). The CPO is necessary to implement proposals that have been developed as part of WBC's plans for the regeneration of Sheerwater. In tandem with its statutory planning obligations, WBC has a statutory responsibility, under the Equality Act, 2010, to consider the impact of its decisions in relation to age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership.¹ An EqIA provides a systematic and comprehensive tool to assist the Council in fulfilling its statutory obligations. In the case of the Sheerwater CPO, it is by assessing the potential impact of the regeneration proposals, and implementation of the proposals, through the prism of equality, and the steps that have been taken to mitigate any potential negative impacts and unlawful discrimination and enhance positive impacts. A full EqIA and an accompanying Action Plan have been presented to the Council at various stages since commencement of the regeneration and have been continually updated since the EqIA was commissioned. There have been appropriate actions suggested, and comments made on actions undertaken by the Council. WBC Planning Committee approved the Sheerwater CPO on July 30, 2020 and the process of conducting the EqIA since it was commissioned, has continued to be a 'live' one, mirroring and informing implementation of the CPO, and the regeneration proposals.

1.2 The area of land in Sheerwater that falls within the scope of the CPO now lies within the Canalside ward, but until the reorganisation, formed part of the Maybury and Sheerwater ward. The area covers some 31 hectares, and prior to the recent relocation of tenants and residents as part of the implementation of the regeneration proposals, Sheerwater had an estimated population of 1,565, evenly split between the number of men and women. The development and redevelopment of the CPO land sits within the context of the delivery of WBC's wider aims for mixed housing provision, economic development, and regeneration of the borough's deprived areas, as well as the implementation of specific proposals for housing delivery, economic development, and the regeneration of Sheerwater. The stated aims of the development proposals for Sheerwater centre on increased housing provision to meet the needs of a changing, and diverse population and includes affordable homes for rent and sale, and the provision of enhanced sheltered accommodation. The proposals also centre on improving social and economic opportunities for Sheerwater residents by addressing the deteriorating fabric of the neighbourhood, capitalising on employment and training opportunities arising from the development, and enhancing existing local community, leisure, sporting, recreational, and health facilities, and open space. A hybrid proposal for the regeneration of Sheerwater prepared by New Vision Homes for a residential-led mixed use

¹ Public authorities need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status. This means that the first arm of the duty applies to this characteristic but that the other arms, that is, advancing equality and fostering good relations do not apply.

development had previously received planning consent in July 2016. However, following approval of the hybrid proposals, the Council agreed with New Vision Homes that the commercial component was not economically viable. The Council therefore asked ThamesWey Developments Ltd to revisit the scheme. The process of revisiting the scheme included examining suggestions for material enhancements to the consented scheme. This was to take account of issues that had been raised during further public consultation, as well as representations that had been made to the Council. The suggestions centred on an increase in the total number of units by 20%, a revision of the housing mix to increase the number of smaller properties, and an increase in the amount and quality of open space. After examining these suggestions, the scheme was subsequently revised to take on board these considerations and were set out in a report to WBC Council on 8 February 2018, where approval was given to ThamesWey to submit a revised Hybrid Planning Application. The revised Hybrid Planning Application subsequently received planning consent and work commenced on site in Sheerwater on 22 July 2019 in the grounds of Bishop David Brown School. At the time of submitting this EqlA, the Council has secured all 120 privately owned homes within the regeneration area via voluntary agreement and 112 are under contract or have completed. The other 8 are actively engaged and are in the process of moving towards completion. Several residents have already expressed the desire to move into the first residential phase, the purple phase as soon as the town houses and apartments are available for social rent which is estimated to be between July and September 2021.

1.3 This EqlA has examined the following since being commissioned:

- a) Whether there are any negative effects on protected group(s) resulting from the Sheerwater regeneration.
- b) Whether there are any negative equality effects that would give rise to unlawful discrimination for any protected group(s).
- c) Identifies measures that might be needed to mitigate negative equality impacts on protected group(s) that might arise.
- d) Identifies potential positive equality impacts and identifies measures that might maximise them.
- e) Examines the potential impact of the regeneration proposals on community cohesion.

1.4 **Organisation of the EqlA:** The EqlA is structured in the following way: Section 2 sets the relevant legislative and policy context and Section 3 sets out the methodology that has been adopted for conducting the EqlA. Section 4 sets out the scope of the CPO and the development proposals for Sheerwater, Section 5 discusses the demographic profile of the regeneration area as it was at the start of the regeneration, as the area has changed because of the vacating and demolition of properties, and relocations. Furthermore, most of the statistical data is based on the 2011 Census with a new Census due in 2021. Section 6 discusses some of the crosscutting EqlA themes and deprivation indices that are relevant to assessing the potential impact of the regeneration proposals, and Section 7 presents the findings of the EqlA in relation to the programme of consultation and

engagement as it relates to the planning and implementation of the regeneration. Section 8 examines the potential equality impacts of specific deliverables in relation to housing, employment, business, and transport and connectivity, community leisure and recreational facilities, open space, and in relation to fostering community cohesion, arising from the regeneration. The final section 11 concludes the EqlA and sets out a series of recommendations. It also refers to an EqlA Table that summarises positive, negative, and differential impacts, and mitigation measures, identified during the EqlA.

2. The context for equality

2.1 **The legislative and policy context:** The legislative context for equality is anchored in a paradigm that has shifted over the past four decades from individual acts of restitution, to delivering equality, and addressing unlawful discrimination in a proactive and pre-emptive way. This approach embraces entire organisational systems, cultures, processes, policies, practices, and procedures, identifying the potential for negative impacts and unlawful discrimination. It relates to those who are referred to in the Equality Act 2010 as sharing a protected characteristic, specifically: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership. The Equality Act 2010 provides the legal framework to protect the rights of individuals against unlawful discrimination and to advance equal opportunities for all. As such, it means that in exercising its powers of compulsory purchase, WBC, as is the case for all public authorities, must take a considered view of the effect of any differential impacts on groups with protected characteristics, assess negative impacts, take steps to mitigate them, assess negative impacts against long-term positive impacts, and enhance positive impacts.

2.2 Section 149 of the Equality Act, 2010, sets out the general Public Sector Equality Duty to which public bodies are subject. The general equality duty is underpinned by specific duties that are designed to integrate equality considerations into the day-to-day business of public bodies by ensuring that, in the exercise of their functions, they have due regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

2.3 As well as the legal framework for equality, which is a central consideration in assessing the potential impact of WBC's strategic regeneration objectives for Sheerwater, there is also WBC's equality objectives which are reviewed, updated, and published annually, the most recent being contained within the Equalities Annual Report for 2020. There are also a range of statutory instruments, guidance, and national and local policies and strategies that have direct relevance to equality in relation to the exercise of a CPO.

2.4 In the case of WBC's planning CPO, Section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 (as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) empowers an acquiring authority, following authorisation by the Secretary of State, to compulsorily acquire land in its area. This is in circumstances where the authority can demonstrate that there is a '*compelling case in the public interest*' to do so to enable development, redevelopment, or improvement likely to deliver the sustainable economic, social, and environmental well-being of its area. The National Planning Policy Framework, 2019, sets out the more detailed requirements for the planning system to the extent that it is both '*proportionate*' and '*necessary*' to: support economic growth; achieve a wide choice of high-quality homes; widen opportunities for home ownership, and create sustainable inclusive and mixed communities. The National Policy Planning Framework is underpinned by a set of principles that include engaging and empowering local people in the shaping of development plans. The Government has also published a National Strategy for Estate Regeneration that sets out its expectations for the way in which landlords, developers and local authorities should engage with residents throughout an estate regeneration scheme, and for how residents should be protected. Whilst the socio-economic duty has now been removed from the Equality Act, 2010, socio-economic considerations are nevertheless integral to equality considerations, and planning legislation and policy. This is because group experiences intersect and are inextricably linked with socio-economic factors. Indeed, the government has produced guidance on the application of EqlA's in relation to CPO's and the guidance makes clear that in addition to assessing differential impacts on groups with protected characteristics and balancing short term negative impacts with longer term positive impacts, consideration must be given to the impact on low income. It is the case that there are, for example, a disproportionate representation of older people, disabled people and black and minority ethnic people in low-income groups.²

2.5 At the regional and local level, Surrey County Council has adopted a Surrey Strategic Partnership Plan 2010-2020. This is an important consideration in the regeneration of Sheerwater as its principal objectives centre on high standards of sustainable social, economic, and environmental development, and on the promotion of learning opportunities and healthy lifestyles. These key objectives are mirrored in the Woking Core Strategy, 2012 that likewise centre on strong, sustainable, and competitive economies and specifically designates Sheerwater as a *Priority Place* for targeted intervention by WBC, Surrey County Council, NHS Surrey, and other local authorities in the county.

2.6 **Community Cohesion:** The development of approaches to ensuring that communities are cohesive is a policy imperative of the current government and a key policy objective for WBC in the context of regeneration.³ In 2001 in the UK, following disturbances in the north of England the term community cohesion, although not a new concept, became a centrepiece of policy making. Indeed, the Home Office report of the Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion, also known as the Denham Report published in December 2001, highlighted community tensions.⁴ There

² Guidance on Compulsory Purchase Process and The Crichton Down Rules for the disposal of surplus land acquired by, or under the threat of, compulsion (DCLG, 2015).

³ WBC Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion Strategy, 2004.

⁴ Building Cohesive Communities: A report of the Ministerial Group on Public Order, Home Office 2001.

were other reports published at the same time, specifically, the report of the Community Cohesion Review Team, also known as the Cattle Report, and the findings of Lord Clarke, David Ritchie, and Lord Ousley, that broadly concurred on many of the underlying social and economic issues that contributed to the disturbances. The reports also identified the need to look holistically at communities and to develop and harness the existing economic and social capital to counteract potential fragmentation and division. This is seen as one of the cornerstones of successful urban renewal, and ultimately more cohesive communities.

3. Methodology

3.1 Approach to undertaking the EqlA: The EqlA has been structured around an appraisal of WBC Council and Executive papers relating specifically to the regeneration proposals for Sheerwater and other documents. This has provided some of the relevant background detail. The approach to the assessment has also centred on a desk review of relevant equality and planning legislation and guidance, local and national policies and strategies, and an examination of the results of two Sheerwater Master Planning consultations and processes. There is a wider body of knowledge on urban and suburban inequalities and regeneration schemes, and health inequalities, and this has also been examined as it has salience for areas like Sheerwater in enabling broader equality implications to be drawn about the potential impact of the regeneration proposals. A comparative analysis of demographic data across groups with protected characteristics living in Sheerwater at Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level at the start of the regeneration, and an analysis of data from the available results of the most recent 2018 Housing Needs Analysis Survey has also been undertaken. This has been used to identify the key groups and the potential issues likely to arise from implementation of the regeneration.

3.2 In addition to the desk research, the process has also centred on an action research approach involving attendance at officer meetings, and a number of in-depth interviews with residents, WBC officers and Councillors, including the Leader of the Council who is the portfolio holder for regeneration, the Canalside ward member, and Halo, independent consultation and engagement specialists who were appointed in November 2017 by WBC to undertake a statutory consultation on the proposed changes to the existing tenancy agreement for secure tenants. In addition, interviews have been held with the Vice Chair of Sheerwater Together, a member of Sheerwater Residents Association, and site visits made with members of the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team and ThamesWey Developments Limited, Well North Enterprises, as well as focused discussions with members of the Sheerwater Regeneration Team at various stages, and which have included a tenant home housing needs assessment visit. This approach has formed part of a pre-emptive and retrospective approach to assessing the development and revision of the Sheerwater regeneration proposals to date, and the potential impact of the process and implementation going forward following the approval of the CPO by WBC's Planning Committee on 30 July 2020. As the process of undertaking the EqlA and development and implementation of the proposals has taken place over an extended time horizon of 3+ years, many of the stakeholders have been visited or revisited using via telephone as appropriate and Zoom given the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

3.3 The EqlA has focused its analysis on a set of questions, structured around the following EqlA framework. These are set out in the following table:

EqlA Assessment Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the current situation in Sheerwater? • What is the existing situation in relation to all groups, in particular those with protected characteristics? • What is the potential negative impact of the regeneration on residents? • How can potentially negative impacts be effectively mitigated and in what way(s)? • Are there any protected groups that are disadvantaged and if so in what way(s)? • Are there any protected groups on which there is a positive impact and if so in what way(s)? • What is the potential for positive medium and longer-term impacts of the regeneration on residents in Sheerwater? • How can potentially positive impacts be enhanced and in what way(s)? • What is the specific impact on commercial and owner-occupiers, leaseholders, and tenants who share protected characteristics within the footprint of the proposed regeneration area and proposed development? • To what extent do the regeneration proposals potentially reduce the degree and/or the extent of disadvantage among and between groups with protected characteristics in Sheerwater? • How will the regeneration directly impact and contribute to the realisation of the potential equality effects of the planned regeneration? • What is the potential impact of the regeneration proposals on community cohesion in Sheerwater? • How will the results of the EqlA be publicised and monitored?

4. The scope of the CPO and the Sheerwater regeneration proposals

4.1 **The Sheerwater regeneration area:** The Sheerwater regeneration area, one of the most ethnically diverse areas in Woking was formerly within the Sheerwater and Maybury ward, but following the electoral reorganisation, now falls within the Canalside ward. The northern border of Sheerwater is demarcated by the Basingstoke Canal, and at its southern end by the South Western Main Line. The area has a canal and mature woodland, open spaces, business parks and light industrial and commercial retail units. The regeneration area, which has long needed capital investment, is principally residential and at the start of the regeneration, contained 576 homes. The main shopping parade, which could be best described as '*of its time*', is located along Dartmouth

Avenue and included two convenience stores, fast food outlets, a cafe, a pharmacy, a glazing firm which relocated to another part of Woking in 2020, and other retailers. The area also had a post office which closed in November 2019, following the resignation of the postmaster. However, there is now a new post office counter which was incorporated into the Londis store in December 2020 and offers a range of services including personal and business banking and parcel delivery. The majority of housing in the area is two-story post-war brick construction, while the Dartmouth Avenue area around the shopping district comprises 3 storey 1960s residential blocks, and 1960s 4 storey residential blocks. A small mosque, which was opened in 2017, was also located on Dartmouth Avenue. The future location of the mosque is currently the subject of ongoing discussion with the Council and the community exploring options for its future location, either in Sheerwater or within proximity of Sheerwater. A large ASDA superstore opened on Albert Drive in 2014. The area did have a public house, the Birch and Pines, but that building was demolished at the start of the regeneration.

4.2 The regeneration area is served by social, health, recreational, and educational facilities, and these include: Woking Sure Start Children's Centre, which will be part of family support, Parkview Community Centre, Sheerwater Recreation Ground which will be located in the Central Park when it is developed, Sheerwater Football Club temporarily relocated, Sheerwater Health Centre, Waterside Dental Centre and two schools, Broadmere Primary School and Bishop David Brown School, a mixed secondary school. There are local bus services that provide access to Woking and other areas, and access to the railway stations of Woking and West Byfleet, is approximately a mile in each direction from Sheerwater. The regeneration proposals include many off road cycle routes through enhanced open spaces along with enhancements to pedestrian walkways and cycling infrastructure.

4.3 **Poverty, inequality and decline in Sheerwater:** Whilst Woking as a borough is generally affluent, Sheerwater falls within one of the most deprived wards in Surrey and is inscribed with some of the classic hallmarks of decline not generally associated with life in the suburbs. Indeed, at the start of the regeneration, Sheerwater was characterised by poor housing conditions and some of the seemingly intractable issues associated with this, including unemployment, under-employment, poverty, increased premature mortality, increased morbidity including heart disease, cancer, diabetes, stroke, and other problems resulting from a lack of investment and a declining infrastructure. Moreover, there was a lack of suitable play areas for children, which the regeneration has sought to address, and while there are many open spaces in Sheerwater that are reasonably generous in size, they are largely unattractive, structurally disconnected and of limited value, consisting largely of cut amenity grass and tree planting. Moreover, they do not benefit from the natural surveillance to afford children a high degree of safety. When assessed against the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Sheerwater ranks as the worst in Surrey on dimensions of Income deprivation, Health deprivation and disability, and Employment deprivation. Moreover, large parts of the regeneration area rank among the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country and the Devonshire Avenue and Dartmouth Avenue area of Sheerwater are identified as being within the 14% most deprived areas nationally. The extent and intensity of deprivation in Sheerwater has therefore challenged the generally accepted notion of the suburb as being the apotheosis of the prosperous leafy idyll. This provides a new dimension to place-based notions of decline and social

and economic distress, which are generally seen as being exclusively inner-city urban phenomenon. The hallmarks of deterioration and concentrated disadvantage in parts of Woking such as Sheerwater are not isolated but are expressions of wider demographic and economic forces.⁵ Indeed, between 2001 and 2011, the number of suburban areas with above average poverty increased by 34% across England and Wales and the gap in concentrations of poverty between urban centres and the suburbs is narrowing.⁶

4.4 Without minimising the impact of urban poverty in larger cities and its deleterious effects, there are in fact more people experiencing poverty in suburban areas. The suburbs score higher on certain indicators, specifically: lone parents, part-time workers, disabled people, and recipients of pension credit.⁷ This has major implications for our understanding of community and place-based notions of social and economic decline and regeneration from an equality perspective. The Sheerwater CPO regeneration area, as stated above, is referenced in Surrey County Council's Strategic Partnership Plan 2010-2020 and has been designated as a Priority Place in WBC's Woking Core Strategy. This is for specific action and resources to be deployed in providing a wider range of mixed tenure new homes, upgrading the physical infrastructure and addressing some of the underlying causes and effects of decline, through a range of targeted social and economic investment measures and initiatives. The stated aims of the regeneration scheme are to provide the critical scale of development that is needed to underpin and re-empower social and economic progress to meet WBC's strategic planning objectives for the regeneration of Sheerwater, and its broader development and redevelopment strategy for the borough.

4.5 **The CPO and regeneration proposals:** The delineated CPO area covers most of the land within Sheerwater of some 31 hectares, and within that, principally but not exclusively, land on which residential and commercial properties are situated. In 2016, WBC gave full planning permission for Phases 1a, 1b and 1c of the Sheerwater regeneration scheme, and land on which residential properties are situated, and outline planning consent for the remaining phases. The scheme had been prepared by New Vision Homes, and following a commercial reappraisal, the Council asked ThamesWey Developments Limited, an arms-length company that is wholly owned by WBC to revisit the scheme. A number of substantive changes were then proposed which were set out in a report to Council on 8 February 2018, giving approval to ThamesWey to submit a revised Hybrid Planning Application and revised timetable for consideration of the CPO. The revised scheme received planning consent on 18 April 2019, and work commenced on site on 22 July 2019 at Bishop David Brown to build the new leisure centre, swimming pool and sports pitches which have now been completed. The first residential phase comprising properties for affordable rent, and open market sale or rent started on 9 September 2019, and is on course for completion in July 2021. The show homes should be ready by June 2021. 46 properties will be let at market rent which is the private element, and the social element, 46 will be for social rent. The CPO, which was approved by

⁵ Richard Florida, *The New Urban Crisis: Gentrification, Housing Bubbles, Growing Inequality, and What We Can Do About It*, Oneworld Publications, 2017.

⁶ Paul Hunter, *Poverty in Suburbia: A Smith Institute Study into the Growth of Poverty in the Suburbs of England and Wales*, Smith Institute, April 2014.

⁷ Ibid.

WBC's Planning Committee on July 30, is allowing for the regeneration of Sheerwater through a revised programme of comprehensive development and redevelopment. It is designed to assist in stemming the spiral of decline, and to enhance the living and working environment that has become degraded through historic lack of investment and disinvestment. The regeneration proposals that led to the need for a CPO, address the decline in the physical fabric and seek to capitalise on significant opportunities for developing and stimulating wider social and economic benefits. The implementation of the development proposals is through ThamesWey Developments Limited, and the social housing element will be transferred to ThamesWey Housing Limited on completion. A Sheerwater Regeneration Delivery and Oversight Panel which was created in 2019 to replace the former Sheerwater Regeneration Project Board, and Sheerwater Oversight and Delivery Panel, is responsible for overseeing the detailed implementation of the Sheerwater regeneration project by ThamesWey.

