STOKE CLIMSLAND PARISH
NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT
STAGE ONE

September 2019, Updated April 2026

Stoke Climsland Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group

Purpose: This Stage 1 Equality Impact Assessment identifies groups that may be disproportionately affected during the preparation of the Stoke Climsland Neighbourhood Development Plan, highlights key local equality issues from the evidence base, and sets out how those risks should be managed through engagement and later policy drafting.

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1. Introduction

Completing an Equality Impact Assessment, EQIA, is a practical way of ensuring that the Neighbourhood Development Plan benefits the whole community and that the plan-making process is fair, inclusive and evidence-led.

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against people because of protected characteristics. This Stage 1 EQIA is intended to show how Stoke Climsland Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will use available evidence to inform decisions, identify any risk of exclusion or adverse impact, and ensure that later policy drafting is tested before the plan is finalised.

This Stage 1 EQIA has been prepared at an early point in plan preparation. It should be revisited as the plan develops, particularly before Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation and again at submission stage.

2. Terminology

Diversity relates to the differences between people, including characteristics such as age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender identity, together with wider social and economic circumstances that shape how people experience a place.

Equality seeks to ensure that people are treated fairly and that barriers to participation or access are recognised and, where possible, removed. This may require different methods of communication or engagement for different groups.

3. Principle

In formulating the Stoke Climsland Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan, the Parish Council and Steering Group should seek to reflect the diversity of the whole community, take account of the needs of different sectors of the population, and ensure that all members of the community have a reasonable opportunity to influence the plan through an appropriate engagement strategy.

4. Protected characteristics

The nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are listed below. For neighbourhood planning in Cornwall, three further contextual factors, socio-economic disadvantage and rural isolation, are also important because they can intensify unequal outcomes.

Characteristic	Relevance to neighbourhood planning
National Characteristics	
Age	Different age groups may have different housing, accessibility, mobility, leisure and service needs.
Disability	Development and engagement should be accessible to people with physical, sensory, cognitive or mental impairments.
Gender reassignment	Plan-making should be inclusive and use respectful language and engagement practices.
Marriage and civil partnership	No specific land-use implication usually arises, but equality of treatment remains relevant.
Pregnancy and maternity	Access to services, public realm, community facilities and suitable housing can affect this group.
Race	This includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins, including language barriers where relevant.
Religion or belief	The plan should respect different faith groups and those with no belief.
Sex	The needs and experiences of women and men may differ in relation to safety, caregiving and access.
Sexual orientation	Plan-making should avoid exclusion and use inclusive language.
Local Characteristics	
Socio-economic circumstances	Affordability, transport cost and access to services can significantly affect outcomes in rural areas.
Rural isolation	Distance from services and limited transport can compound disadvantage for several groups.
Experience of Care[1]	Past or present experience of children's social care

5. What is discrimination?

The purpose of this EQIA is to help ensure that decisions taken in preparing the Stoke Climsland Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan are evidence-based and do not discriminate unlawfully against people with protected characteristics.

Discrimination may be direct, by association, by perception or indirect. It may also arise through harassment or victimisation. In rural areas, apparently neutral policies or engagement methods can have unequal effects where people face mobility barriers, digital exclusion, lower incomes, limited transport or reduced access to services.

For Cornwall parishes, socio-economic circumstances and rural isolation are particularly relevant because they may intensify the effects of disadvantage across several protected characteristics.

[1] Cornwall Council recognises experience of care as a locally protected characteristic, covering anyone who has experienced children's social care at any point in their life.

6. Baseline data, Stoke Climsland Parish

The baseline below is drawn principally from the Stoke Climsland NDP evidence report "Our Community", which uses 2021 Census data and related evidence. *It identifies those equality issues most relevant to early plan-making.*

Population and settlement pattern

The parish population was 1,657 at the 2021 Census. Stoke Climsland/Venterdon is identified as a Category E settlement in the Cornwall settlement hierarchy, while Luckett, Bray Shop and Downgate are uncategorised. This points to a dispersed rural pattern and the continuing importance of access to services.

Age structure

The evidence shows a clear ageing trend. Between 2002 and 2021 the proportion of school age residents fell, the proportion of young workers aged 20 to 44 fell sharply, and the proportion aged 65 and over rose to 28.9 percent. This suggests a need to address both the needs of older people and the risk that younger households are priced out or leave the parish.

Sex

The parish population is broadly balanced by sex, with 49.9 percent female and 50.1 percent male.

Household composition

There were 681 households in 2021, with a high proportion of one and two person households and a notably high proportion of older single person households. This is consistent with an ageing population and may affect future housing, health and community facility needs.

Race, ethnicity and language

The parish population is predominantly White, 98.6 percent, with 95.7 percent born in the UK. About 99 percent of households had English as the main language, but a small minority had no English in the household. While ethnic diversity is limited numerically, inclusion still requires accessible and respectful engagement.

Religion and belief

Around 54.8 percent of residents stated that they had a religion, overwhelmingly Christian. The plan should remain inclusive of all beliefs and of those with no religion.