4.6 The proposals for the regeneration of Sheerwater centre on multi-use development and redevelopment comprising mixed tenure housing with a range of property sizes and types, built to lifetime homes standard, to maximise flexibility and adaptability to respond to the changing needs of the population, and to create a wider choice of homes in Sheerwater. This is coupled with a net gain in social housing, and improved space and amenity standards within an enhanced environment. The housing development is being underpinned by enhanced retail, employment and training opportunities, and social, health, recreational, sports, and leisure provision that has led the development. This is detailed more fully as follows:

- a) The demolition of 573 residential units, non-residential buildings, and sports facilities on the designated CPO land.
- b) The comprehensive phased redevelopment of Sheerwater to deliver approximately 1,142 new high-quality residential units consisting of a mix of 619 homes for sale on the open market, and 523 affordable housing units of which 134 will be specialist residential dwellings.
- c) The provision of 134 affordable assisted living residential dwellings. These units will be self-contained and will include 23 dwellings that are fully wheelchair accessible.
- d) The provision of enhanced community, leisure, recreational and play facilities including swimming pools and a gym, the provision of a community centre, enhanced nursery facilities, a health centre, improved and accessible public spaces, the provision of retail space, a new convenience store, improved pedestrian and cycling routes, car parking, and transport connections, and sustainable drainage.
- e) The plan also seeks to address skill levels in Sheerwater, and to promote employment and training opportunities for local people during the lifetime of the development and beyond.

4.7 The development comprises fifteen phases. The first phase centred exclusively on the construction of a leisure centre and the football, rugby and cricket pitches and will be ready in July

2021, and ready for use when the car park is ready later in the year around September 2021. There was no demolition of residential buildings in the initial phase, but the road at Spencer Close had to be widened to make a construction access route so the verges became smaller and parking restrictions were enforced. The intention from the outset was always for the social and recreational elements to lead the regeneration as a visible expression to residents of progress, prior to demolition of housing, and at the same time, to ensure minimal disruption to residents' lives. The redevelopment, which started on site in 2019 is scheduled to take place over some seven years.⁸

4.8 In comparison with the originally consented scheme, the proposed re-provision of public open space within the regeneration area is of significantly enhanced quality and usability. The new proposals also increase the proportion of affordable housing and this includes an increase in the number of smaller affordable units within Sheerwater, an increase in supported housing, and a significant number of one-bedroom properties that were not included in the previous scheme.

5. Baseline profile: groups with protected characteristics

5.1 **Protected groups:** In order to gain a detailed understanding of Sheerwater, a baseline was established, based on the 2011 Census, using the most detailed LSOA information available to provide a detailed level of aggregate need for the regeneration area, and relevant comparative data at ward, borough, county and national level, where needed, to elucidate LSOA data, or where detailed LSOA data were not available.⁹ The analysis centred on groups with protected characteristics, as explained in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 above. The section that follows, Section 6, includes an additional analysis of cross cutting and overlapping inequalities that are relevant to protected groups. This is in line with government guidance on EqlA's in relation to CPO's and wider considerations that relate to protected groups such as socio-economic concerns.

5.2 One of the key questions that this EqlA has sought to focus on relates to the position of protected groups in Sheerwater at the start of the regeneration and how it has progressed, and how adverse impacts can be mitigated, and positive impacts enhanced in relation to the CPO and the regeneration proposals. The EqlA has looked at all the protected characteristics as discrete categories and where data has permitted, it has also attempted to illustrate the intersections between and within the protected groups. This is important because individuals do not live their lives according to discrete analytic categories, but have complex, multiple, and often overlapping needs and identities. Indeed, as research on various policy issues has shown, and as government guidance makes clear, people often experience discrimination and exclusion on more than one dimension and have different experiences at a variety of institutional sites. This can have the effect of compounding disadvantage. Therefore, identifying these potential adverse impacts as the scheme progresses has been fundamental to implementation of the CPO.

⁸ Sheerwater Estate, Albert Drive, Sheerwater, Woking, Plan/2018/0337.

⁹ The ward level data are for the Maybury and Sheerwater ward based on the 2011 Census, prior to the incorporation of Sheerwater in the Canalside Ward. In addition, the picture is a changing one because the Census is out of date because of population changes, and because of the regeneration whereby people have moved out of the area.

5.3 There is not always sufficient evidence in relation to the protected groups for an assessment to be made with the highest level of confidence. Moreover, there is a risk that in the absence of more sophisticated data, inequalities will not be identified, measured or reduced for people who experience multiple disadvantage. Whilst some of the data gives a broad picture, given the nature of the regeneration, the picture is of course a changing one, the Census is now out of date, it is not always sufficiently nuanced enough to capture the fine-grained distinctions that disguise very different experiences, and it is therefore necessary to guard against the risk of over-simplification. As an illustration, while a group of people may be objectively identical in terms of their ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender or sexuality, the individuals within a group may see themselves as completely dissimilar. Moreover, identities are not fixed but change over time. The Census data has therefore been used alongside other data where it is available to present as full a picture as is possible.

5.4 **Age:** The Census 2011 reveals that proportion of residents in Sheerwater aged 0-4 and 5-15 is 8.9% and 15.1% respectively. This is higher than the average for Woking where the proportion is 7.3% and 6.3% in the case of both Surrey and England. There is a slightly higher proportion of working age residents, that is, those aged 18-64 in Sheerwater, 63.3%, compared with the Woking, Surrey, and England proportions which are 62.6%, 61.0% and 62.3% respectively, but a significantly lower proportion of residents in the 65+ age range, 9.6% compared with the average for Woking, Surrey and for England where it is correspondingly, 15.0% 17.2% and 16.3%. This is likely due to the relatively higher proportion of black and minority ethnic residents in Sheerwater who have a younger age structure than is the case for the population generally, and whose working age population is increasing. The age profile of the population of Surrey is older than the national average, while the age profile of Woking, as is the case in Sheerwater, is younger than the national average.

5.5 The number of people aged 65 years and over in England and Wales is projected to increase by 65% in the next 25 years to more than 16.4 million in 2033.¹⁰ The number of people aged 60 or over is expected to exceed the 20 million mark by 2030 and the number of people age 65+ is projected to increase by 40% in the next 17 years to over 16 million. The number of people 85+ is set to double in the next 23 years to over 3.4 million.¹¹ Moreover, the older population is more ethnically diverse and the number of black and minority ethnic people aged 70+ is projected to be in the region of 1.9 million by 2051 nationally. Furthermore, the LGBT charity Stonewall has estimated that there are 1 million lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, aged over 55 in the UK. The proportion of older people in Sheerwater and in the ward is likely to mirror the ageing population of England with the largest projected growth in the 55-64 age group, while the proportion of the population age 65+ and 85+ will remain a smaller proportion of the overall population, with modest increases. This does nonetheless have important implications for service planning and delivery in the regeneration area, and for the regeneration scheme which brings forward enhanced provision to meet the needs of a young working age population, homes for adults with support needs, and enhanced supported

¹⁰ Challenges of an ageing population, Age UK, 22 April 2013.

¹¹ Later Life in the United Kingdom, Age UK, August 2017.

housing provision for older people, disabled people and other residents requiring a supported living environment.

Age	Sheerwater %	Woking %	Surrey %	England %
0-4	8.9	7.3	6.3	6.3
5-15	15.1	12.8	13.0	12.6
16-17	3.1	2.3	2.5	2.5
18-24	9.3	6.9	7.7	9.4
18-64	63.3	62.6	61.0	62.3
65+	9.6	15.0	17.2	16.3
85+	1.9	2.3	2.7	2.2

5.6 Disability: According to the 2011 Census the proportion of residents in Sheerwater who consider that their daily activities are limited to some extent by having a disability or illness, is 19.2%. This is higher than the average for Woking, Surrey, and England where it is 13.0% 13.5% and 17.6% respectively. The proportion of residents who consider themselves to be considerably limited by having a disability in Sheerwater is 9.9%, compared with the significantly lower proportions of 5.5% for Woking, 5.7% for Surrey and 8.3% for England as a whole.

Limiting Illness	Sheerwater %	Woking %	Surrey %	England %
Day to day activities limited a little	19.2	13.0	13.5	17.6
Day to day activities limited a lot	9.9	5.5	5.7	8.3

5.7 Based on the 2011 Census, a significantly higher proportion of the population in Sheerwater, 20.2% claim working age benefits, compared with Woking, 6.8%, Surrey 6.1%, and 11% in England. While older people lead very productive lives, contributing to the economy and to civic society, there is also a direct relationship between disability and age, as the onset of disability does tend to increase with age. Indeed, disability free life expectancy has declined for both women and men in the older population nationally. Whereas in 2010-12, a woman age 65 could anticipate 11.2 additional years free from disability, this has now declined to 10.9 years. Moreover, whereas men could have expected 10.6 years disability free life expectancy, it has declined to 10.3 years.¹² This too has important implications for the regeneration scheme given the relatively higher proportion of Sheerwater residents requiring a supported living environment, the high proportion of residents with a life-limiting illness, and the necessity for there to be sufficient housing provision to meet current and future housing needs, as well as open space that increases the potential for physical outdoor activity which impacts positively on the health of older people.

5.8 Sex: The 2011 Census revealed an equal 50% split in the proportion of men and women in Sheerwater. This compares with the average for the ward, Surrey, and England where, in all cases, the proportion of women is higher than the proportion of men. This is set out in the following table:

Sex	Sheerwater	Woking %	Surrey %	England %
Men	50.0	49.5	49.0	49.2
Women	50.0	50.5	51.0	50.8

¹² Ibid.

5.9 Sexual orientation and gender reassignment: There is a dearth of reliable data on sexual orientation in England, the UK, and at a sub-regional level. The ONS Integrated Household Survey (IHS) introduced questions on self-perceived sexual identity of adults in the UK, which is one component of sexual orientation. Data from 2017 IHS indicates that 2.0% of UK residents identified as lesbian or gay, an increase from 1.5% in 2012, 0.5% as bisexual, 93.2% as heterosexual or straight and 0.3% as other sexual identity. The IHS found that younger people, age 16-24 were more likely to identify as LGB, 4.2% and that this correspondingly decreased with age with 0.7% of adults over the age of 65 being likely to identify. Moreover, men were more likely to identify as being gay 1.7%, than women who identified as lesbian, 0.9%. Women were however twice as likely to identify as being bisexual, 0.9%, compared with men, 0.6%.¹³ A 2017 aggregate study by Public Health England that synthesised 22 key surveys to provide an estimate of the LGB population found that a maximum of 3.2 million people from a population of 54.3 million would self-identify as belonging to a sexual minority in England. There was also correspondence with the IHS whereby the Public Health England Survey found that the proportion of people who identify as LGB is highest, 4.74%, among young adults up to age 34 and decreases with every older age group. The proportion is also higher in men, 3.10%, than in women, 1.92%, and in the mixed ethnic groups, which is linked to its younger age structure. It is likely that in the future, there will be more people from black and minority ethnic groups identifying as LGB given the current younger age profile.¹⁴ This has implications for Sheerwater given the high proportion of black and minority ethnic young people living in the area, and as the black and minority ethnic population increases and as it ages. According to the data from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, there were 0.8% of couples living in a same sex civil partnership or cohabiting in Woking.

5.10 There are major gaps in equality data in relation to gender reassignment, and no local level statistics. According to a report by the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, the transgender population is estimated to be in the region of 650,000 people in the UK, and this may be an underestimate.

5.11 Race: The ethnic profile of Sheerwater differs markedly from the composition for Surrey and the UK as a whole. This is mainly due to the very large black and minority ethnic population, which is the highest proportion in Woking, giving the area a truly international character. In fact, in areas such as Sheerwater, it is no longer accurate to talk of a minority ethnic community since, while Sheerwater is a long-established community, there have been significant changes in the demographics of the local population over the last 20 years as a result of inward and outward migration. As illustrated in the following table, based on the results of the 2011 Census, the proportion of White British residents in Sheerwater is 51.9%. This is significantly lower than the average for Woking Surrey and England, which is 74.9%, 83.5% and 79.8% respectively. In terms of the proportion of all non-white British minority ethnic communities, the proportion is 48.1% in Sheerwater compared with 25.1% for Woking, 16.5% for Surrey and 20.2% for England as a whole. The largest minority ethnic group in Sheerwater is the Pakistani group comprising 26.3% of the

¹³ ONS Integrated Household Survey, Sexual orientation, UK, 2017.

¹⁴ Producing modelled estimates of the size of the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) population of England, Final Report, Public Health England, January 2017.

population, and this compares with the significantly lower proportion of 5.7% for Woking, 1.0% for Surrey, and 2.1% for England. This is followed by the white Other group which comprises 8.9% of the population, and the black African and black Caribbean group which comprises 2.3%, and the Indian group which comprises 1.4%. The mixed population of Sheerwater comprises 3.1% of the population compared with 2.4% for Woking, 2.1% for Surrey and 2.3% for England as a whole. Moreover, in the UK, the mixed population is the fastest growing in percentage terms.

Ethnic Groups	Sheerwater	Woking %	Surrey %	England %
White British	51.9	74.9	83.5	79.8
White Other	8.9	8.7	6.9	5.7
Black African, Caribbean, and Black British	2.3	1.4	1.1	3.5
Asian/Asian British: Indian	1.4	2.3	1.8	2.6
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	26.3	5.7	1.0	2.1
All non-white ethnic groups	39.2	16.4	9.6	14.6
All non-white British ethnic groups	48.1	25.1	16.5	20.2
Mixed	3.1	2.4	2.1	2.3

5.12 In Sheerwater, again, based on the 2011 Census, a lower proportion of residents, 79.4% have English as a principal language. This compares with a significantly higher proportion of residents who have English as a principal language in Woking, 89.9%, Surrey, 94.1%, and 92.0% in England. There is also a recognised feminisation of migration to the UK, which has implications for Woking in that it is part of a global trend where women migrate to join their families, as well as for economic reasons.

5.13 **Religion or belief:** The religious make up of Sheerwater reflects its diverse ethnic composition, with a correspondingly much lower proportion of Christian religions and a much higher proportion of Muslim and non-Christian religions than is the case at the borough, regional or national level. The 2011 Census reveals that the proportion of residents who describe themselves as Christian in Sheerwater is 41.2% and this forms the largest religious group. This reflects the ethnic composition of Sheerwater and compares with a considerably higher proportion of Christians for Woking 58.8%, Surrey, 62.8%, and England, 59.4%. The next largest grouping is for all non-Christian religions comprising 32% in Sheerwater, compared with significantly smaller proportions of 10.7% for Woking, 5.0% for Surrey and 8.7% for England. The next largest religious group in Sheerwater is the Muslim religion comprising 29.9%, compared with the considerably smaller proportion for Woking of 7.4%, Surrey 2.2%, and the average for England, 5.0%. There are 20.8% of residents who describe themselves as having no religion in Sheerwater, and this compares with 23.1% for Woking, 24.8% for Surrey and an average of 24.7% for England.

Religion and Belief				
Religion	Sheerwater %	Woking %	Surrey %	England %
Christian	41.2	58.8	62.8	59.4
Hindu	1.0	2.0	1.3	1.5
Muslim	29.9	7.4	2.2	5.0
All non-Christian religions	32.0	10.7	5.0	8.7
No religion	20.8	23.1	24.8	24.7

5.14 Pregnancy and maternity: There are significant deprivation and equality issues for women at the developmentally sensitive stage of pregnancy and when caring for newly born children. While lone parents are not a homogenous group, lone parent households do tend on average to be poorer than two parent households. As evidenced by a proxy measure for poverty and disadvantage, in Sheerwater, the Census reveals that the proportion of lone parent households with a dependent child, which tend to be headed by women, is considerably higher in the regeneration area 9.4% compared with the average for the borough, 4.6%, for Surrey, 4.7%, and for England, 7.1%. There is scientific evidence that the impact of disadvantage on health begins before birth and can then be transmitted through successive generations. This is the effect of the cumulative influence of factors operating contemporaneously, social, environmental, economic, and genetic, and which include epigenetic effects and our epigenetic endowment.¹⁵ During pregnancy, mothers in deprived areas are more likely to face multiple stressful life situations, which are exacerbated by having fewer resources to deal with the effects. The early child health consequences of poverty during pregnancy and in the early stages of life can therefore set a newly born child on a life-course of disparities in health outcomes, initially through an increased risk for preterm birth, intrauterine growth restriction, and neonatal or infant death, and subsequently through delayed cognitive development, poor school performance, and behavioural problems, all of which are linked to poverty. Moreover, continuing to experience poverty throughout childhood reinforces inequalities at birth, with the profound health consequences, potentially remaining throughout the duration of life. There is evidence also that children on in the Canalside ward, which takes in Sheerwater, are more likely to be obese or overweight than in any other area of Surrey.¹⁶

5.15 In Maybury and Sheerwater, the rate of under-18 conception is in the 4th highest decile of local authority wards nationally, compared with the Woking average, which is in the 2nd lowest decile. Teenage pregnancy is also linked to deprivation with babies born to teenage mothers experiencing worse health outcomes than those born to older mothers. This includes premature death in the first year of life, and accidental harm. It also includes teenage mothers being at a higher risk of poor mental health, being more likely to smoke, less likely to breastfeed and more likely not to be in education, employment, or training, and therefore, more likely to live in poverty. While the rate of teenage conception is not statistically significant when compared to the average for England, the local differences, albeit based on very low numbers, do underline the need for some local action to address the higher rate in Maybury and Sheerwater.¹⁷

5.16 Marriage and civil partnership: Same-sex couples who register as civil partners have the same rights as married couples in employment and must be provided with the same benefits

¹⁵ Nesa Carey, *The Epigenetics Revolution: How modern biology is rewriting our understanding of genetics, disease and inheritance*, Icon Books, 2011.

Helen Pearson, *The Life Project: The extraordinary story of our ordinary lives*, Penguin, 2016.

¹⁶ Evidence from the Child Measurement Programme reveals that 22% of year 6 children (those aged 10 and 11) in the ward are considered obese, while a further 18% are overweight. Similarly, 10% of reception aged children (4 and 5 year olds) are obese and another 9% are heavier than they should be WWW.DIGITAL.NHS.UK.

¹⁷ Maybury and Sheerwater Health Needs and Assets Assessment Full Report, Surrey Public Health, August 2013.

available to married couples including flexible working, maternity/paternity pay, and training opportunities. This has implications for the CPO and the Sheerwater regeneration proposals in that the Housing Needs Survey has collected up to date data which has revealed that a number of residents have described themselves as living in a civil partnership.

6. Deprivation analyses: cross cutting EqlA themes

6.1 This section examines some of the cross cutting and overlapping inequalities that are relevant to the EqlA and potential impact of the regeneration on groups with protected characteristics. The focus is on some specific domains of experience: income poverty and inequality; educational attainment; inequalities in health; business and employment; housing and households, and the public realm and open spaces.

6.2 **Income, poverty, and inequality:** According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015, Woking is a relatively affluent borough. The Devonshire Avenue and Dartmouth area of Sheerwater, within the regeneration area, has been identified as being within the 14% most deprived areas nationally and among the most deprived in the country. Moreover, Sheerwater is ranked as the most deprived in Surrey on the income and employment domain, on the health deprivation and disability domain, and ranks the fourth poorest on the education, skills, and training domain. The area is also ranked as the most deprived in Surrey on the sub-domains of income deprivation affecting older people, and among the most deprived wards for income deprivation affecting children. Indeed, deprivation in children is a major issue for the regeneration area and the MOSAIC profile shows a significantly higher proportion of lower income families than is the case for Woking or Surrey, and a higher proportion of lone parent families who, as stated in the section on pregnancy and maternity above, are more likely to be women parenting alone. It is also the case that 24.4% of people in Sheerwater are living in poverty compared with 9.6% for Surrey and 11% for the borough.

6.3 **Educational attainment:** In Sheerwater, 30.1% of residents have no qualifications which is dramatically higher than the proportion for Woking, 15.2%, Surrey, 15.9%, and England, 22.5%. Moreover, only 15.0% of residents in Sheerwater age 16-64 have NVQ level 4+ qualifications and this is significantly lower than the average for the borough 38.4%, Surrey, 36.2%, and England, 27.4%. In terms of educational attainment levels at the Key Stages, these are noticeably lower within Sheerwater compared with Woking, Surrey, and England, and is particularly pronounced at Key Stage 4, that is, pupils between 14 and 16, studying for GCSE qualifications. The result is that a significant number of young people going to school in Sheerwater do not remain in education after the age of 18, 56.2% compared with Woking 21.6%, Surrey 21.5% and England 14.0%. The number of young people not in education, employment and training is also significantly higher in Sheerwater, 26% than is the case for Surrey, 6%.

6.4 **Inequalities in health:** The World Health Organisation defines health as a '*state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*'. This definition is predicated on a social model of health. Again, as illustrated in the section above on pregnancy and maternity, it is the case that the conditions in which people are born, live, work, and

grow older, combine to shape and influence their health and wellbeing. The milieu in which people go about their daily lives, the ability to access necessary economic resources, access to information and networks of social support all have an impact on health and life outcomes. Moreover, what happens to individuals in terms of health outcomes is not the same as health outcomes for groups of people or outcomes for the population as a whole.¹⁸ As an illustration, outcomes delineated by gender, disability, by membership of a particular social or ethnic group vary, often dramatically, from the norm and overall population averages. There are also pronounced differences within communities, as well as between communities, and different conceptions of health and the body.¹⁹

6.5 The Sheerwater regeneration area shows a very high incidence of health deprivation across the IMD 2015 within the health and disability domain. Life expectancy at birth is one of the overarching indicators in the Public Health Outcomes Framework, and it is a critical indicator of overall health outcomes. It represents the average number of years a person in a particular area would expect to live, based on the current mortality rate in that area.²⁰ The average life expectancy at birth in the Maybury and Sheerwater ward is 76.9 years. This is considerably lower than the average life expectancy at birth for Woking of 82.9 years, and Surrey, 82.6 years. The average life expectancy at birth in Sheerwater is also a dramatic 9 years below the life expectancy at birth in Brookwood ward where it is 85.1 years, the highest life expectancy at birth in Woking. As well as a decreased average life expectancy, Sheerwater ranks poorly on mental health indicators for adults under 60 suffering mood and anxiety disorders. Moreover, the proportion of the Sheerwater resident adult population who are in treatment with the Drugs and Alcohol Services in the Maybury and Sheerwater ward is more than twice the average for Surrey and over one and a half times the average for Woking. When this is delineated further it becomes clear that despite the relatively younger age structure of Sheerwater residents compared with Woking, Surrey and England averages, there is a much higher proportion of clients in drugs services in older 45 to 54 age groups. All the health and wellbeing issues in Sheerwater as an area of significant disadvantage and relative poverty underline the need for a life course approach to tackling health inequalities, articulated by Michael Marmot, Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health.²¹

6.6 **Business and employment:** Woking as part of the wider London and the South East mega city region, has a relatively highly specialised industrial sector with strong representation in financial and business services, professional and scientific industries, a growing cluster of environmentally focused businesses, advanced engineering, and a strong cluster of technology-based businesses with numerous IT and software development companies. Furthermore, Woking, which is ranked in the top 20% of UK local authorities for economic vibrancy is a rapidly growing business location, having increased its business base by over a quarter in the last six years, outperforming both Surrey and the South East, and its knowledge economy having grown at a significantly faster rate since 2010 than

¹⁸ Michael Marmot and Richard G. Wilkinson (ed) *Social Determinants of Health* (Second Edition) Oxford University Press, 2006.
Michael Marmot, *The Health Gap: The Challenge of an Unequal World*, Bloomsbury, 2015.

¹⁹ Sophia Skyers, Campbell Kerr, and Pauline Johnson, *Count Me In! Informing the future of personalised medicine from bench to bedside*, September 2017.

²⁰ Public Health Outcomes Framework, February 2020, Public Health England.

²¹ *Hidden Disadvantages in Surrey: Taking action on poor wellbeing*, Public Health Annual Report, 2012 – 2013.
Michael Marmot, *The Health Gap: The Challenge of an Unequal World*, Bloomsbury, 2015.

Surrey and the South East region. In 2016, the proportion of knowledge-based businesses in Woking was 27% compared to 17% in Surrey and 14% in the region.²² The impact of Covid-19, as is the case in other areas of the UK has adversely affected businesses and as an illustration, in April 2020, 70% of businesses said that they would be using the furlough scheme in some form.²³

6.7 In line with its relatively highly qualified resident population, the borough of Woking has a higher proportion of people employed in the Standard Occupational Group 1-3, that is, 56% compared with the South East, 49.6% and slightly less than the Surrey average of 56.5%.²⁴ In stark contrast with the economic vibrancy of the borough, unemployment in Sheerwater is the highest within any of the areas that have been designated Priority Places in Surrey, and this is linked to low educational attainment and skills that are not congruent with the demands of national regional and local labour markets in higher paying sectors. In Sheerwater the 2011 Census reveals that 20.2% of the population age 16-74 are working age benefit claimants, compared with 6.1% in Surrey. Wage inequality is distinct from income inequality. Income inequality is an aggregate of those at the top of the scale as well as the economic conditions of people who are unemployed or do not work, while wage inequality, measures the gap between the lowest paid and the highest paid workers and in the south east region there is a very wide dispersion between the wages of the more highly paid and lower paid workers. This is in part the result of structural labour market changes that have bifurcated workers into higher paid industrial sectors such as knowledge-based workers, and lower paid service jobs, including flexible forms of labour, zero-hour contracts, and an increase in low paid part time work. Added to this is the fact that the low wages and the uncertain nature of full-time work can no longer guarantee a route out of poverty and social exclusion.²⁵ Added to this is the devastating economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on work, employment, and training prospects.

6.8 The impact of horizontal and vertical occupational segregation also has a pronounced ethnic and gender dimension, as well as a geographical one and this gives rise to disparities in earnings that fragment along equality lines.²⁶ This is a reflection of the fact that highly paid workers are disproportionately men, and are more likely to be non-disabled men, and a reflection of the fact that women, and black and ethnic minorities, and disabled people, are over-represented as a whole in low paid employment sectors and are under-represented at higher paid levels in other employment sectors such as business, financial, managerial, and professional and technical occupations. There are, also, significant gender, ethnic, and other variations across and within protected groups.²⁷ As an illustration of this disparity, the level of employment for the Maybury and Sheerwater ward at the time of the 2011 census was 61.7% compared with 68.8% for the borough. This ward also has a

²² Woking Economic Development Strategy, 2017-2022.

²³ BCC Coronavirus Business Impact Tracker: More than 70 per cent for firms surveyed have furloughed staff as scheme goes live, www.surrey-chambers.co.uk.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Richard Florida, *The New Urban Crisis: Gentrification, Housing Bubbles, Growing Inequality and What We Can Do About It*, One World, 2017.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *Annual Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion Report*, 2016.

²⁶ The term vertical segregation refers to the absence of certain groups at the apex of the occupational hierarchy, while the terms horizontal segregation refers to the fact that in specific industries or sectors, men and women for example are found doing different kinds of jobs.

²⁷ Race Disparity Audit, Cabinet Office, 2017.

higher proportion of black and minority ethnic residents, a higher proportion of lone parent households with dependent children, and a higher proportion of residents who are permanently sick and disabled in comparison with the borough. There is also a higher proportion of economically inactive men in Sheerwater, 8.9% compared with Surrey, 2.1% and England, 4.3%. The proportion of women who are economically inactive is less for women than it is for men but is still significantly high at 6.5%, compared with 2.0% for Surrey, and 3.8% in England. In Sheerwater less people work full time, 70% compared with Woking 74.4%, Surrey 72.7%, and the South East, 71.4%. By contrast, more people in Sheerwater work part time, which tends to be lower paid, 30.1%, and is among the highest in the borough, compared with Woking 25.5%, Surrey, 27.3%, and the South East, 28.6%. Therefore, income inequality is driven by a confluence of factors including being economically inactive, unemployment, under-employment, ethnic, gender, and disability penalties, economic restructuring of labour markets, being employed in low paid sectors, lower educational attainment, the rising incomes of those who are employed in very highly paid sectors, and the declining economic conditions of those employed in low waged flexible service sectors. The impact of COVID-19 on employment sectors, as the country emerges from lockdown, and impact on existing inequalities among protected groups has yet to be fully calculated.

6.9 Housing households: The Sheerwater Estate was developed in the early 1950s by the London County Council and was then transferred to Woking following abolition of the Greater London Council. As stated above, the area suffers from historic under investment and is dilapidated. The majority of the residents in Sheerwater at the start of the regeneration were local authority tenants, 64%. A further 16% of the properties were owned by private individuals, 7% were owned by Registered Social Landlords, 2% were owned by ThamesWey, 6% were leasehold properties, 4% were commercial premises, and 1% were shared ownership properties. The local authority housing in the regeneration area is in a poor state of repair with some of traditional brick construction and others 1960 and 1970s construction. The impact of poor housing is exacerbated by the multiple manifestations of poverty and inequality on the estate, both visible and hidden. There are 3,618 households in the wider Sheerwater area, and 9.4% of households with dependent children in Sheerwater are lone parents, compared with a significantly lower proportion, 4.6% at borough level, 4.7% for Surrey, and 7.1% for England. Lone parent households are usually headed by women, and poverty as we have seen, is much more likely to be an issue for lone parents. In addition, 20.3% of households are overcrowded in Sheerwater, compared with 6.8% for Surrey and 8.7% for England. For the LGBT community, housing, households, and 'invisibility' is a critical issue as research has shown that there is rarely a recognition that sheltered housing schemes, for example, include LGBT people, that there is potential prejudice in neighbourhoods, or that there may be a need for specific support for LGBT residents.²⁸

6.10 The public realm and open spaces: A number of strategies influence WBC's approach to the development and redevelopment of open spaces in Sheerwater and key among these are the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and its related Development Plan Documents, the Woking Community Strategy, and the Woking Cultural Strategy. Natural Woking, our Biodiversity

²⁸ Joanna Jeffery and Richard Seager, Why Sexual orientation is important for social housing providers, Stonewall Housing, August 2010.

and Green Infrastructure Strategy for the area, also has direct relevance to the CPO and the regeneration proposals, particularly in relation to the emphasis placed on the protection and management of open spaces within the borough. There are consistent themes running throughout all of the strategies, which have direct implications for Sheerwater residents, specifically: the importance of safe and attractive places in which to live, work, and relax, and in which to invest time and resources; equality of access to open spaces that can support a variety of impromptu uses as well as organised programmes of activity, and open spaces that are sustainable, and which encourage and enhance the personal health and wellbeing of residents, and foster cohesive communities. The importance of this has been underlined during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. At the national level, NPPF and PPG incorporate a range of provisions to ensure that housing developments provide or enable good access to community and green and open amenity and recreational space, including play space, and built into this, there is a recognition that sport and recreation support quality of life, and help to promote social inclusion and community cohesion.

6.11 There is an emerging body of evidence on the inter-relationship between open space and public places and varied patterns of use or indeed avoidance, delineated for example by gender, age, race, disability, sexual orientation, and income.²⁹ There is also evidence that while residents in deprived areas value the potential benefits of open space, they tend to underuse the spaces in the areas in which they live, precisely because they are often of very poor quality, and because, when combined with poor layout, fears about safety and security are often compounded.³⁰ While Sheerwater has a range of open spaces. The existing open land use configuration does not work in the broader context of the public realm and therefore does not provide opportunities for the older population of Sheerwater for example, to meet and experience passive outdoor enjoyment, or to take part in socially connective outdoor activities. The open spaces are not located in a connected way that enable them to benefit from natural community surveillance, provide spaces for impromptu activities, and provide areas where children and young people for example, can participate in outdoor activities in safety. The regeneration proposals have addressed these concerns by removing roads and introducing green streets. The proposals have increased the amount of open space, and has concentrated it more in a central linear park. This will have a positive impact in that it is a better informal open space facility that should, in the future, allow for activities such as festivals or mini village fairs, particularly as we emerge from lockdown, as well as accommodating walking and cycling.

7. Consultation and engagement leading to the CPO

7.1 **The process of engagement:** The process of engagement is critical as local and national policies and legislation in respect of urban development and redevelopment have engagement at the axis. It has therefore been fundamental to the development of the EqlA to examine the process

²⁹ Community green: using local spaces to tackle inequality and improve health, CABI, 2010.

Hate crime against LGBT people in Britain increased by 78 per cent since 2013, Stonewall, September 2017.

Yasminah Beebejaun, Gender, urban space and the right to everyday life, *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 23 December 2016: 323-334.

Takemi Sugiyama, Catherine Ward Thompson and Susana Alves, Associations Between Neighbourhood Open Space Attributes and Quality of Life for Older People in Britain, *Sage Journals*, 41 (1) 2009: 3-21.

³⁰ Community green, using local spaces to tackled inequality and improve health, CABI, 2010.

of engagement as well as the various approaches to involvement, and to make an assessment of the extent to which they have given voice to residential communities, communities of interest, and various other stakeholders within Sheerwater, and to make an assessment of areas where there have been perceived gaps to inform the development of the proposals and the CPO as it is implemented.

7.2 The planning application and development of the Master Plan: The pre-planning application process and development of the regeneration proposals was underpinned by consultation and engagement, and this was overseen by the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team. This element of the consultation which was structured around an expansive and intensive suite of consultative and collaborative and engagement approaches, was drawn up and implemented over a period of 24 months to develop the Masterplan, and was delivered through New Vision Homes, WBC's housing management partner. The process of engaging the community, alongside existing quantitative and qualitative data about Sheerwater, its shifting demographics, and its myriad housing and socio-economic challenges, helped to inform the regeneration proposals. This included a mix of tenures and unit sizes, as well as the broader social, recreational, and environmental plans. As stated above, as a result of further feedback arising from the consultation and representation to the Council, as well as the economic viability of the commercial components, ThamesWey Developments Ltd was invited to bring forward enhanced proposals to the consented development. These were then presented at a planning public consultation on 18 January 2018 at Parkview Community Centre, attended by 350 people, of which, over 200 signed in giving personal details to enable receipt of further updates about the scheme. The event provided a series of detailed display boards which were staffed by members of the design and consultant team to ensure that any questions about the design intent of the revised masterplan could be discussed and answered. The event was well received but at the same time, most individuals were understandably interested in discussing their own personal circumstances and personal views about the Council. The housing team was present on the day and were provided with a separate designated room to allow residents to raise questions about how they saw the scheme affecting them directly. The revised enhanced hybrid planning application was presented to Council on 8 February 2018 and was then granted Planning Permission.

7.3 The process of consultation, that has informed the development of the regeneration proposals, has been centred on various forms of appreciative inquiry as well as traditional survey approaches. These have included but have not been limited to, a launch event in June 2013 which was attended by 547 people, 56% of whom lived within the proposed development area, 34% within the wider regeneration area, and 4% in neighbouring areas. There have also been a number of public meetings, focus groups, one-to-one meetings with potentially affected residents and neighbouring communities, a number of design workshops and exhibitions, drop-in events at local community venues, mosques, churches and other places of worship, and a series of community visioning workshops across the regeneration area. There have also been regular updates in the local press, and a regular newsletter continues to be distributed to over 1,000 households. There has also been and continues to be on going and direct mail correspondence with the residents impacted by the regeneration proposals. In addition to this, a dedicated telephone line, email address, and

consultation website, has been established, and information was also housed at Parkview community centre where prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, residents passing by could drop in. The approach to engagement prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, was augmented by door-knocking, and by the facilitation of multiple events and updates in community venues, the local youth club, and local schools to ensure that information about the regeneration proposals as they change and develop was widely dispersed, effectively communicated, and understood. As an illustration, there were several events and presentations made to the residents at Woodlands House, a supported housing scheme, to ensure that those who had not been able to be present at specific ones, are included at a later stage, and as a means of ensuring that the mode of engagement was fit for purpose in terms of the needs of specific groups.

7.4 There have also been less structured methods including a visit to an area addressing similar challenges, and opportunities for brief impromptu encounters employed as part of the process of widening participation. These have included, for example, a visit made by supported housing residents to Oak Tree Sheltered Accommodation in Reading, and a tour of the facilities, and a serviced stall in the local ADSA where residents were able to get information at their convenience. The Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team also attended the MASCOT (Maybury and Sheerwater Community Trust) hub launch, a community initiative organised by church groups, with the aim of identifying and addressing the underlying causes of deprivation and social exclusion in the ward. The MASCOT is currently located in the Dartmouth area of Sheerwater but as part of implementing the regeneration, a proposal is being considered to relocate it to St Michaels Church in a vacant retail unit. Attendance at the MASCOT hub launch enabled the project team to meet and engage with local service providers and community groups, to discuss the proposals.

7.5 There has also been outreach via more high-profile existing community initiatives and this has included the Sheerwater Festival in 2017 where the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team hosted a stall that provided information and set up competitions, with the objective of communicating details about the regeneration of Sheerwater in ways that actively engaged younger people. In 2018, the Council worked jointly with the wider community to organise a Sheerwater Street Party, as part of a wider Woking Together initiative. The event featured local artists and crafts people, as well as local food vendors and was very well attended. The Council's Community Engagement Team was highly commended by the Sheerwater Residents Association for the instrumental role it played in making the Sheerwater Street Party an enormous success, and in bringing the diverse community of residents together spanning age ranges and nationalities. It was also noted by the Sheerwater Residents Association that the 2018 Sheerwater Street party played a crucial role in building bridges between the Council and the residents of Sheerwater, and in fostering an ongoing and congenial partnership going forward. In place of a more traditional Residents' Steering Group which was seen as having limited opportunities for wider participation, a Community Consultation Forum (CCF) was established with the specific aim of ensuring that the large number of residents who expressed an interest in playing an active role in developing the proposals for the original Masterplan, alongside the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team, would have the

opportunity to do so. The CCF is a self-selected forum comprising social and private sector tenants, home-owners and other statutory and voluntary agencies from inside and outside the redline area.³¹

7.6 Statutory consultation with secure tenants and housing needs assessment: As illustrated, there have been various consultations that have taken place in Sheerwater in respect of the original Masterplan and its development. In accordance with its obligation under Section 105 of the Housing Act, 1985, WBC undertook a consultation with secure tenants on WBC's proposal to change the proposed developer from New Vision Homes, and invite ThamesWey Developments Ltd to submit the proposals for undertaking the regeneration of Sheerwater, and as part of this, consultation on the proposals for the affordable housing to be operated by ThamesWey Housing Ltd. There has also been engagement in respect of the terms of the proposed new tenancy conditions to be offered by ThamesWey Housing Limited whereby Halo has undertaken a consultation with secure tenants, specifically under the provisions of the Housing Act, and the statutory responsibility to consult them specifically. The consultation that started at the beginning of December 2017 and went through into 2018, was carried out through a postal questionnaire sent to all secure tenants affected by the changes. Halo did follow this up door-to-door, with consultation packs to engage those tenants who did not respond to the questionnaire or who were not able to respond. Prior to finalising the consultation questionnaire, Halo undertook a 'sense' check of the draft questions, exploring terminology, language, interpretations and meanings, and the implications of the questions in relation to the proposed housing management changes. The 'sense' check was with a sample group of 30 tenants, selected at random by WBC. The sample included tenants with a range of general needs, as well as tenants experiencing mental health issues, substance abuse issues, and older and supported tenants. The purpose of this was to enable the team at Halo to discuss the potential changes with the group representing a broad spectrum of needs, and to identify whether the questions were clear, and whether there were any gaps that needed to be filled.

7.7 As well as the statutory consultation, WBC's Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team has collected data, through a Housing Needs Assessment on the specific needs of all secure tenants who will be impacted by the CPO, coupled with information on the characteristics of all members of households. The assessment has been ongoing to inform mitigation measures in respect of social housing tenants with a focus also on groups with protected characteristics, and the team designed an equality monitoring form specifically to inform the housing needs assessment. There were 308 secure tenancy households in Sheerwater when the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team was established in 2017. The Housing Needs Survey data collected demonstrates that the majority responded saying that they wished to move out of Sheerwater. Those that did not want to move principally cited concerns about the implications of doing so for their secure tenancy. The Housing Needs Assessment, through a series of home visits, has developed a detailed and vivid picture of the support needs, vulnerabilities, language translation and interpretation requirements, disabilities, including mental health needs, and other relevant

³¹ Sheerwater Regeneration Statement of Community Engagement: Prepared in support of the Revised Hybrid Planning Application for the Sheerwater Regeneration Project, April 2019.
Sheerwater Regeneration Council Commitments: A Community Charter for the Sheerwater Regeneration, March 2018 has full details of the suite of engagement activities that informed the scheme.

information to ensure that tenants are properly aided when moving, and that they are also housed appropriately. The Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team identified that 37% of those surveyed stated that they had some form of disability, impairment, and/or mental health need. The team, very early on, identified and supported the move of two older people with significant health issues who had been housed inappropriately with no access to lifts and as a result, had suffered social isolation for years, as prior to the regeneration, they were under the radar of statutory and voluntary agencies. The work of the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team has therefore afforded and is continuing to afford residents with high support needs, and older residents who are currently unsupported, a process by which their needs can be identified and met. A snapshot of the results from the Housing Needs Survey on 5 June 2020 is summarised in the table below:

Disability reported of any Member of the Household	Numbers	% of households
Non-disabled	181	63
Disabled (One or more disabilities)	106	37
Total Tenants surveyed	287	100
Visual Impairment	9	3
Mobility Needs/Wheelchair	52	18
Cognitive or learning disabilities	14	5
Mental health condition	47	16
Properties with adaptations	31	11

7.8 What more has been done and is being done: The revised plans, and the revised timeline for implementation of the development offered WBC an important opportunity to further engage with residents and to respond proactively to identified needs, both in terms of support, and in terms of fit-for-purpose ways of engaging a diverse community. The process of conducting the initial EqIA identified the need to engage with the small businesses in the area, and in particular those in the shopping parade. Indeed, most of the businesses are small, local black and minority ethnic retail and food outlets, that tend to be family run, and the impact of the regeneration and what it could mean for the viability of those businesses was considered, as well as the impact on home businesses, two of which were identified at the start. Given that an organised meeting at a set time would have been difficult for business owners to attend, engaging with them was carried out on a one-to-one basis. It has been determined that some of the outlets wish to and indeed will relocate within the existing development. These include the pharmacy and the minimart, the latter having a wide offering for an ethnically diverse constituency of residents, offering Asian and African and African-Caribbean produce. As already mentioned, the post office in Sheerwater closed in 2019 and residents were without a post office for about a year causing considerable difficulty. A new post office counter has now been incorporated into the Londis store, located on Dartmouth Avenue. The delay in providing post office services was partly because of COVID-19 restrictions, and partly because the Central Post Office did not have the staff or the resources for training and implementation of the security systems required to incorporate a post office counter. This is therefore an important reinstatement of a vital service for residents. There are other businesses in Sheerwater whose financial insolvency predates the proposed regeneration of the area and these businesses, which have been operating on the basis of free rents provided by the Council, will cease to trade. Those businesses that come with secure accommodation are being given the same options

for compensation and relocation as is the case for secure tenants generally. In the meantime, the parade of shops is still open for business and provision will not cease until there is reprovision.

7.9 The initial EqlA identified the need to specifically engage smaller community groups using the Parkview Community Centre which is earmarked for demolition. There will be reprovision before it is demolished within the yellow phase which is due to commence in the Autumn of this year. Moreover, the new scheme however allows for complete reprovision and therefore all the small organisations that have been using the Parkview Community Centre will transfer to the new facility. This means that there will be limited impact on those community groups, the services that they provide, and therefore on the beneficiaries of those using the services which include groups with protected characteristics. Similarly, there is was a dedicated space for a Mosque located within the parade of shops on Devonshire Avenue in Sheerwater which was provided by the Council. There are calls to prayers five times each day and given the need for a dedicated space in Sheerwater, the Council, having consulted with the Muslim Education and Welfare Trust, will be making provision for a Mosque within the wider area of Sheerwater, or close by as part of its plans. In December 2017, the first of an on-going series of monthly newsletters entitled Sheerwater Regeneration Update was distributed to those residents living within the regeneration area and surrounding area. The newsletter provides information on what is happening at each stage of the development, and features case studies setting out the concrete experiences of tenants who have been rehoused as part of the scheme. They are also an important source of information on the activities that are being undertaken alongside the development with the wider community in Sheerwater, as well as forthcoming initiatives. As an illustration, a local expert panel was featured which was established to develop a street naming strategy and invited representatives from the local community. The street naming panel has been tasked with coming up with names for the new apartment blocks, roads, and communal areas within the regeneration area from which all buildings and streets will derive their name. The panel has met virtually several times during lockdown February to March 2021 to discuss names for the purple and red phases. The newsletter also provides information about the various roles of the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team members and gives contact numbers for homeowners and residents who have queries.

7.10 While Sheerwater is an established community, there have been significant changes in terms of demographic diversification over the last 20 years. Since it was commissioned, the EqlA has mirrored the development of the proposals and implementation of the CPO. There have been efforts to fully engage those who have varying language requirements, including those who cannot read English or read in their parent tongue. The engagement has also recognised and tried to respond to the needs of those residents facing a range of issues. These include issues around language proficiency, those who lack the knowledge, resources, and agency to make their voices heard, those who are unable to engage effectively due to poor concentration, anxiety, self-doubt, low self-esteem, and those whose lifestyle make active participation particularly challenging and daunting. There are residents who for example suffer high levels of anxiety about the regeneration. They are also fearful about opening letters from the Council and as a way of managing that anxiety, may choose not to do so. Through a variety of face-to-face approaches, individuals and groups that

have been harder to hear have been engaged by the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team.

7.11 The consultation, as the proposals have developed and implementation has proceeded, has considered the varied access needs of residents, to assist in building in a more explicit consideration of equality impacts. As already stated, when the proposals were revised in 2018, this gave WBC a further window of opportunity for engagement and public consultation and provided the space for the Council to take on board some of the challenging issues that had been raised in relation to wider community engagement. This was crucial in that, for example, while the consultation on the new Masterplan engaged just over 350 residents, the extent to which the process initially engaged the harder to hear, due to the type of engagement activities employed, that is the Council's website, local media, posters, and direct mail, was questionable. In addition, the feedback forms were accessible only to the functionally literate, or those able to access the forms from the Council's website. This left many groups who may not have been included. In responding to these issues, the Council developed a poster campaign, in consultation with local groups and agencies, and made the posters available in the six principal languages in Sheerwater, specifically: English, Polish, Bengali, Nepalese, Hindi and Urdu. The posters have been put up in schools, the MASCOT, GP surgeries, the Children's Centre, Parkview Community Centre, the Church, and Asda, and explained the key tenets of the regeneration, and signposted residents to translation and interpretation services where further information about the scheme could be obtained. In addition, the content of the poster was added to an edition of the Sheerwater Newsletter. The varied approaches to engagement which have also included community visioning workshops, drop in events at local community venues, mosques, churches and other places of worship, consultation and events at leisure and recreational facilities, focus groups with older people, over 55's, business, retailers and a range of community groups, a range of drop-in sessions, and more recently in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, a virtual engagement workshop organised by Well North Enterprises are set out in Appendix B.

7.12 The process of engagement with residents with complex needs has been taken on board through the on-going work of the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team, which has the specialist skills to engage people with varied access requirements. The team is also multilingual and has therefore been able to explain the objectives of the regeneration to residents of different nationalities, and the various options as they have developed. The team makes full use of the MASCOT Hub, where interpreters can be accessed, and works with the health centre and other agencies to communicate their local presence and availability. What came through via the Housing Needs Assessment is a confirmation that tenants did not previously feel that communication was effective, although it is seen to have improved considerably since the start. Indeed, the report of the Independent Scrutiny Panel recognised that communication was poor at the outset, and that this compounded residents' uncertainty and fear. The face-to-face visits of the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team which has had a physical presence in Sheerwater since September 2017 and continues to do so (NVH had a presence before ThamesWey submitted the new Hybrid) offers a wider group of secure tenants the opportunity to learn considerably more, to be updated, to articulate their views, and to express their concerns and their desires. Indeed, communication via the team is seen as very good and the team is regarded locally as doing its utmost to engage

residents. The Council employed a Community Engagement Officer in February 2018 for Sheerwater as a whole, not only the regeneration area, but whose remit includes exploring opportunities to link more closely with the regeneration of Sheerwater in terms of the activities. The Engagement Officer who is based in Sheerwater, liaises on the broad issues of regeneration and signposts to appropriate agencies within the regeneration area.

7.13 The Council also employed a Community Outreach Support Officer who was seconded from CornerHouse, a local mental health charity, and who was located with the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team on a part-time basis after being appointed in July 2018. The need for a mental health support service was identified in the Housing Needs Assessment where a large proportion of tenants who responded, identified mental health and pre-existing depression as being a major issue, and/or increased anxiety. This was exacerbated by concerns about the proposed regeneration, principal among these being changes to lifetime tenancies, as well as anxieties about the timescale for the regeneration. The Community Outreach Support Worker provided an important service to some of the most vulnerable tenants, gaining access to them, prior to lockdown via door-knocking, through visiting areas where residents naturally congregate, responding to drop-in enquiries, and through self-referral, offering advice, guidance, information, and signposting to other services where required, including those provided by CornerHouse. An important feature of the service was the flexibility it offered in that access to it was not solely restricted to tenants physically located in Sheerwater but included those who had chosen to relocate outside of Sheerwater, but who had ongoing support needs.

7.14 The service provided by CornerHouse has now ceased but the Council has continued in the provision of mental health support in response to the ongoing need by employing a permanent Mental Health Housing Support Worker who is located with the Sheerwater Housing Support Team. As well as supporting tenants, the Council is working towards improving the collaboration of services around mental health for service improvements. The new mental health worker now works with the entire housing department and some of the other departments such as the family support service and New Vision Homes. The model in Sheerwater thus has wide applicability as a model for support across the borough. The Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team has also engaged with tenants who have chosen to move away from Sheerwater, as part of a post relocation evaluation learning exercise that identifies, from the tenants' perspective, what has been done well in terms of the bidding, relocation and the support process, and what could have been done better to inform implementation of the scheme going forward.

7.15 There is a need for ongoing engagement as the scheme is implemented, and this represents a challenge to traditional forms of engagement for the Council and how it moves forward with this at this stage of the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in social distancing requirements. The development, despite the lockdown is on track, and going forward, this must continue to be aligned with maintaining meaningful engagement with communities in area that has myriad social and economic challenges. There are issues identified around poverty and inequality in the baseline assessment that may have been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in terms of mental health and social isolation. The solutions have included the use of technology but at the

same time, the digital divide may become more apparent. Thus, listening to the community and looking to the community for solutions as well as understanding and responding to new barriers to engagement will continue to be vital.

7.16 Through Well-North Enterprises, the Council has been thinking creatively and has been speaking with stakeholders and local service providers about plans for the new two-storey community health campus in the yellow phase and bringing together a number of health services under one roof making them more accessible. In addition, through consultation, services such as neonatal and post-natal maternity services, physiotherapy, and mental health services in addition to the GP practice, dentist, and pharmacy services, have already been identified as a priority.

8. The EqIA of the CPO effects and mitigation

8.1 The regeneration proposals, as already stated, address some of the issues identified in the 2016 scheme that was initially approved and seek to mitigate the unintended adverse impacts identified. The proposals specifically, increase the number of affordable housing units, including provision for one-bedroom properties, and increase the number of larger units. The proposals also enhance open space provision to provide additional opportunities for residents to engage in more informal play and social and recreational activities. The EqIA has continually considered the impact of the regeneration proposals, as they have developed, and as implementation has proceeded, along the lines of a themes identified as potentially impacting the local community and within that, groups with protected characteristics. While the themes have been separated out analytically, in practice, there are many areas of overlap and this has been reflected. The themes are as follows:

- Housing development and redevelopment
- Community recreational and leisure facilities
- Employment and training
- Local businesses
- Public realm, open space, and safety and security
- Travel, transport, and connectivity
- Community cohesion

a. Housing development and redevelopment

8.2. **Housing and housing stimulus:** The need for decent housing in a safe and secure environment is one that is common to all of humanity. The baseline analysis set out above has provided evidence of the degree and extent of deprivation in Sheerwater, and its complexity in the innumerable socio-economic challenges faced by residents, the poor and deteriorating condition of housing, and the generally depressed and untidy appearance of the public realm. The regeneration will have a positive impact in directly addressing the physical condition of housing in Sheerwater, including specialist provision. This will make a significant contribution to enhancing the general

appearance of the area, resulting in a more attractive place in which to live, and in which to invest time and resources. The regeneration will meet the needs of current residents while providing for future residents, providing more choice of accommodation in an improved environment and it will therefore have a positive impact. The approach to the regeneration recognises that poverty and inequality cannot be tackled solely through housing provision, and that housing provision must be in sympathy with the surrounding area and open space provision, and social and economic considerations. As stated elsewhere in this EqlA however, on-going consultation does need to continue to actively engage and amplify the voices of those who are traditionally 'harder to hear'. Indeed, WBC recognises that this was formerly a weakness in the original programme of engagement, allied to a general view that as a diverse constituency, the full spectrum of residents had not always been engaged in the most effective ways. WBC has addressed this and has continued to proactively take steps to engage hard to reach groups.³² This is however an enormous and ongoing challenge for the regeneration given the guidance given by the government on the importance of social distancing, and the importance of taking active steps to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, and the new variant, among the population generally and among groups with protected characteristics who suffer disproportionately more adverse outcomes from COVID-19, including death.

8.3 Tenure balance and increased housing density: The CPO involves the demolition of 573 residential dwellings. The housing proposals, within a consensual approach to regeneration, is seen as offering one solution to increased housing demand and acute land shortage, particularly in the South East.³³ The housing proposals will therefore have a clear positive impact, in delivering a significant net increase in mixed tenure accommodation. The area will benefit from the construction of approximately 1,142 high quality energy efficient new homes, of which, circa 520 will be affordable homes representing a net gain. There will also be 134 homes specifically designated for supported living accommodation. WBC's Strategic Housing Market Assessment, conducted in 2009 and updated in 2015, examined the current and future need for varied types of housing and size of accommodation in the borough, including family sized homes, open market accommodation, affordable housing, and specific supported housing needs. The affordable housing component of the Sheerwater regeneration scheme is a response to an increased need for housing, particularly in lower income socio-economic groups among whom, groups with protected characteristics tend to have significantly higher representation.³⁴

8.4 There are currently 18 formally designated sheltered housing units owned by WBC and the proposals to accommodate residents in Woodlands House and provide more sheltered housing units represents a significant increase in addressing the existing needs of older Sheerwater residents and other residents with varied support needs, as well as the future care support needs of Sheerwater residents who are not currently in sheltered housing. The residents in Woodlands House were not supportive of the previous proposed location for all the re-provided supported housing as the area

³² Sheerwater Community Charter, updated October 2019.

³³ New National Design Guide, 2019.

³⁴ Sheerwater Regeneration draft planning application, June 2015.

that was proposed was seen as peripheral. This was taken on board in the proposals when they were revised, and provision has been made for the construction of 68 supported units along Devonshire Avenue, the central and core part of the development. In addition to this, the scheme has retained 66 older supported units in the current location thus increasing the amount of supported accommodation from the original 62 in the previous proposal to 134 under the current scheme. The increased affordable housing provision will therefore have a positive impact given the older population is increasing, and therefore current and potential future support needs can be addressed.

8.5 The most significant change between the originally consented scheme and the agreed scheme that is being implemented is the addition of a podium approach to medium rise units which also includes supported housing with communal facilities in a reversion of the current Woodlands offer. The proposals will have the effect of meeting increased parking needs in a way that is not at all obtrusive, within a green and integrated environment and this therefore will have a positive impact.

8.6 The tenure balance in the initial Sheerwater regeneration proposals started off with 22% market housing and 78% affordable housing. The proposed tenure-mix under the current proposals is 54% and 46% respectively, with an overall increase in the number of properties and a net increase of affordable units within the regeneration area. The overall increase in housing density potentially makes for a more efficient and effective approach to land use than is the case for the existing development. The increased capacity of high quality affordable and market housing, coupled with higher space and amenity standards, will have a positive impact on the lives of local residents, addressing overcrowding for example, which is an issue in Sheerwater, through more suitable accommodation for individuals, couples, children, and families. The density of the development could help to promote pedestrian scale mixing in a more tenure diverse neighbourhood with housing that is available and affordable to more people, and people from varied income groups than is currently the case. This presupposes that the homes and larger homes for sale in the area for example are purchased as homes to be lived in within a genuinely mixed community, and not as empty vehicles for investment, or a share in a geographical space, that is unoccupied for significant periods. In addition, 4% of the residential units will be fully adapted for wheelchair use including a lift in the low-rise residential units along with an increase in floor space. It is however shared experiences and shared interests that foster a coming together, not bricks and mortar as it is often pointed out that public housing and private housing sit side by side in many parts of London for example, but this does not mean that people in public and private housing have significant social contact.³⁵

8.7 The original proposals significantly reduced the number of one-bedroom properties and studio flats in Sheerwater. A reduction of this type of property on the scale proposed did represent a negative impact as it effectively meant insufficient local provision to meet the needs of residents housed in studio and one-bedroom accommodation. This group is vulnerable with medium to high

³⁵ David Goohart, *The Road to Somewhere: The populist revolt and the future of politics*, Hurst and Company, 2017.

mental health and other support needs, including issues relating to substance misuse. The process of developing and refining the regeneration proposals has therefore focused on ensuring that this highly vulnerable group of residents has access to support through the work of the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team. The team, as already stated, has a highly visible presence being in Sheerwater, and as part of the process of relocation, has considered the accommodation requirements of vulnerable tenants, buttressed by an assessment of the level of individual support needed. The development proposals are therefore an informed response to identified local housing need in Sheerwater, and at the same time, are set within the broader and interrelated context of housing need and provision across the borough. The original scheme has therefore been revised to include the provision of 345 units of one-bedroom accommodation, which when broken down include 134 specialist units for supported living, and 211 general properties. This means that residents who are currently living in the studio flats, and one-bedroom properties should be able to remain in Sheerwater, in a community with which they are familiar, and to be housed appropriately whereas this would not have been possible before the proposals were revised. The revised housing proposals therefore mitigate any negative impacts and enhance the positive impacts of the regeneration for vulnerable residents living in the area. The effect of delaying the CPO has also been positive in its impact in allowing time for more engagement with tenants and residents.

8.8 Demolition and reprovion: The redevelopment of any area is not just about bricks and mortar. Moreover, development with residents in situ has posed and continues to pose a complex set of challenges given that it is a destabilising process for those for whom rootedness, familiarity, and continuity is a priority, and who have deep attachments to their homes. The Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team confirms that this is the case, and that it is coupled with fears and insecurities. These centre on fears about change and loss, fears about potential disruption to daily life and daily routines, and fears about the rupturing of social and practical support networks that older people and parents with young children for example are particularly reliant on, with grandparents playing an increasing role in childcare. According to the Understanding Society surveys, while geographical mobility is more common, 42% of people live within five miles of where they lived when they were fourteen and 60% live within twenty miles.³⁶ More specifically in relation to Sheerwater, there were initial difficulties engaging with some of the owner occupiers who include those with high support needs, as well as those who have been in Sheerwater for generations, and whose families have a long association with the area. This has however progressed well and all the owner occupiers have now been engaged. The provision of a leisure complex and sports facilities at Bishop David Brown School in Sheerwater has led the development of housing and residents have therefore been able to see the benefits that the regeneration can bring with the new local leisure facilities being available at an early stage. This approach has been positive in its impact in that while there has been and will inevitably continue to be some disruption in terms of implementing a

³⁶ Ludi Simpson and Nissa Finey, Spatial patterns of internal migration: evidence for ethnic groups in Britain, *Population Space and Place*, Volume 15, Issue 1. January/February 2009: 37-56.

David Goodheart, *The Road to Somewhere: The New Tribes Shaping British Politics*, Penguin 2017.

scheme of this scale and magnitude, by allowing the social and recreational provision to be in the first phase of the construction, disruption to residents' day-to-day lives has been kept to a minimum.

8.9 The approach to mitigation of potentially negative impacts is a deliberative response to possible psychological distress, particularly in the case of residents who are older and who may be less mobile, as well as disabled residents, vulnerable residents with mental health issues, others with medium and high support needs, those with less organised or chaotic lifestyles, and parents and lone parents with young children. As well as anticipating and mitigating the potential for disruption, by allowing the reprovision of housing to proceed in advance of housing demolition, the phasing of the development will have a positive impact as the provision of replacement housing is a crucial ingredient in the smooth relocation and resettlement of all residents, minimising disruption as far as possible. The phased approach has maximised the opportunity for residents within the regeneration area to purchase a new dwelling or move into a newly constructed property in Sheerwater depending on their preferences, before the properties they are currently living in are demolished. The proposals have also allowed tenants the option of moving early and out of Sheerwater, and some residents have already taken this route. Indeed, qualitative data from the Housing Needs Assessment, as already stated, revealed that the majority of tenants did seek to move out of Sheerwater. The main reasons cited were: the financial compensation offered providing the means and opportunity to make a fresh start; wanting to improve their health and well-being; a dislike of the area; moving closer to family who live outside of Sheerwater, and chief among these, wanting to secure the high level of protection afforded through a secure tenancy by locating to another Council property in the borough. The effect of the proposals will have a transformational impact on the attractiveness of the area and that this may also reduce the extent to which current residents will seek to move elsewhere.

8.10 WBC began early resettlement planning through on-going resident consultation, the on-going detailed Housing Needs Assessment and gathering of equality monitoring data, and through the statutory housing consultation. This provided a positive foundation for the identification and triangulation of evidence relating to various needs among residents, and informing specific interventions for the regeneration area overall, and on an individual case-by-case basis. This enabled customised responses to the needs of individuals and families and afforded the time for the streamlining of assistance in a supportive way. The team has engaged with 313 secure tenants, and 71% of those have said that they wish to move away from Sheerwater, 195 secure tenants have accepted the offer and have been supported to relocate to another part of the borough. At present, there are 7 secure tenants who have not yet responded to letters, phone calls or attempts to visit them at their residence or impromptu visits, but concerted efforts are being made by the team using tried and tested methods of engagement that they have used in the past. The number of tenants willing to waive their right to return is considerably higher than expected and the challenge going forward as the scheme is implemented will therefore be to maintain their goodwill as the ability to relocate tenants quickly is limited due to the availability of appropriate housing. It is understandable that some tenants are becoming frustrated as they wish to move swiftly. In relation to homeowners, all 120 have either exchanged contracts or are moving towards exchange and completion. There are now 40 properties in Sheerwater with temporary tenants in place and the Regeneration Housing

Support Team has identified 22 households needing to be relocated, and who will also need assistance with their housing. The COVID-19 pandemic has had implications for the relocation and resettlement process given the official advice regarding social distancing, and a focus on remaining in situ in the case of older and vulnerable groups. Of the 42 properties in the regeneration area that were owned by Registered Social providers, all 42 have been purchased on a voluntary basis by the Council.

8.11 As the baseline assessment has illustrated, the regeneration area is home to a diverse community that spans groups with protected characteristics, and home to residents who have multiple complex and often overlapping needs. The majority of tenants have expressed a wish to move out of Sheerwater. Therefore, a sustained focus on the remaining tenants is required to ensure that their standard of living remains high, and that they do not fall off the radar. There are a number of tenants who have multiple or complex needs but through partnership working and community links, the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team have been proactive in ensuring that tenants remain engaged, and that their well-being remains paramount.

8.12 **Diverse households:** The households in Sheerwater reflect the diversity of the community and its changing demographics. Therefore, delivering affordable well-designed homes that allow for future demographic change is key to meeting diverse needs as well as being a centrepiece for reducing existing health inequalities. The regeneration housing proposals will thus have a positive impact given that the housing design allows for meeting the needs of existing residents, whilst also being cognisant of future demographic changes and changing requirements. As already stated, the regeneration proposals were revised, at an early stage, following feedback on the potentially adverse impact on vulnerable tenants occupying the studio flats, and one-bedroom properties in Sheerwater. The proposals have made provision for them to continue to reside in Sheerwater and this is a positive way forward in mitigating any potential negative impact.

8.13 There are other households who were potentially adversely impacted by the regeneration proposals and this included households with school age children who go to school locally, and who could have faced disruption if suitable alternative accommodation could not be provided to enable children to continue attending their current school. The phased approach to demolition and removal, where an appropriate proportion of new build housing is being made available as far as possible to support a single relocation process, should mitigate this negative impact as it maximises the number of residents who wish to stay in the area being able to do so.³⁷ Indeed, one of the key considerations in the development and implementation of the regeneration proposals has been ensuring that this is the case. The existing childcare arrangements for some residents, given the younger age structure of the population may be adversely affected in the case of working parents, where the carer decides to relocate, or is relocated temporarily to another part of the borough, or where residents are providing childcare services from home in Sheerwater. The assessment has identified a resident childcare business, as well as other residents whose employment is home-based

³⁷ New Vision Homes: Sheerwater Regeneration, Woking Affordable Housing Statement, 2015.

and the potentially negative impact of relocation in this respect has been taken account of in the phasing of the relocation.

8.14 The older residents in the regeneration area, residents with mental health issues, those with support needs, and those requiring forms of language support are vulnerable to disruption, and therefore require practical assistance to vacate their existing homes and move to new properties. To pre-empt the potentially negative impact of this, the detailed housing needs assessment, as already explained, examined the requirements of all members of households in depth, through face-to-face visits. The Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team is multi-lingual and has accessed and continues to access translators and interpreters as and when they are required. All properties in the area were visited by housing officers and a detailed assessment of the household requirements conducted from a housing resettlement and from an equality perspective. The information has informed the general as well as customised approaches to relocation already referred to, and has ensured that every tenant receives the support they need.

8.15 The majority of residents the team has engaged with, desire to leave Sheerwater, and see the regeneration as an opportunity, albeit with some underlying concerns about the process. However, those residents with close family, long established community links in the area, and those whose life has centred almost exclusively on the area, and this includes older people, are fearful of change, fearful of losing important community connections, and therefore are reluctant to move away. Indeed, these concerns have been repeatedly vocalised by residents and this is therefore a potentially negative impact that is mitigated by the offer to the majority of residents of remaining in Sheerwater if they wish to do so. In relation to those tenants who have moved from Sheerwater, the Council has been conducting an on-going Satisfaction Survey, post relocation to understand the impact of the process from the perspective of tenants, and to inform the relocation strategy. To date, the results have been very positive with the majority of tenants who responded and who outlined their experience of the process stating that it was a smooth and supportive one, that they were happy to be in a new home, pleased to be out of Sheerwater area, and that the process of relocation was 'very good'. There were some however who expressed mixed feelings and disappointment with the process of relocation and how they were feeling post relocation, and others who felt isolated once they had moved.³⁸ The following is a selection of the remarks made:

Sheerwater Satisfaction Survey February 2021 – Qualitative Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>I love my new flat and I can't see how I could have been supported any better.</i><i>Wouldn't want to go back to Sheerwater and love my new property. Couldn't be happier but feel a bit lonely as I don't know anyone.</i><i>Brilliant really happy here moved from a second floor flat to a ground floor property.</i><i>Very good. 10 out of 10. Everything went really quick.</i>

³⁸ Tenant Satisfaction Survey, 24/02/2021.

Sheerwater Satisfaction Survey February 2021 – Qualitative Comments

- *New property was a bit of a mess but I am really pleased with it now. It was a positive experience and I am happy to be in a new area.*
- *Sheerwater Regeneration Team were exceptional, they made it easy and I can't fault them. I was worried about viewing during lockdown May last year but Sean was helpful and careful. I was apprehensive about moving, the Sheerwater Regeneration Team were absolutely superb and made it easy.*
- *It became harder to see the team once COVID hit. Took a while to view the property. Happy where I am now not living in a damp flat anymore.*
- *I was disappointed with how I was told about the regeneration as I heard from a neighbour. I was not totally impressed by the application process but happy to be away from Sheerwater.*
- *Communication wasn't that great. Not enough support. Provided a second-floor property which was not what we wanted as having twins, but we had to accept.*

8.16 Many older LGBT people have experienced a lifetime of discrimination, fear, and isolation, and this may have impacted their expectations for housing support and care as they age. The older LGBT residents may remember a time when they were 'illegal' and they may have suffered consequences in terms of loss of employment, family, and being subject to hostility and vulnerability to physical attacks. The anxiety of having to move which affects all residents may be intensified in the case of LGBT residents by anxieties about facing discrimination as a result of having to move to a new community, coupled with fears about how their sexual identity will be received by new neighbours, by managers and workers in support agencies, and in the case of sheltered schemes, by staff and other residents.³⁹ Indeed, Stonewall has provided national evidence that in the case of LGBT people across all age groups, nationalities, and genders who approach the organisation for housing advice, two out of three state that their housing problem is directly related to their sexual orientation or to their gender identity. Moreover, a national Stonewall study entitled *Gay in Britain* found that there is a real fear about what a future care home could hold with almost 31% of LGB people and 35% of those age over 50 saying that they would expect to be treated worse than heterosexual people by staff if they were resident. These negative experiences also extend to housing with one in five, that is, 18% of LGB people, saying that they expect to be treated worse than heterosexual people when applying for social housing and this rises to one in four, that is, 25% of gay people aged over 65.⁴⁰ The Housing Needs Assessment has explicitly recognised these issues in the lines of questioning taken and has attempted to deal with them sensitively by exploring whether there are any specific concerns.

8.17 **Rents and tenancy changes:** The proposals will deliver an increase in affordable homes which will have rental levels set. The financial modelling indicates that the rental level will not

³⁹ The International Longevity Centre – UK, *Housing Issues Affecting Older Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual People in the UK: A Policy Brief*, 2008.

⁴⁰ *Gay in Britain: Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People's Experiences and Expectations of Discrimination*, Stonewall, 2013.

secure sufficient income for ThamesWey Housing Limited to cover the annuity loan interest and repayments. The Council has agreed a revolving loan facility which will enable ThamesWey Housing Limited to continue to provide the affordable rents. Over time these rents will increase with inflation and will repay the investment. A profit cap will apply to ThamesWey Development Ltd which will require a grant to be paid to ThamesWey Housing Limited if the construction costs and market sales result in an improved outturn for ThamesWey Development Limited. Any available grant will reduce the deficit in the earlier years of the model. This approach is predicated on the view that regeneration has its own in-built contradictions in terms of increasing the competition for limited urban space, with competition rendering urban space more expensive, and which in turn gives rise to higher and higher prices. This is particularly the case in the South East, which is becoming more and more out of the reach of people on low incomes, and increasingly middle-income people.

8.18 Social housing in Sheerwater, when it is demolished, will move from being wholly owned by the Council, to being wholly owned by ThamesWey Housing Limited or a newly established subsidiary. Whereas social housing is tagged to average income and remains relatively stable, affordable rent is tagged to 80% of market forces and rent levels can and therefore do change dramatically. The negative impact of this and the implications for residents has been taken into account in that there will be no loss of social housing and the reprovion will be at social rent levels.⁴¹ In addition to the complete reprovion of social housing will be 84 affordable dwellings for rent. Therefore, as the reprovion of social housing will be on the basis of rents being set at social rent levels, they will not exceed Local Allowance Levels, and will be in line with the S106 planning agreement and this action therefore mitigates potential negative impacts. There is a similar model in operation in Kingsmoor Park, in Woking, which the Council has adopted, where the rents have been stipulated within the S106 agreement, mirroring Local Allowance Levels and where increases are linked to inflation, not to market levels. The Chartered Institute of Housing has stated that social rents represent the only affordable option for residents and therefore, the negative impact for vulnerable tenants and those on lower incomes is mitigated by the approach taken by WBC in relation to rent control. The major change in tenancy agreements from secure tenancies as is the case with Council tenancies, to assured shorthold tenancies that would be granted by ThamesWey Housing Limited is among the key concerns voiced by secure local authority housing tenants, who are more likely to be from groups with protected characteristics and it is therefore a negative impact.

8.19 **Assistance and Compensation:** The Council has made commitments to assist affected residents wishing to relocate to other areas, or who need to relocate outside Sheerwater, as well as residents seeking to relocate within the new Sheerwater development. The core premise underpinning this is that anyone displaced by the regeneration should not be financially worse off than before. WBC's Sheerwater Community Charter, a non-statutory document sets out in detail, a range of assistance packages which include but are not limited to band B priority status for Council

⁴¹ Supplementary report – Sheerwater Regeneration, Council, 13 February 2020.

tenants who receive a greater priority within that band when applying through the Council's choice-based lettings system, Hometrak. The housing allocations policy has also been revised, such that tenants within the regeneration area are also housed in accordance with a priority basis based on how close their moving date is. Tenants also receive assistance with removal, packing and unpacking, assistance with changing utilities and claiming benefits, access to independent advice, and ensuring necessary adaptations are in place.⁴² The Council has a borough wide-property bank where it can offer vacant properties to tenants displaced by the regeneration and this includes specifically adapted properties.

8.20 The Council has appointed an Independent Tenants' Adviser (ITA) to advise secure tenants, in accordance with the commitment made in the Sheerwater Community Charter. The secure tenants living within the regeneration area have access to free independent and impartial advice from a designated person from within a qualified organisation. The sessions are offered on a flexible basis by telephone via a freephone number, by email, and face to face for those tenants who request it to ensure wide accessibility. Thus far, the ITA has been dealing with a range of issues including but by no means limited to concerns around the impact of the regeneration on secure tenancies, accessibility in relation to moving from Sheerwater, concerns around safety, requests for assistance with the housing bidding process and Hometrak for homes in Sheerwater, other parts of Woking and outside of the borough, and requests for clarification on the housing bidding process. Access to the ITA is helping to ensure that the secure tenants have the information they need to make informed decisions on all issues, relating to the impact of the regeneration on their housing, and their lives. More recently, following concerns raised by Woking Access Group, the Council took a decision to provide evening surgeries with the Regeneration Housing Support Team for those residents unable to attend appointments or drop-in sessions during the day. The surgeries were centred on 15-minute face-to-face appointments thus ensuring that a broader group of tenants are able to voice issues of concern, learn more about the regeneration as it continues to progress, and obtain access to the type of support they will need during a home move.

8.21 The Council has also established an innovative scheme called Earn Your Deposit Scheme. The scheme offers a substantial contribution towards purchase of a new home for ThamesWey Housing Limited qualifying residents in shorthold tenancy arrangements, by setting aside an annual financial contribution based on the size of the property. This is set out in the following table.

Earn Your Deposit Scheme	
Property Size	Deposit Earned Annual £
Studio	2,050
1 Bed	2,400
2 Bed	3,000
3 Bed	4,000
4 Bed	4,500
5 Bed	4,750

⁴² Woking Borough Council Community Charter: January 2019.

8.22 The Council has also set out a compensation regime for home loss and disturbance payments for freeholders, leaseholders, homes in shared ownership, and secure social housing tenants. In the case of social housing tenants, as well as the services set out above, secure tenants receive a Home Loss Payment at a level set by the government of £6,500 on a flat rate, and a disturbance payment based on the number of existing bedrooms from £2,050 for a studio, up to £4,750 for a five-bedroom house. Those in shared ownership receive the market value of their equity stake, plus a home loss payment of 10% of the market value of that stake at a minimum of £6,500 to a maximum of £65,000. They may also be entitled to disturbance payments for related costs incurred. In the case of freeholders and lease holders, WBC will pay the market value of the property plus an additional 17.5% as compensation, it will also compensate if necessary, for losses in connection with the transfer of a mortgage and, as well as the right of first refusal to buy a new property constructed as part of the development. In the case of non-resident freeholders, the compensation will also be the market value plus 17.5%, where ownership pre-dated 3 December 2015.⁴³ To date, all 120 privately owned properties in the regeneration area required for demolition, have been secured. The delay in the consideration of the revised scheme arising from discussions around enhancements to the proposals had a positive impact in allowing more time for engagement with residents to reach agreement on the voluntary sale of their homes, and under the terms of a revised Community Charter. The Council adopted a flexible approach with the owners of the properties, taking into account the needs of the individuals of those properties, nor did it stick rigidly to the Charter which only provided a backdrop to this flexible approach.

8.23 The proposals for compensation will have a positive impact in that social housing tenants, as already explained, are more likely to be on lower incomes, and from groups with protected characteristics. In the case of homeowners, it is the case that properties in the regeneration area are cheaper relative to the rest of Woking. They are more likely to be owned by those on lower incomes including older residents, and black and minority ethnic residents, and WBC has been aware that they are more likely to find greater difficulty in purchasing homes in the new development, and on the open market in other parts of the borough given the high cost of housing in the South East. The compensation packages that are being offered by WBC, coupled with the Earn Your Deposit Scheme, seek to mitigate the effects of this in being above the statutory level set out in the Code of Compensation. There remains a potentially negative impact for residents, particularly older residents and/or those on lower incomes who are disproportionately represented among groups with protected characteristics in terms of their ability to obtain a mortgage. WBC has therefore addressed this by recourse to provisions in the Housing Act, 1985, which empowers local authorities to advance funds for the purpose of acquiring a house other than through Right to Buy. Apart from the interest rate, local authorities can set the terms of the mortgage and WBC gave an undertaking to do this and to act as lender of last resort. This approach mitigates negative impacts and enhances positive impacts. To date, 26 households have gone down the assisted purchase route where the Council offers to take a, equity stake in a new property capped at 33% of the market value of the new property or £100,000, whichever is the lesser and the new property can be located anywhere

⁴³ The figure for non-resident homeowners was revised so that it is in line with resident homeowners at 17.5%. This decision was made by WBC's Sheerwater Regeneration Oversight Panel, 23 November 2016 and therefore was not reflected in the 2016 Community Charter which predates that meeting, and where the offer at that time was market value plus an additional 12.5%.

on mainland UK. There are 11 who have taken a mortgage with the Council and of these households 8 have taken both assisted purchase and a mortgage with the Council.

8.24 In the case of vulnerable residents with issues relating to alcohol and substance misuse, as well as those with mental health issues, there is the potential for harm and increased vulnerability where it is known that large financial compensation payments are being made to individuals. Moreover, there is the potential for negative impact among this group in relation to effective financial management of large sums of money. There are therefore safeguarding issues as well as money advice and money management issues that need to be carefully examined. Although it is not specifically within their remit, the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team has fulfilled an important role providing support for the more vulnerable residents with complex needs. The importance of meeting the needs of tenants requiring advocacy, advice, and support as the development progresses has been recognised and the Council as already mentioned appointed an Independent Tenants' Adviser for secure tenants. The Council has also employed a permanent Mental Health Support Worker, and a Sheerwater Community Engagement Officer to seek to mitigate these potentially negative impacts.

8.25 In the case of private tenants, they are one of the most vulnerable and insecurely housed groups and comprise a significant proportion of children, young people, black and ethnic minorities, and low-income households. Research carried out by the Fabian Society, endorsed by Shelter, and the Chartered Institute of Housing showed that families in private rented accommodation struggle to get by after paying rent.⁴⁴ Moreover, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation identified the private rented sector as a significant cause of in work poverty.⁴⁵ The CPO and the regeneration proposals therefore have a potentially negative impact for private rented tenants in adding to an existing insecurity and anxiety, particularly as this group also contains a high number of temporary housed residents with mental health needs. While WBC has no commitment to house private tenants, to ameliorate some of the potentially negative impacts, WBC is providing support in signposting to advice on accommodation. The nature of shorthold tenancies involves risk and high turnover. The Council recognising the importance of continuing to provide support to this vulnerable group, is providing advice and support through its Housing Options Team, and advice sessions, to ensure that those with protected characteristics receive accessible support in finding suitable accommodation where possible as it will have a beneficial impact on the wider community, whilst also enhancing positive impacts for this vulnerable tenant group in the process.

8.26 The first phase of the residential development, known as the purple phase, began in 2020 and is scheduled for completion in the summer. It is a housing development of 10 three story houses and 82 one two and three bed apartments that are available for social and market rent, link to a central square, and are situated in a gateway to the development. The disruption has been kept to a minimum because of the phased approach and the measures that have been put in place to move people only when housing is built. The show homes are now open and residents living in the

⁴⁴ Chartered Institute of Housing, Mind the Gap: The growing shortfall between private rents and help with housing costs, May 2016
Fabian Society, For us All, Redesigning social security for the 2020's.

⁴⁵ Joseph Rowntree Foundation, UK Poverty 2017: A comprehensive analysis of poverty trends and figures.

area have already expressed a desire to move into the purple phase as soon as the town houses and apartments become available for social rent. The preparatory works for the red and yellow residential phases started at the beginning of 2021. The impact of the construction is also temporary and will be outweighed by improvements in the area, the provision of energy efficient homes, and a better environment that will improve the health and wellbeing of the population.

b. Community, recreational and leisure facilities

8.27 **Multi-use environment:** The ethos underpinning the regeneration of Sheerwater was that the re-provision of the sports pitches and provision of the recreational open space would be timed, as has been the case, to be at the forefront of the redevelopment and regeneration of the area. As with the provision of open space, the provision of leisure and sports facilities play a vital role in communities, bringing benefits that help to improve health and wellbeing, and at the same time, empower and connect people and communities across age ranges, skill levels and abilities, and provide diversionary activities for at risk young people. The nature of the recreational and leisure offer in Sheerwater, which has led the development, centres around a Leisure Centre located via access to land surrounding Bishop David Brown School, and includes: a 3G floodlit football pitch with spectator seating, a rugby pitch, two grass pitches and a cricket pitch. Indeed, the very first sign of construction activity in the area, and as planned, has been the construction of new leisure and recreational facilities including improved rugby, football and cricket pitches, the construction of a new leisure centre housing a gym, studios, sports hall, swimming pools, health suite, and a function room, and which, will have ample space for parking. The development will include a centrally located shopping area in a later phase, located closer to the other new facilities such as the community centre, health centre, pharmacy, and nursery/children's centre. It will foster the potential for linked trips to be made in locations that are easily accessible and in the heart of the development. This will particularly benefit residents with access needs, those with young children, those with other caring responsibilities, and those who are less mobile as provision will be more carefully balanced with the residential development, including accommodation for older people located in proximity. Section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 requires decision makers to make reasonable adjustments in certain circumstances, for example, where a disabled person is at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled. The location will also facilitate collaboration between the different services located together and Well North Enterprises (WNE) has been commissioned by Woking Borough Council to facilitate this process through a variety of forms of engagement to help to bring the community together, and to look at how community and commercial space across the development can be used to support the overall regeneration objectives. This will have a positive impact on groups with protected characteristics, in terms of a greater ease of movement, and within a contiguous central location and an enhanced and more congenial environment.

8.28 The provision of recreational open space and leisure facilities at the start of the regeneration of Sheerwater will have a positive impact in that residents, particularly vulnerable groups who may be fearful of change as it is a concrete and positive expression of the wider aspirations for the area. This positive impact will be enhanced by the fact that the delivery of leisure and sporting facilities has not resulted in any loss of provision although there has been some disruption as implementation

of the development has proceeded. Now that the construction of the leisure and sporting facilities are almost finally nearing handover, a community use agreement will be put in place to ensure that the facilities are shared between different uses in the community, including schools, community groups representing diverse interests, local sports clubs, women only activities as required, and so forth. A number of options are being explored to ensure that the new community centre becomes a facility that is more proactively centred on the needs of the community, moving away from its former use as principally a venue for hire. In focusing more on specific local need, this will have a positive impact in reducing the number of centre users coming from outside of the Sheerwater area, and in reducing the impact of traffic. As with any facility, promotion of its use needs to make sure that it is not only the well informed or those who are already active that it appeals to, but those groups who are traditionally underrepresented including women and girls.

c. Employment, training, and the labour market

8.29 Employment and training of local people: As one of the key components of its approach to ensuring that the regeneration of Sheerwater is sustainable, in WBC's Community Value Plan, the employment and training of local people is seen as an important driver underpinning the development.⁴⁶ The approach is embedded in the activities and opportunities that will arise directly from the redevelopment of Sheerwater, as well a longer-term focus on education and training during and post redevelopment, working with partners to take forward measures to ensure that Sheerwater residents have the requisite skill sets attuned to labour market demands. These opportunities will be as a direct result of the regeneration proposals and will sit within the context of other development strategies and plans in the borough, the sub-region, and the region.

8.30 The specific opportunities arising within Sheerwater resulting from the regeneration proposals are being buttressed by active engagement with schools and community agencies operating in the area. This will enable the promotion of employment and training opportunities locally. These interventions include a job skills club to provide people with assistance in securing employment, the development of a partnership with Job Centre Plus to ensure that site vacancies are advertised and promoted in the regeneration area, and partnerships with other local agencies and training providers as part of the work of an Employment and Skills Group that is to be established as part of the scheme. For example, one of the contractors operating in an early phase of the construction, Pellikaan have specifically set out the actions it will take to create positive local outcomes and community value, and these include making contact with local schools regarding work experience weeks, traineeships, and onsite tours, using local suppliers and subcontractors, networking and meet the buyer events. The Pellikaan offer also includes promoting specific job opportunities locally including Trainee Site Manager, Plant Operatives, Traffic Marshall, and General Operatives. This will ensure that there is long-term support for residents across all of the protected groups, with a focus and co-ordination of activities also on those on low incomes and those not in education, employment and training. There are plans to organise a career fair to promote wider

⁴⁶ Sheerwater Regeneration WBC Community Value Plan, October 2015.

understanding of the construction industry and the broad spectrum of potential employment and skilled training opportunities that are available within the sector.

8.31 As the employment proposals have developed, they have been informed by a wealth of national evidence which demonstrates the low awareness about opportunities in the construction sector. Indeed, construction is seen in the popular imagination as being principally about brick laying and labouring. There is wider evidence that reveals a lack of awareness about the range of opportunities within the sector for the application of skills in digital technology, design, land planning, carpentry, electrical engineering, surveying, sales, business development and so forth. The level of awareness of these opportunities is therefore also likely to be low in Sheerwater. It is the case that despite the progress that has been made, women also continue to be under-represented in the construction industry and in the associated trades. There is also some evidence, principally because of its image, that the sector can also be potentially off-putting for LGBT people and other protected and vulnerable groups.

8.32 To address the lack of awareness about opportunities in the construction industry, Gilbert Ash, another contractor working on the scheme, held an employability event in February 2020 at the Mascot Hub on Dartmouth Avenue to provide school leavers and job seekers with the opportunity to find out more about the type of careers available in the construction industry. The session covered skills, training, current opportunities, how to apply, and addressed issues in relation to women in construction. In addition, during the build, Gilbert-Ash, the purple phase contractor also worked with Woking based charity called LinkAble which, for over 30 years, has supported children and adults with learning disabilities across the borough. As well as fundraising for LinkAble, Gilbert-Ash has added colourful signage to its site hoardings to help promote the services of the charity. A key focus of LinkAble's service offer is providing activities and experiences for its users that they struggle to access. As soon as it is safe to do so, Gilbert-Ash will be working with LinkAble to host a number of site visits to give its members insight into the work of the construction industry. The employment proposals overall do have the potential to have a positive impact in relation to openings for residents. The comparative lack of literacy, numeracy, and the lack of high-level qualifications among residents with protected characteristics in Sheerwater is however a structural barrier. Moreover, employment is no longer a guaranteed route out of poverty given the impact of low pay and the rise of in work poverty. Therefore, as part of an approach to implementing the employment proposals, the notion of a living wage is central to the proposals and to the arrangements entered into with contractors, supported by measures to encourage disadvantaged and underrepresented groups into training and employment.⁴⁷

8.33 The recruitment and retention of women working in the construction and manual trades is extremely low as already stated, with women representing approximately 11% of the workforce in the construction sector and as little as 1% per cent of manual trades. Indeed, construction has the undesirable distinction of having the lowest representation of women employed. Moreover, where

⁴⁷ Andy Pike, Neil Lee et al, Job creation for inclusive growth in cities, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, August 2017. Living Wage Foundation, Explaining UK Wage Rates.

women are employed in the sector, they are found predominantly in secretarial positions, rather than in occupations that are a direct part of construction activity. This has been slow to change despite a high representation of women on construction related courses at colleges and universities, and despite industry action to attract new recruits, alongside equality measures that have been put in place by professional organisations, trades unions, government, schools, and a range of training providers to bring about positive change.⁴⁸ A survey of 1,000 women, commissioned by Keepmoat has also revealed that there are pronounced inequalities within groups with protected characteristics in that a mere 13 percent of women aged 16-25 would consider a career in construction.⁴⁹ By contrast, workers over 60 in the construction industry see employment tenure as one of the most important issues affecting them.⁵⁰ There are other concerns among groups with protected characteristics that have implications for the Sheerwater proposals. An important illustration is that 60% of gay respondents to a survey on their experiences in the construction industry said that they felt comfortable about being open about their sexual orientation with immediate colleagues. This figure however varied dramatically across the industry ranging from 70% feeling comfortable in architectural practice, to 27% of those working for contractors.⁵¹ In relation to disabled people, according to the Construction Industry Council, less than 5% of people in the construction industry disclose a disability, which is lower than reported disability across the UK, and there is evidence of particular recruitment challenges experienced by disabled people.⁵² Thus, equality considerations will continue be a major challenge for implementation of the regeneration proposals in Sheerwater if the benefits arising from construction and associated employment opportunities are to be evenly dispersed.

8.34 The Council through the regeneration and other incentives at its disposal is continuing to work with and through its partners to promote and enhance the image of construction as inclusive, through local initiatives. This is being backed by a range of measures across the supply chain in relation to flexible working, reasonable adjustments and so forth. The Public Services (Social Value) Act, 2012 places a duty on public bodies to consider social value ahead of procurement and S106 ensures that there is a strategy to maximise the employment opportunities, apprenticeships and training and the promotion of such opportunities for and to local people on the development. WBC can therefore require providers and contractors, through a social value clause and a local labour clause, to consider how they will deliver greater value for Sheerwater by for instance, promoting careers in construction to local people so that they can make informed choices as a result of a

⁴⁸ Not Just for Boys, Smith Institute, 2017.

Women in the Construction Industry Ranstad, 2016.

Also, the Construction Industry Training board has stated that construction output is expected to grow by 1.7% in the next five years in the UK. This means 179,000 new jobs will be created and more than 35,000 workers will be needed each year. In addition, post Brexit restrictions on migrant labour may potentially have an impact on the construction sector.

⁴⁹ Keepmoat Homes, Women in Construction Infographic, February 2017, www.keepmoatcorporate.com (Accessed 7 February 2018).

⁵⁰ The impact of the ageing population on the construction industry, CIOB.

Joanna Leaviss, Alistair Gibb and Phil Bust, Understanding the Older Worker in Construction, Strategic Promotion of Ageing Research Capacity, funded by Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, 2008.

⁵¹ LGBT Construct, LGBT+ Inclusion in Construction, presentation by Christina Riley, Senior Planner, and Co-Chair, Balfour Beatty LGBT & Allies Network, 2017.

Lucy Anderson, Workers consider quitting construction industry over homophobia, Construction News, 11 October 2016.

⁵² A Blueprint for change, Construction Industry Council, 24 February 2016.

greater understanding of the breadth of the offer, by having consideration to the age profile of the construction workforce, and by requiring practical equality and support measures as part of contractual terms.

8.35 A critical equality challenge will therefore clearly be how the employment and training proposals move from the general to the specific. They will need to be backed up by the setting of robust, nuanced, and meaningful equality targets and outcome measures and proposals for effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks, as part of a coherent and workable Community Value Plan. In this, the type of jobs created, and worker profile is as important as the number of jobs. The development of fit for purpose targets and outcome measures will need to form a core element of the implementation of the regeneration, taking account of the complex experiences of, for example, women returning to training or employment following a break in employment, younger women, older people, disabled people, and LGBT groups. These measures need to be based on an awareness of the different barriers that protected groups face, and their complex, multiple and overlapping experiences and needs. For example, older people could also be targeted for a range of jobs across the sector, coupled with reasonable adjustments and flexible working practices that make the prospect of a job in construction a reality for a broad spectrum of workers with protected characteristics.⁵³ The aspirations of the regeneration proposals for employment and training and the setting of meaningful targets and measures has the potential to ensure a positive impact by requiring that the services of funders and delivery agencies are also held to account and are responsive to local equality considerations.

8.36 As part of the implementation of the employment and training proposals, with the accent on the employment of 'local' people, in order to further enhance positive impacts for Sheerwater residents, it needs to be borne in mind that inequality, as illustrated in the baseline assessment, has a particular spatial dimension in Sheerwater as the most deprived in Surrey on the income and employment domain, and the fourth poorest on the education, skills and training domain, with a high proportion of working age benefit claimants. The practical application of the term 'local' is therefore important in this context given the distinctiveness of the area and the myriad of equality and inequality challenges it faces compared with the borough of Woking as a whole, the sub region, and indeed the region. As Sheerwater fares badly on the employment and training domain, and there is a lack of qualifications, connecting residents with higher quality jobs will be a key challenge as qualifications are one of the most important predictors of job quality. There could potentially therefore be a displacement or mismatch effect caused by a fault line in which high quality jobs created in Sheerwater may be taken by people living outside of the area and commuting in. This will be a positive outcome overall for Woking as a borough but may not necessarily benefit residents living in Sheerwater and does not necessarily meet the notion of inclusive growth.

d. Local businesses

8.37 **Impact on local businesses:** The development proposals for Sheerwater include 1728m² of retail space situated around the Central Square, which is at the heart of the development, and

⁵³ Older workers crucial to curbing construction industry skills gap, CIC, 9 December 2017.

close to the community hub. There are at present, 15 retail businesses that fall within the proposed regeneration area, in an environment that is aged and unattractive. The CPO is necessary for the acquisition of freehold and leasehold interests in business properties, and provision for the development of new retail units within a more appealing, and improved environment. This will have a positive impact in terms of attracting investment and providing a more pleasant environment in which to shop and relax. Indeed, a number of businesses have indicated that they will be relocating to new commercial units, either within Sheerwater, or in other parts of Woking. There is however a negative impact in that the majority of the retail units in the existing shopping parade are struggling family owned black and minority ethnic businesses, some of which are used for convenience shopping and take away meals by residents. Because the Council has been subsidising these retailers over several years to keep them going, charging minimum to no rent, many of the owners of those businesses are not in a position to set up again either locally or elsewhere in Woking once the regeneration has been implemented as many are not commercially viable and will therefore have to close. This will be coupled with a loss of employment which will impact black and minority employees more acutely given that the businesses are predominantly black and minority ethnic family run ones where more than one family member may be employed, with a correspondingly adverse impact on family income.

8.38 As well as providing employment and convenience shopping that reflects the diverse demographic, the retail units also fulfil an important local presence, providing home delivery services, assistance with financial management for vulnerable residents, and operate as ‘eyes’ in the community for residents by providing an alert in circumstances where someone may not have been seen for a few days. The Council’s Asset Management Team has carried out a face-to-face consultation to gain an understanding of what the likely impact of the development proposals will be from the perspectives of retailers, and to examine measures to support those affected businesses that can and wish to continue to trade in relocating either to suitable retail units in the redeveloped area or elsewhere in Woking. Sheerwater Glass has located to premises outside of Sheerwater but remains in the Borough, while others such as the pharmacy will remain in Sheerwater. The minimart which provides a wide offering including Asian, African and African-Caribbean produce will also remain in Sheerwater, continuing to provide for the needs of an ethnically diverse community. Given that the new retail units will be opened before the existing retail facilities are closed, the impact is potentially neutral in allowing the customer base of many of the existing retailers who are able to remain in situ to be retained, therefore helping to mitigate potentially negative effects on business owners and residents using those services. There will be a population increase resulting from the regeneration and this may have a beneficial effect in supporting local business. As already stated, it is likely however that a number of businesses that are not commercially viable, and which have not been commercially viable for some time, will cease to trade. To mitigate the impact of this, the Council will be providing compensation to those businesses that are not commercially viable and which will close as a result of the regeneration. Moreover, those businesses that come with accommodation leases will be treated in precisely a similar manner as Council secure tenants and will be fully supported through the relocation and resettlement process.

8.39 A key part of the Community Value Plan will centre on providing customised guidance for

those businesses that will be unable to relocate in Sheerwater including, establishing a new business, looking at new opportunities and signposting owners and employees to relevant support to potentially mitigate some of the negative impacts. To mitigate the effect of loss of employment resulting from the closure of the existing retail premises, the Council has also proposed an End User Agreement, and an Employment and Skills Plan. There are potential business and employment opportunities arising as new facilities retail, recreational and leisure and hospitality services are developed in Sheerwater that will have a positive impact if the necessary support and commitment to residents can be established.

e. Public realm, open space, and safety and security

8.40 Attractive public spaces: The regeneration proposals are embedded in WBC's local policy objective of developing a high-quality network of open spaces, that enhance quality of life, seek to meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, and positively influence patterns of use in ways that can offer everyone varied opportunities for richer outdoor experiences.⁵⁴ The importance of this has been underlined during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. A centrepiece in the development of the original Sheerwater Master Plan and its associated regeneration proposals is the provision of attractive, safe, and accessible open spaces, within a parkland setting, that enhances the public realm, and caters for a wide range of needs. The overall vision is to provide spaces where residents of all ages, visitors, and people who work in the area can mix, relax, and enjoy taking part in a variety of outdoor activities. As well as safe, well lit, and accessible spaces for all, enhancing the quality of open space in Sheerwater is also central to the regeneration. The scheme that is being implemented optimises the use of land within the regeneration area, and addresses residents' concerns about reduced opportunities for informal play due to the emphasis in the originally consented scheme on 'managed' open space. The overall impact is positive in that the quality of useable open space has been significantly enhanced.⁵⁵

8.41 Accessibility to open space from an equality perspective: An important equality consideration in relation to open space and the public realm is the view of the 'physical space' as 'dynamic', rather than 'static', changing seasonally, and in accordance with patterns and timings of use. The physical open space can also be a defined contiguous area within a locality that is negotiated with others for specific uses and activities. Therefore, from a planning and equality perspective, assessing and taking different interests and potential interests into account has been and is a central concern in the development and implementation of the regeneration proposals. An example of this is the issue of open space in relation to, gender, age, disability, and community safety, the way people experience space according to social, cultural, and economic background, and the range of activities for which open spaces may be used by children, young people, older people and so forth. As the development proposals are implemented, WBC will continue to ensure that the interests of protected groups are actively considered. A sensitive and inclusive open space planning is taking full account of the identified needs of groups with protected characteristics in the amenities

⁵⁴ Natural Woking: Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Strategy, Woking Borough Council, 2016.

⁵⁵ Social factors in road safety: Policy Paper, Royal Society of the Prevention of Accidents.

Understanding the link between disadvantage/deprivation and road safety, DfT Road Safety Research and Dissemination Learning, 21 January 2009.

that are provided, how they are provided, and which, balance various needs. The open space and public realm designs of previous decades are replete with examples of restrictions to physical accessibility, and designs that have compromised feelings of safety, and walkability. This is currently the case with the open space configuration in parts of Sheerwater. Therefore, as these fundamental access issues are being addressed through the regeneration, they will have a positive impact on the lives of residents and will leave an important legacy for future generations.

8.42 The regeneration area has a high black and minority ethnic population and a review undertaken by CABI has revealed that in urban areas, black and minority ethnic residents tend to have less local green open space, and that where they do live in areas with open spaces, they are of poorer quality and are inaccessible. The regeneration area in Sheerwater has a high proportion of black and minority ethnic residents, compared with other areas of Woking. The importance of parks and green spaces where people feel safe are among the key factors that contribute to individual quality of life in neighbourhoods.⁵⁶ There is also evidence of greater health benefits afforded by access to a public realm and areas where people feel that they can walk and engage in outdoor activities in relative security compared with areas where they do not. These positive health benefits include reduced prevalence of obesity related chronic disease, reduced cardiovascular disease, and reduced depression.⁵⁷

8.43 As already illustrated, health inequalities follow a social gradient and it is the case that people living in poor areas, such as Sheerwater, are more likely to and indeed do experience adverse health outcomes. The current focus on non-communicable disease and specifically, COVID-19 also reveals the link between health inequalities and adverse outcomes in that those with underlying conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and so forth, and those in older age groups are more at risk of poor outcomes. The regeneration proposals for Sheerwater have increased the amount of open space. The park being positioned centrally benefits from natural surveillance as it will be overlooked by houses and the community centre, and will be located near to the nursery compared. There is also a network of paths leading directly from the park thus ensuring that it is an accessible space, combined with a variety of landscaped features and formal play areas. This will have a positive impact by increasing the potential for active outdoor impromptu use in an inclusive way, thus making an important contribution to residents' quality of life and to tackling health inequalities and extending overall life expectancy as well as healthy life expectancy.

8.44 **The Community Garden Project:** As part of the regeneration of Sheerwater, a new community garden is located adjacent to the shopping parade on Dartmouth Avenue in two spaces with benches providing an attractive space where residents can relax. The community garden which was set up by a local group called Sheerwater Together, was conceived with the intention that being located within the regeneration area, it would have to move once the development was underway. The garden was therefore designed and steered by the group, in partnership with RHS Wisley School of Horticulture, Surrey County Council, Bishop David Brown School, and other local groups in such a

⁵⁶ Community Green: using local spaces to tackle inequality and improve health, CABI, 2015.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

way as to enable its various elements to be rehoused. These include wooden benches, wooden planters, most of the plants including fruit trees, and the garden shed. The aim of the project is to provide an attractive and green outdoor space to improve the area, whilst also providing residents with the opportunity to get involved in the development of the garden and its maintenance. The design includes community vegetable grow and share, and sensory plants, and flowers. This is positive in its impact on the environment and on Sheerwater residents who experience significant disadvantage, and who have been unable to access and use extant public spaces.

8.45 There are several studies that have shown that families who participate in community gardens have a healthier diet than those who do not. They have also been shown to promote exercise, bring environmental benefits to the wider community, and to help stimulate positive action on a range of other issues. This includes the wider dissemination of nutritional knowledge among family and friends and acting as an informal educational resource in a tangible expression of the relationship between 'growing' and 'scientific' learning.⁵⁸ The development of the garden project in Sheerwater has also proved positive in its impact as a focal point for the practical application of design, project management, and teamwork skills. As the community garden project has developed, it has had a positive impact as an active space for outdoor engagement, as a safe space to retreat to, as an important source of social support for vulnerable people, and as an access point for new communities, older residents, and for residents whose principal language is not English. It will have a positive impact in continuing to enable the community in Sheerwater to cohere and to develop relationships around a shared interest and productive activity, as well as joint pride as custodians of a socially meaningful space.⁵⁹ The community garden has already helped to extend the networks of residents through the forging of links with RH Wisely, and residents have been involved with several of their initiatives outside of Sheerwater.

8.46 The benefit of the garden project is an important source of local support. It has provided therapeutic benefits for residents with mental health issues, and has engaged disabled residents, residents with sensory impairments, and sheltered housing residents with various support needs. The project has also been able to engage with some of the secure tenants that have not responded to door knocking, letters, or other printed information, and have therefore proved difficult to engage. The first community newsletter for Sheerwater published and disseminated in December 2017 began the process of promoting the garden project to residents, as has the work of the Community Engagement Officer. The project has now formed a Gardening Club which prior to the

⁵⁸ Helen Quale, *The true value of community farms and gardens: social, environmental, health and economic*, Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, 2007.

Also, in London, Bostall Gardens in Abbey Wood, the Royal Borough of Greenwich is a community based gardening project that has brought together men and women from an ethnically diverse community comprising residents from Nepal, Taiwan, residents who are second-generation Jamaican, and white British residents, disabled residents, and residents spanning the age spectrum. As well as developing the land, which was originally on a derelict site, the community garden now grows a variety of produce in unenclosed spaces and a poly tunnel, and also provides residents with individual small plots. The garden also provides relaxation spaces where people can sit and socialise. The members of the community garden host monthly meetings and social gatherings in their homes where a variety of national dishes are contributed and shared, as well as education about different gardening practices and varieties of fruits and vegetables. The social aspect of the events that have brought residents together would not have happened in the absence of the community garden. The members of the gardening project have gone on to attract funding to develop a meeting space on the land and to fund related projects to further enhance the communal areas of the garden.

COVID-19 pandemic, met on the last Sunday of every month. It is important to continue to promote the community garden further through the dissemination of information via a variety of channels, and in a variety of other forums to ensure that a wide group of residents continue to have the opportunity to learn about it, and to participate. The changing situation in relation to COVID-19 and current government advice against gathering and the importance of social distance clearly has implications for this.

8.47 The experience of community garden projects in other parts of the country reveals that engagement is in part dependent on knowledge of their existence, and that this can be limited when promotion relies solely on word of mouth. The use of a community newsletter and other social media is therefore a positive step and engagement is being developed further through active promotion in local schools, community radio, faith organisations, local community groups, a proposed summer garden party that unfortunately had to be delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and agencies working directly with individuals at the local level. As well as the overall potential benefits for residents, the inclusion of a diverse group of participants in the project can bring enormous benefits to the direction, focus and emphasis of the community garden. A large proportion of residents in Sheerwater are for example from rural growing cultures or are from families who are from rural growing cultures, and therefore have invaluable knowledge that they can contribute on growing different varieties of fruits and vegetables, and on different gardening practices. As part of a relationship of mutual exchange, residents who have a longer history in Sheerwater can also impart knowledge about gardening practices, and knowledge about varieties of fruits and vegetables that are more readily available. A future location will be identified for the community garden, with local residents either in the regeneration area or other parts of the estate when it is scheduled to move.

8.48 **Accessibility to open spaces during the development and safety and security:** As the regeneration proposals continue to be implemented, maintaining accessibility to open space in Sheerwater is a crucial on-going equality consideration, as is the safety and security of the site. The scheme has been considered and developed from the standpoint of ensuring that reprovision of safe and accessible spaces take place, prior to the removal of existing open space. As part of a Community Safety Campaign, the empty properties in the regeneration area are fitted with metal panels over the doors and windows to ensure that they do not become vandalised and unsafe. The purple phase contractor, Gilbert Ash was also awarded 4.5 stars by the Considerate Contractors Scheme based on its stringent safety and security measures, including additional COVID-19 requirements which will have a positive impact, given the disproportionate incidence of COVID-19 within black and minority ethnic communities, and on disabled and other vulnerable groups, including a higher risk burden of adverse outcomes. The Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team also carry out regular patrols and have been working with ThamesWey and Serco to secure void spaces and stairwells to deter rough sleeping and loitering, and have weekly onsite security visits. These measures also address the issues of safety and security and the risk of crime and anti-social behaviour that is associated with construction sites. They also enhance the safety and security of younger people, and particularly younger men who, despite the popular imagination, are more

likely to be victims of crime, as well as LGBT people and black and minority ethnic people who are more vulnerable to crime.

8.49 There are also weekly site walks by the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team, and fly tipping removal. The team is also in the process of designing posters to provide information for people on how to report anything suspicious, and to address crime and fear of crime, the costs of having patrols on the site during the evenings and at the weekends to provide visible security to residents is currently being looked at. The consideration that has therefore gone into re-provision will ensure that any potential for negative impact as the regeneration proceeds in terms of loss of space, and safety and security is kept to a minimum through seamless and continued accessibility throughout all the development phases. Furthermore, as already stated, the provision of more useable open space in Sheerwater, which is in sympathy with the development, will have a positive impact on protected groups by providing more accessible space for outdoor enjoyment. The new dwellings within Sheerwater will have smaller gardens attached to them than is currently the case, and this could be seen as having a negative impact in some cases. The enlargement of the central park area and the provision of safer, accessible, and useable open space overall that is connected to residential areas, and supported living, coupled with the community garden in the interim period, and when the community garden is finally relocated, serves to mitigate any potential negative impacts, and enhances positive impacts. In addition, the podium medium rise units are in sympathy with the proposals for delivering open space that is more connected, whilst also achieving higher levels of parking. This will have a positive impact and mitigates any potential negative impact by directly addressing residents' concerns about congestion alongside an increased population.

f. Travel, transport, and connectivity

8.50 **Enhancing travel and transport accessibility:** Sheerwater, despite its proximity to Woking Town Centre, has a lower public transport accessibility rating in comparison with areas such as Goldsworth Park and St Johns which, while being a similar distance away, have a higher accessibility score.⁶⁰ The Sheerwater area is served by several buses that run along Albert Drive, the main road of entry and exit, with bus stops located along the route. The proposals for improvement in the public realm and open spaces and addressing issues of security are designed to support and encourage travel and transport by a variety of means. They are anchored in and fully integrated with wider strategies and plans for the borough, specifically the approach that has been set out by Surrey County Council as the Highways authority, in partnership with Woking Borough Council, to meeting needs of residents. The borough of Woking is one of Cycling England's flagship cycle towns and the proposals for the regeneration of Sheerwater are also integrated with the Cycle Woking project.⁶¹ In specific terms, they hinge on the improvement of transport and travel infrastructure with enhanced parking provision, encouraging cycling, and walking through improved pedestrian access to facilitate pedestrian and cycling flows and safe access and signage, encouraging the use of public transport, and identifying and removing barriers to access. The development will ensure access to public transport is as convenient as possible through a robust design that is sympathetic to

⁶⁰ Surrey Transport Plan: Woking Borough Draft Local Transport Strategy & Forward Programme.

⁶¹ Ibid.

potential public transport routes. The Dartmouth Avenue area is being improved and widened to allow buses into the new development and the introduction of these services will be subject to discussions with the bus operators nearer the time.⁶²

8.51 As stated in the Department for Transport's action plan, Transport for Everyone, while there are many barriers to travel and transport experienced by the general public, the impact on specific groups who face various forms of disadvantage can vary significantly. These include key issues such as lighting, combined with fears about safety and use of public transport or walking at night for women, black and minority ethnic groups, disabled people, gay and transgender people and older people.⁶³ There are also transport access challenges that are faced by people as they age, become more prone to ill health, and who therefore need to access primary and secondary health facilities, and which need to be carefully considered. Moreover, women tend to have more caring responsibilities compared with men and undertake more journeys with dependents such as taking children to school or supporting family members in attending health facilities. The mobility of care is thus an important equality consideration in the regeneration of Sheerwater. The Department for Transport found for example that 69% of missed maternity appointments were due to transport related factors.⁶⁴ The issue of access to transport and connectivity is therefore an important equality issue for Sheerwater that the regeneration seeks to address and is important given the younger age structure of the population, as well as the ageing nature of the population.

8.52 The buses in Sheerwater, are currently not fully accessible for all residents, and in particular, older residents, disabled residents, those with mobility issues, and women with small children, particularly those who are not located close to bus stops. There are no covered bus shelters with the exception of the bus stop by the schools and one at ASDA, and the service does not stop at the local shops in Sheerwater. The Council is looking to install an additional two bus shelters on the edge of the regeneration at the request of the local residents; another bus shelter to serve the school children, and one to serve local older residents. While there was a bus service in Sheerwater that went directly to St Peter's Hospital, this is no longer the case. The rail stations of West Byfleet and Woking are approximately 1.8 and 2.8 kilometres respectively from the centre of the estate. There is a renewed focus since the impact of COVID-19 on the way in which towns and cities should be designed for the needs of residents and those who visit in ways that both enable and urge people to move unhindered, and under their own power, and in which the car is no longer seen as the default option. The regeneration proposals will provide residents with a wider choice of active travel that is more accessible, and this includes cycling and walking, and will include actions to encourage a bus service. Thus, facilitating wider access to public transport as well as other forms of travelling around the area, and connecting Sheerwater with wider geographical areas is a key consideration in the regeneration proposals and will have a positive impact. This is particularly important given the likely increase in population and therefore demand for public transport, and increase in cycling and the use of electric bikes, the latter already beginning to change the way people travel in socially

⁶² Sheerwater Regeneration, Woking Transport Assessment for ThamesWey Developments Ltd, March 2018.

⁶³ Transport for Everyone: An action plan to promote equality, Department for Transport, December 2012.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

distanced ways, appealing to those who do not traditionally see themselves as cyclists, and delivering physical benefits.

8.53 As illustrated in the deprivation analyses in 5.5 above the proportion of older people in Sheerwater and in the ward will likely reflect the ageing population of England particularly in the 55-64 age group. The travel proposals encourage walking and cycling, and it is important that cycling and walking initiatives are targeted at protected groups in Sheerwater as the scheme is developed and implemented. A 2015 Age UK and ILC report reveals that there is a gender dimension to cycling in England with 22-27% of men aged 16-54 cycling compared with 11-14% of women in the same age group. This also compares with a mere 15% of men in the 55-64 age group cycling and only 8% of men in the over 65 age group. The corresponding figures for women are significantly less at 7% in the 55-64 age group and 3% over 65's, considerably lower than EU countries with a well-developed cycling infrastructure.⁶⁵ In building on the development of the boroughs cycling infrastructure through the regeneration of Sheerwater, the transport and connectivity proposals will therefore have a positive impact in that cycling and activities can provide important physiological and mental health benefits for residents. This is evidenced by studies that demonstrate the benefits of cycling and walking in reducing the risks associated with numerous diseases.⁶⁶ This is built into the government's Obesity Strategy, 2020, along with targeted measures that align with local measures.⁶⁷

8.54 A major change in the scheme is in the approach that has been taken to roads, arising from issues raised in the consultation in relation to congestion. This is in terms of reducing the number and scale of roads accessible to vehicles and a reduction in their priority. The effect will be improved pedestrian and cycle routes, and this therefore addresses residents' concerns. Moreover, the proposed reconfiguration of the entrance to Broadmere School with new drop off and parking areas off Devonshire Avenue will reduce the need for vehicles to progress into the wider estate and pedestrian and cycle routes have also been enhanced with routes being primarily off road from the new estate to encourage a greater access to the school for local residents without using a car and this therefore will have a positive impact. There are moreover long-term health benefits for children who walk or cycle to school and this is important given the epidemic of obesity affecting children as well as adults and the implications for premature mortality resulting from medical conditions related to obesity including cardiovascular disease, respiratory diseases, cancer, and diabetes. Indeed, staying active and staying active as one ages is a huge predictor of how likely one will remain healthy and independent and regular physical exercise has been shown to positively impact strength, balance, cognitive abilities, and the risk of developing debilitating illnesses.⁶⁸

8.55 There will likely be an increase in congestion in and around the regeneration area as the various phases of the scheme are implemented, due to construction traffic needing to use local roads to access the various worksites. The likely result will be delays and the differential effects on

⁶⁵ The Future of Transport in an Ageing Society, Age UK and ILC, 2015.

⁶⁶ Pollock, R.D. et al, 2015: An investigation into the relationship between age and physiological function in highly active older adults, *The Journal of Physiology*, 593(1).

⁶⁷ Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives, Department of Health and Social Care, July 2020.

⁶⁸ Marco Pahor et al., "Effect of structured physical activity on prevention of major mobility disability in older adults: the LIFE Study randomized clinical trial", *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 311, No 23 (20145): 2387.

children, older people and disabled people, and anxieties for those with visual impairment who may find the new physical layout a challenge, and people with nervous system conditions who are sensitive to noise and machinery. This should therefore be carefully monitored, and actions put in place to minimise any negative impacts.

g. Community cohesion

8.56 **Community sustainability:** The importance of community cohesion is reflected in WBC's approach to the regeneration of Sheerwater in the targeting of resources in an area that has experienced the effects of historic underinvestment and decline. It is rooted in the wider strategies and plans for the borough of Woking as a whole and for the sub-region and aims to bring the area into parity with the wider area. There is national evidence highlighting the potential for tensions within and between communities living in areas that are in receipt of funding from regeneration programmes, particularly where the regeneration has not been managed sensitively.⁶⁹ This underlines the importance of aligning community cohesion considerations and wider strategies and plans, with an equality perspective. Community cohesion is centred around one of the core legislative equality principles, that is, promoting good relations between different groups, by encouraging and engaging in dialogue with all people, targeting resources in a transparent way, and amplifying the voices of those who are more likely to be excluded and who may therefore be 'harder to hear'.

8.57 One of the main and grounded fears of regeneration is that of gentrification and its negative impact whereby existing disadvantaged groups are displaced and replaced by wealthier newcomers, followed by increased rents and property prices. As an integral part of the development and implementation of its proposals, the Council has considered the potential for negative impact on community cohesion and as already explained above, has taken active steps to mitigate this by putting in place a profit cap on the development, suppressing social rent levels, and putting in place measures to ensure that existing Sheerwater residents, both homeowners and secure tenants, can remain in the area post regeneration if they desire to do so. The residents in the current studio and one-bedroom properties were facing a potentially negative impact under the proposals in being forced to move from Sheerwater due to the shortage of suitable properties. The Council having considered the effect of this, through ThamesWey, brought forward 276 affordable one-bedroom properties as part of an important enhancement to the scheme to mitigate the potential negative impacts.

8.58 There is little if at all any empirical evidence that tenure mix is an effective means for achieving the social objectives of neighbourhood regeneration as income, education, and so forth are key influential factors. There is evidence that the process of regeneration can give rise to social divisions and conflict between different groups of interest, as well as competition between various interests seeking to influence the outcomes of the regeneration. With this in mind by enabling the

⁶⁹ Building Community Cohesion in Area Based Initiatives: A guide for residents and practitioners, Jude Cummins, Sophia Skyers, Riette Oosthuizen and Janet Poorman, Office of Public Management, October 2004.

recreational and social aspects of the regeneration to lead the process, the Council is seeking to work towards the fostering of community cohesion and community sustainability by providing high quality and supportive services, and safe, open, and useable spaces that build on what the community has to offer, and which provide spaces for mixing and interaction in significantly enhanced and accessible community facilities. Indeed, the community facilities have led the development and occupy a central position within the plan, reflecting their importance in bringing together the wider community. It is the case that community cohesion is impacted, not because of differences between people but from social, economic, and environmental issues that undermine feelings of trust and security. The regeneration proposals are an ambitious attempt to regenerate Sheerwater in a holistic way. The community that is a mixed one live very comfortably together, and the regeneration is being handled in a way that seeks to build on this existing cohesion.

9. Implications of COVID-19

9.1 The regeneration of Sheerwater has not been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and is on course for completion within the specified timescale. The pandemic is a global health crisis that is without precedent in living memory, and one that has had and will continue to have long term social and economic consequences. The pandemic has been accompanied by major concerns for the welfare and well-being of older people, for vulnerable people facing challenging mental health issues, for those with long term health conditions, and for black and minority ethnic groups, all of whom are at risk of major complications and death if they contract the virus. The COVID-19 pandemic has occurred against a backdrop of social and economic inequalities in existing non-communicable diseases. The observed inequalities in COVID-19 morbidity and mortality therefore mirror, reinforce, and compound existing health inequalities in the distribution of chronic disease, and social and economic inequalities experienced by groups with protected characteristics.⁷⁰

9.2 The official advice is constantly changing but focuses on the need for people to adopt a precautionary approach to enhance safety, with an increased emphasis on hygiene, and as we emerge from lockdown, continuing to wear masks and maintaining social distancing. This has equality implications for regeneration schemes such as Sheerwater in that, WBC has had to be mindful of pressing decisions that need to be made about the older and vulnerable population at risk, and within that, how to ensure safety, security, and support as the regeneration proposals are implemented. This is particularly an issue given the timescales for the regeneration on the one hand, and crucially, the impact of relocation decisions for example on mental and physical health, as well as further face-to-face engagement given that the official advice is clearly to remain in a precautionary mode where at all possible. Alongside changing advice, there is a wealth of information emanating from a variety of sources including social media on COVID-19, some of it

⁷⁰ Bamba C, et al. J Epidemiology Community Health 2020;0:1–5. doi:10.1136/jech-2020-214401.

Intensive Care National Audit and Research Centre Report on COVID-19 in critical care 17 April 2020.

Bailey, Suzie and West, Michael, Ethnic Minority deaths and Covid-19: What are we to do? Kings Fund 30 April 2020.

Covid-19 the impacts of the pandemic on inequality, Institute for Fiscal Studies, 11 June 2020.

Platt, Lucinda, and Warwick, Ross, Are some ethnic groups more vulnerable to COVID-19 than others? Inequality, the IFS Deaton Review, May 2020.

contradictory. This therefore provides a fertile space in which misinformation can breed, thus adding to the existing fears of residents who are already prone to anxiety, about the impact of the regeneration on them personally. The Council recognises it is important that communication with residents remains key and this forms the central component of its targeted welfare response and communication strategy for engaging residents and supporting vulnerable residents across the borough and which includes Sheerwater during the pandemic and as the country emerges from lockdown.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

10.1 **Recommendations:** This EqlA has taken a predictive and pre-emptive approach to assessing the equality implications of the regeneration of Sheerwater and has mirrored and fed into the process which has included the development of the regeneration plan and has been ongoing since the start of implementation. The development proposals do have the potential to have a positive impact overall and where the potential for negative impacts have been identified, mitigating measures have been put in place by the Council where possible. Specifically, the measures underpinning the proposals for redevelopment bring forward more useable, pedestrian-friendly, and connected open spaces, reduced congestion, and enhanced car parking provision. They also increase the proportion of affordable housing, enabling residents to remain in Sheerwater if that is their wish to do so, in an enhanced and safe environment. This includes greater provision for the more vulnerable residents who are currently housed in one-bedroom and studio properties, thus also enabling them to remain in Sheerwater if that is their wish. There is also increased housing provision for older people.

10.2 The changes to the initially consented scheme has also meant that there will be sufficient provision to rehouse more vulnerable secure tenants who are currently occupying one-bedroom and studio properties in Sheerwater. The fact that a full Housing Needs Assessment has been carried out also means that support measures have and are continually being put in place for secure tenants, who were previously under the radar of statutory agencies, as part of the regeneration going forward. Moreover, recreation, leisure, and community provision have led the development, in advance of housing construction meaning that any potential negative impact on residents has been effectively mitigated. The impact of COVID-19 however did have implications for removal and relocation of older and vulnerable groups as current government advice was to remain in situ but with the relaxation of restrictions, more generally, the emphasis for everyone is on social distancing.

10.3 A higher number of secure tenants have taken up the offer of moving out of Sheerwater altogether than was anticipated and while there are issues of supply that present an issue in relation to rehousing residents in other parts of Woking, the Council is actively responding to this. The proposals in seeking to physically transform Sheerwater will have the positive impact in making Sheerwater an attractive place in which to live, work and invest. As land values tend to increase where focused regeneration activity takes place, the Council has proposed a profit cap to suppress prices, alongside a suite of compensation measures for home owners, leaseholders, secure tenants, tenants who are privately renting, and tenants who aspire to buy their own homes, to mitigate any

negative impacts on groups with protected characteristics that have been identified as potentially arising from the regeneration.

10.4 There are proposals in relation to employment and training resulting from the regeneration proposals and which, form part of an added Value Community Plan. These proposals do have the potential for positive impact as they are linked to specific practical support measures targeted at residents. For local people to benefit however, these interventions will need to be conjoined with specific employer and provider positive action measures, targeting areas where some protected groups are under-represented, for example, in construction, to ensure that the employment and training benefits are evenly distributed.

10.5 The community and recreational facilities will be significantly enhanced. The community organisations currently located in the Parkview will be relocated within Sheerwater, as will businesses that are viable. Those businesses that are not commercially viable and which have not been for some time will cease to trade. However, measures for advice and for monitoring the end destination of those business owners displaced by the regeneration in order to mitigate the impact on them are being put in place. There is currently a dedicated space for a Mosque located within the parade of shops in Sheerwater which was provided by the Council in response to an identified need. There are calls to prayers five times each day and given the need for a dedicated space in Sheerwater, the Council is making provision for a Mosque within Sheerwater or within proximity as part of its plans.

10.6 The consultation that has informed regeneration proposals has been extensive and intensive and the opportunity arising from the revised timescale for the scheme has meant that WBC has been able to invest more time in undertaking more and wide-ranging forms of consultation. This has been important in terms of engaging with groups that are traditionally 'harder to hear', and who have a variety of access needs and therefore, may not be able to engage with the more formal approaches to consultation or the more obvious tools of self-expression. A continuing approach to engaging with residents as the scheme progresses will build on the existing good relations between different groups in the area. The process is ongoing with the work of the Sheerwater Regeneration Housing Support Team, and implementation of a range of actions.

10.7 The S106 agreement was signed on 17 April 2019 when the works have commenced on site with works at Bishop David Brown School, now nearing handover, to build the new leisure centre, swimming pools and sports pitches, and which, as promised in the regeneration proposals, led the development. The initial residential phase is also nearing completion. A number of recommendations resulting from the EqlA of the Sheerwater regeneration proposals are relevant and these are set out below. In addition, a summary of the EqlA, potential impacts, and mitigation measures is set out in a separate Appendix D.

Recommendations: It is recommended that:

1. As implementation of the regeneration continues, the approach to community engagement should continue to take account of groups who are '*harder to hear*', building on the extensive engagement undertaken to date, and ensure that effective communication remains key.
2. The Council continue to ensure that Woking Access Group is engaged.
3. The Council should make the EqIA available to the stakeholders cited in this report and make the EqIA publicly available.
4. The Council continue to enhance the cohesiveness of Sheerwater by continuing to promote the area as a welcoming place, and the potential benefits of the regeneration as being inclusive.
5. The Council keep EqIA under review as the regeneration proceeds, and along predicted key milestones over the lifetime of the project.

Appendix A - Interviewees

List of Interviewees	
David Bittleston	Leader, Woking Borough Council
Mohammad Ilyas Raja	Councillor, Canalside Ward, Woking Borough Council
Ben Carasco	Surrey County Council
Ray Morgan	Chief Executive, Woking Borough Council
Zafar Iqbal	Senior Policy Officer (Community Engagement) Corporate Strategy, Woking Borough Council
Paola Capel-Williams	PFI Project Manager and Project Support, Woking Borough Council
Hazel Craig-Waller	Project Officer, People Directorate, Woking Borough Council
Shanaz Ashraf	Housing Support Officer, Woking Borough Council
Karen Campion	Housing Support Officer, Woking Borough Council
Giuseppe Amico	Housing Project Support Officer, Woking Borough Council
Ben Jones	Housing Project Support Officer, Woking Borough Council
Yasmin Gordine	Sheerwater Community Engagement Officer
Dominique Raymond	Mental Health Support Worker
Cliff Bush	Woking Access Group
Trevor Millard	Halo Works
Shahid Azeem	Chair of Woking Asian Business Forum
Ian Lelliott	Head of Residential Services, ThamesWey Homes Limited
Chris Louca	Sheerwater Together and Sheerwater Residents Association
Ian Vousden	Vice Chairman Sheerwater Residents Association
Edward Valletta	Manager Mascot
Karl Atreides	Director for Mental Health, Surrey Coalition of Disabled People
Robin de Wreede	Partner, Davitt Jones Bould
Bobby Afzal	Sheerwater Muslim Education and Welfare Trust Management Committee Member
Andrew Mawson and Nicola Gleave	Well North Enterprises (WNE
Martin Smith	Self-Supporting Minister
Rana King	Mental Health Support Worker (MIND)

Appendix B – Consultation and Engagement Programme

Public Consultation Events	Date	Attendees
Launch event	13 June 2013	547
Vision workshop	29 and 30 October 2013	150
Option workshop	30 and 31 May 2013	693
Masterplan workshop	30 and 31 March 2013	244
Public Consultation	18 January 2020	350
Community Consultation Forum (CCF) Workshops	Date	Attendees
CCF1	31 July 2013	87
CCF2	3 October 2013	61
CCF3	29 May 2014	71
CCF4	30 July 2014	67
CCF5	24 September 2014	18
CCF6	8 October 2014	31
CCF7	22 October 2014	36
CCF8	8 January 2015	58
Community Update	13 and 14 February 2015	194
Design Workshops	Date	Attendees
Streetscape and infrastructure	14 August 2014	5
Emerging masterplan	20 August 2014	9
Community facilities	3 September 2014	8
Leisure and recreation	16 September 2014	3
Housing and character areas	25 September 2014	7
Drainage	1 October 2014	4
Elderly accommodation	13 November 2014	18
Focus Groups	Date	Attendees
Elderly coffee morning	21 November 2013	14
Over 55s afternoon tea	21 November 2013	10
Educational services	4 December 2013	3
Business and retail	5 December 2013	7
Anti-social behaviour and community safety	18 December 2013	4

Public Consultation Events	Date	Attendees
Health and wellbeing	19 December 2013	5
Youth service provision	19 December 2013	5
Community drop-in sessions	Date	
Woodlands House (Sheltered and supported housing)	18 July 2013	
NVH Housing Managers surgery	4 December 2013	
St Michael's Church coffee morning	Summer 2014	
SureStart play and learn session	5 November 2014	
SureStart parent and toddler session	5 November 2014	
ASDA	13 November 2014	
MASCOT Hub	19 November 2014	
Gilbert Ash Employability Event	February 2020	
Stakeholder meetings/project updates	Date	
Church of England – Guildford Diocese	20 November 2013	
Shah Jahan Mosque	13 January 2014	
WBC Youth Action Committee – project update	31 January 2014	
Surrey Lifelong Partnership – project update	12 February 2014	
Bishop David Brown School – project update	April 2014	
Children's Advisory Board – project update	28 April 2014	
Bishop David Brown School	11 June 2014	
Community Stakeholders lunch	20 July 2014	
Hennessey Court flats – project update	August 2014	
Kiddiwinks – project update	August 2014	
Hyde Housing Association – project update	29 October 2014	
Canal Authority and Canal Society – project update	October 2014	
Woodham Lane residents – project update	21 November 2014	
NVH Resident Operations Board – project update	January 2015	
Sheerwater Football Club	February 2015	

Public Consultation Events	Date	Attendees
Greenoak Housing Association – project update	February 2015	
Socioeconomic consultation workshop	March 2015	
Time Capsule Event	2019	
Well North Enterprise Engagement Workshop	December 2020	

Appendix C – References

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Appendix D – Summary EqIA Table

See separate attachment

Sheerwater Regeneration EqIA
Equality Impact Assessment Summary Table

Summary Equality Impact Assessment

Group impacted	Nature of Impact	Mitigating Actions
Housing		
<p>Demolition of social housing including sheltered accommodation – secure tenants, vulnerable tenants, including those in one-bedroom properties, and tenants in sheltered housing.</p>	<p>The majority of tenants in Sheerwater are local authority tenants (63%) and are directly impacted. This groups comprises tenants on low incomes, among which, black and minority ethnic groups, lone parents with dependent children, and disabled people are disproportionately represented. In addition, vulnerable tenants currently residing in the one-bedroom properties and studio flats with medium to high level support needs are also directly impacted.</p>	<p>The proposals increase and enhance housing provision to the meet existing, future and changing need of Sheerwater’s diverse population. The proposals secure a wider mix of provision with sufficient properties of suitable size, which includes sufficient provision for vulnerable tenants currently residing in the one-bedroom properties and studio flats. This means that all residents can have the opportunity to remain in Sheerwater, if it is their wish to do so. The housing proposals are allied to wider economic, health, and social objectives for the area. The development will see increased affordable housing and will maximise accessible and adaptable housing. New, enhanced, and expanded housing provision will respond to the needs of a wider range of groups with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The Sheerwater Regeneration and Housing Support Team has been continually working with highly vulnerable secure tenants. There was early engagement with more vulnerable tenants. An Independent Tenants Adviser appointed by the Council provides advice to secure tenants and responds to their enquiries on a face-to-face basis for those tenants who request it.</p> <p>The offer of remaining in Sheerwater with a commitment to only moving tenants once, as far as possible has been put in place to minimise disruption. This will be possible through reprovion of housing</p>

Group impacted	Nature of Impact	Mitigating Actions
		and relocation of tenants before demolition of existing housing.
Demolition of private rented properties – children, young people, black and minority ethnic groups and those on low incomes.	Tenants who are privately renting are one of the most vulnerable and insecurely housed groups, comprising a significant proportion of children, young people, and ethnic minority groups and low-income households.	WBC has no legal commitment to house private tenants. However, to ameliorate some of the negative impacts, WBC is providing support to private tenants in finding suitable new accommodation.
Housing change to tenure mix – impact on tenants and residents spanning the protected characteristics including vulnerable and disabled tenants, those on low income, black and minority ethnic tenants, lone parents, children and young people.	The housing proposals will deliver a significant net increase in mixed tenure accommodation, including a significant increase in affordable housing, and appropriate size of housing to meet the needs of existing and future residents.	Housing is an essential facet of everyday life, community, health, and well-being. More evenly balanced tenure mixed with increased overall affordable housing and sheltered housing provision that is fit for purpose. In addition, the significant increase in one-bedroom properties as part of the revised proposals will have a positive impact in enabling vulnerable residents currently in the studio one-bedroom properties to remain in Sheerwater and to have their needs met.
Secure Council Tenants and Housing Association Tenants – groups with protected characteristics with secure tenancies including vulnerable and disabled tenants, those on low incomes, black and minority ethnic tenants, lone parents, children and young people.	<p>Direct potentially negative impact through changes to tenancy agreements for secure tenants and potential loss of affordable housing under new housing management arrangements. For those that move out of Sheerwater, there is the loss of strong ties to the area.</p> <p>The last year has seen a scaling down of visits to secure tenants so that only the emergency ones are visited, and actions taken such as seeing people on the doorstep rather than in their homes.</p>	<p>There will be complete re-provision of affordable housing. Rents will remain at social rent levels and will not increase beyond local market housing allowance levels and will be in line with S106 planning agreements. The new homes will also be of significantly higher quality.</p> <p>An Independent Tenant Adviser has been employed by the Council offering advice to secure council tenants and responding to their enquiries in writing or on a face-to-face basis for those who request it.</p> <p>Prior to the lockdown, the housing team did have a list of vulnerable people who they knew would be isolated and they have supported them in moves and in making arrangements, in accordance with individual need.</p>

Group impacted	Nature of Impact	Mitigating Actions
	334 households contacted with 7 households that have not engaged still left to contact.	The team is making concerted efforts to contact the remaining households that have not engaged through door knocking, leaflets, and a hands-on approach that they have had success with, in the past, being mindful of the reasons the vulnerabilities and fears households may have for not engaging.
Demolition of owner-occupied housing – direct impact on groups spanning the protected characteristics, particularly low-income owner occupiers.	Residential properties in Sheerwater are less expensive relative to the rest of Woking and are more likely to be owned by older residents and black and minority residents and disabled residents on relatively lower incomes. There is a strong attachment of some residents to the area.	The Community Charter sets out compensation levels for owner occupiers which are above the statutory minimum. Moreover, the Community Charter sets out an integrated package of support for vulnerable and disabled residents, and assisted purchase arrangements for low-income homeowners impacted by the development, in circumstances where mortgage affordability may be an issue, and some residents have already taken up these mortgage offers.
Community, leisure and recreation		
Community groups – smaller community groups that use the Parkview Community Centre for their activities and provide services to groups spanning the protected characteristics.	Smaller voluntary and community organisations and community groups using the Parkview Community Centre for a range of activities that serve the local diverse community living in Sheerwater.	There will be complete re-provision within the Parkview Community Centre, and this means that all of the smaller community groups operating there will be able to remain. There is a Muslim Education facility currently operating from the premises of the former butcher's shop in the regeneration area and this will also be relocated within the wider Sheerwater area. There is an ongoing discussion regarding the relocation of the Mascot Centre.
Recreation and leisure facilities – All groups spanning the protected characteristics including children and young people, women, and older people.	The new and enhanced leisure facilities will be re-provided before the existing facilities close.	The scheme is being led by the social and recreational provision and there will therefore be minimal disruption in provision.

Group impacted	Nature of Impact	Mitigating Actions
Cultural and social milieu – residents across the protected groups including black and minority ethnic groups, LGBT residents, older people, and parents and lone parents.	The loss of social and cultural milieu as a result of the disruption to long-established connections between people living in the area.	There will be no demolition of housing in advance of housing re-provision with residents being given the opportunity to remain in Sheerwater if that is their wish. The phased approach to demolition and rehousing means that disruption to existing networks of support is kept to a minimum and people will be able to remain living in Sheerwater if that is their wish.
Muslim community Mosque – The Muslim community.	The loss of the Mosque and dedicated provision potentially is negative in its impact as well as concerns about replacement provision not being fit for purpose for a sizeable Muslim community.	The Council will identify a suitable building within the regeneration area or in proximity of Sheerwater that is fit for purpose.
Community – The wider community in Sheerwater spanning the protected characteristics.	The loss of the Community Engagement Worker dedicated to Sheerwater is negative in its impact and in the absence of a replacement, will continue as the country emerges from a second lockdown. The move towards digital forms of communication is not a substitute for those with sight or hearing impairment. Given the scale and magnitude to the changes in Sheerwater, investment in the community engagement side should be a priority.	The Council has appointed with Well North Enterprises and is engaged in an ongoing dialogue on how to engage with the wider community in the area. The Community Engagement Worker will not be replaced but the functions associated with the role will be covered between the existing staff, the Parkview staff, and key partners.
Business and employment		
Small Businesses – The regeneration will have a direct impact on small businesses located in the Dartmouth parade of shops as they fall within the redline area.	There will be an impact on small businesses and in particular black and minority ethnic family run businesses.	The Council has engaged with small businesses, has explained the proposals, and has obtained their views. There are some businesses, for example, Sheerwater Glass that will be relocating to suitable premises outside of Sheerwater but will remain in the borough. There are others such as the pharmacy which want to

Group impacted	Nature of Impact	Mitigating Actions
		<p>remain in situ and will therefore be relocating within the regeneration area, as well as the minimart which provides a wide offering including Asian produce.</p> <p>There are sufficient commercial units being built in Sheerwater to enable those businesses that are viable and want to remain, to relocate in Sheerwater. The process of relocation will involve one-to-one conversations and active engagement with businesses to facilitate a smooth transfer of operations. A number of businesses that are not commercially viable will however cease operation. The Council has developed a package of support measures which include advice, and monitoring the end destination of those business owners, and an employment and skills plan.</p> <p>The Council is trying to get a definitive date for exit of the retailers. Where leases have expired, the Council is intending to offer a fixed term lease with provision for termination to be made at any time. This will allow those businesses operating to continue, thus giving them the flexibility to carry on if there are any delays. This will have benefits for residents and for the businesses.</p> <p>The post office in Sheerwater has recently closed but is in the process of being re-provided in Londis.</p>
<p>Employment and training – unemployed people, and those with low educational attainment living in Sheerwater, women, LGBT groups, disabled people, and older people under-represented in construction and allied trades.</p>	<p>Opportunities for employment and training arising from construction and allied trades.</p>	<p>The proposals include active engagement with schools and community agencies operating in the area to promote employment and training opportunities locally. These include, a job skills club to provide people with assistance in securing employment, the development of a partnership with Job Centre Plus to ensure that site vacancies are advertised and</p>

Group impacted	Nature of Impact	Mitigating Actions
		<p>promoted in the regeneration area, and partnerships with other local agencies and training providers as part of the work of an Employment and Skills Group.</p> <p>Pellikaan have specifically set out the actions it will take to create positive local outcomes and community value. These include making contact with local schools regarding work experience weeks, traineeships, and onsite tours, using local suppliers and subcontractors, networking and meet the buyer events. The Pellikaan offer also includes promoting specific job opportunities locally including Trainee Site Manager, Plant Operatives, Traffic Marshall, and General Operatives. This will ensure that there is long-term support. There are plans to organise a career fair to promote wider understanding of the construction industry and the broad spectrum of potential employment and skilled training opportunities that are available within the sector.</p> <p>Gilbert Ash held an employability event in February 2020 at the Mascot Hub on Dartmouth Avenue to provide school leavers and job seekers with the opportunity to find out more about the type of careers available in the construction industry. The session covered skills, training, current opportunities, how to apply, and also addressed issues in relation to women in construction.</p>
Living wage – black and minority ethnic groups, older workers and disabled people who are disproportionately more likely to be in lower paying employment, unemployed and on lower incomes.	Employment is no longer a guaranteed route out of poverty given the impact of low pay and the rise of in work poverty.	As part of an approach to implementing the employment proposals, the notion of a Living Wage will be central to the proposals and to the arrangements entered into with contractors.
Public realm, open space, safety and security		
Risk of crime, fear of crime and accessibility – black and minority ethnic groups, women, young people, in	Fears for safety and security may be compounded during the development and construction phases.	The regeneration proposals embed the principles of access for all and are centred on enhancing the

Group impacted	Nature of Impact	Mitigating Actions
		ensuring that the gardens of properties are cut back to minimise the problem.
Individual garden space and open space – protected groups including unemployed people, disabled people, young people, older people, and vulnerable people.	The potential loss of open space and reduction in individual garden space.	There will be no net loss of open space and the proposals have been developed to ensure that open space is re-provided. The proposals seek to optimise the use of land within the regeneration area and provide more open space that is useable. The proposed enhancements to the scheme further increase the amount of open space beyond that originally proposed. The loss of individual garden space is mitigated by the re-provision of sympathetically connected open space that is more useable and safe.
Community garden – protected groups including unemployed people, disabled people, and older people, and vulnerable people.	Loss of existing community garden space which provides an important focal point within Sheerwater.	As part of the regeneration of Sheerwater, a new community garden is currently located adjacent to the shopping parade on Dartmouth Avenue in two spaces with benches providing an attractive space where residents can relax. This was always a temporary arrangement. A new location will be identified with local residents either in the regeneration area or other parts of the estate nearer the time of the demolition.
Travel, transport and connectivity		
Transport accessibility – protected groups including black and minority ethnic groups, job seekers among low income and unemployed groups, disabled people, older people, and vulnerable people.	The issue of access to transport and connectivity and accessibility is an important equality issue for Sheerwater that the regeneration addresses and is important given the younger age structure of the population, as well as the ageing nature of the population.	The regeneration proposals will provide residents with a wider choice of travel that is more accessible and will include designs to encourage more bus services, thus facilitating wider access to public transport as well as other forms of travel to connect Sheerwater with wider geographical areas. This is particularly important given the likely increase in population and therefore demand for public transport, and in the context of the current and changing demographics of Sheerwater.

Group impacted	Nature of Impact	Mitigating Actions
Transport, travel and safety and security – protected groups including black and minority ethnic groups, job seekers among low income and unemployed groups, disabled people, older people, and vulnerable people.	The proposals for improvement in the public realm and open space and addressing issues of safety and security is designed to support and encourage travel and transport by a variety of means.	The regeneration proposals will provide residents with a wider choice of more accessible forms of travel, and will include designs to encourage more bus services.
Community cohesion – All communities living in Sheerwater with particular implications for those with protected characteristics.	There is little if any empirical evidence that tenure mix is an effective means for achieving the social objectives of neighbourhood regeneration as income, education, and so forth are the key influential factors. There is evidence that the process of regeneration can give rise to social divisions and conflict between different groups of interest, as well as competition between various interests seeking to influence the outcomes of the regeneration.	By enabling the recreational and social aspects of the regeneration to lead the process, the Council is seeking to work towards continuing to foster community cohesion. This is by providing high quality and supportive services, and safe, open, and useable spaces that build on what the community has to offer, and which provide spaces for mixing and interaction in significantly enhanced and accessible community facilities. The re-provision of community facilities is leading the development and occupies a central position within the plans for regeneration. This reflects the wider principles of the regeneration which seeks to bring the wider community together.
Implications of COVID-19		
Implications of COVID-19 – all groups and in particular pregnant women, and people with long-term limiting illnesses identified as vulnerable, and those with challenging mental health issues.	Alongside official advice, there is a wealth of information emanating from a variety of sources including social media on COVID-19, some of it contradictory. This therefore provides a fertile space in which misinformation can breed, thus adding to the existing fears of residents who are already prone to anxiety, about the impact of the regeneration on them personally. There are also implications for further active engagement also given current advice on social distancing.	The Council is following the official advice in relation to Covid-19. It is important that communication with residents remains key and that what this means for individuals and for the community is spelled out clearly and sensitively. This will clearly be a challenge in the current climate and will require a strategy around ongoing communication.