Health and disability

82.5 percent of residents reported good or very good health, but 18.8 percent were disabled under the Equality Act definition. When combined with people reporting long-term physical or mental health conditions that did not limit day-to-day activity, 27.1 percent of residents were living with a long-term condition or disability-related issue. Nearly one in ten residents also provided unpaid care.

Pregnancy and maternity

Direct parish data is not available. The evidence report estimates around 14 conceptions a year based on regional rates and the number of women aged 15 to 44. This is a small but relevant group in relation to housing, access to services and community facilities.

Gender reassignment and sexual orientation

Parish-specific data is not available. Cornwall-wide Census data indicates small but material LGBTQ+ populations and the evidence report notes that a reasonable working assumption is that between 5 percent and 7 percent of the population may be LGBTQ+, equating to around 83 to 116 people in Stoke Climsland if national policy assumptions are applied.

Education, jobs and socio-economic profile

The parish is relatively well qualified, with 39.3 percent holding Level 4 qualifications or above, and relatively high proportions in managerial, professional and self-employed roles. Overall household deprivation is lower than Cornwall and England averages.

Socio-economic circumstances and Rural isolation

Overall household deprivation is comparatively low. The 2021 Census recorded 51.9% of Stoke Climsland households as not deprived in any of the four census dimensions—employment, education, health and disability, and housing—compared with 46.1% across Cornwall and 48.4% across England. Nevertheless, 35.2% of parish households were deprived in one dimension, 11.1% in two and 1.8% in three. The proportion deprived in two or more dimensions fell from approximately 17.1% in 2011 to 12.9% in 2021.

These relatively favourable overall figures mask particular difficulties. The 'Our Community' evidence report identifies both statistical areas covering the parish, Cornwall 006D and Cornwall 006E, as falling within the most deprived 10% nationally for the Barriers to Housing and Services and Living Environment domains of the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation. These area-level findings reflect rural isolation, housing affordability and housing conditions, including the absence of central heating in some traditional properties. The evidence also notes the possibility of a smaller core of less well educated or poorly housed younger people being at risk of increasing deprivation.

Experience of Care

No parish-specific published figures have been identified for people with experience of children's social care, past or present. However, the Stage 1 evidence [above] on Socio-economic circumstances and Rural isolation provides relevant contextual evidence of barriers that may also affect care-experienced residents. Potential considerations include access to affordable and suitable housing, employment, transport, services and community networks, particularly for young people moving towards independent living. Individual circumstances will vary.

Community feedback

Residents value a friendly and safe environment, rural atmosphere, green spaces, parish facilities and sense of community. Concerns include traffic, speeding, parking, weak public transport, limited services or activities for young people, poor broadband and fear of over-development. The evidence concludes that the NDP should support the needs of an ageing population while continuing to meet the housing, service and employment needs of families and younger people.

Baseline assessment overview

The available evidence indicates that Stoke Climsland is home to many people who may fall within one or more protected characteristics, particularly older people, disabled people, unpaid carers and those affected by rural isolation.

Although the parish appears comparatively advantaged on some measures, this does not remove equality risk. Rural accessibility, housing affordability, limited public transport, the out-migration of younger

households and the concentration of services in a small number of places all mean that some groups may face greater barriers than others.

The Stage 1 conclusion is therefore that equality considerations are material both to the content of the Neighbourhood Plan and to the way in which the community is engaged during plan preparation.

7. Stage 1 equality impact assessment

The table below follows the structure used in the Wendron Stage 1 document, adapted for Stoke Climsland.

Name of officer(s) completing assessment	Stoke Climsland NDP Steering Group / planning consultant
Date of assessment	September 2019
Name of document or policy being assessed	Creation of the Stoke Climsland Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan
What are the aims, objectives, outcomes or purpose of the policy, service change or function that you are assessing?	A local land-use plan prepared by Stoke Climsland Parish Council as the qualifying body, to guide development in the parish, meet identified local needs, protect the qualities valued by the community, and, following referendum, form part of the statutory Development Plan for Cornwall.
Who implements or delivers the policy, service or function?	Stoke Climsland Parish Council is the qualifying body under the Localism Act. The Neighbourhood Development Plan is prepared by the Parish Council working with the Steering Group, specialist consultants where required, and Cornwall Council as the local planning authority.
Who will be affected by this proposal?	All residents of the parish, local businesses, landowners, community organisations, service providers, statutory consultees, visitors and future residents.
What are the likely positive or negative impacts for the groups identified above? What particular groups may be affected more than others, and why?	The NDP should help secure development that better reflects local needs and protects community well-being. Positive effects may include better support for community facilities, more suitable housing, improved accessibility, protection of the local environment and more careful management of change. Potential negative effects may arise if some groups are under-represented in the plan-making process, if policies do not adequately reflect accessibility needs, or if the eventual pattern of development disadvantages younger households, older people, disabled people, carers or those living in more isolated parts of the parish. Stage 2 should assess the relevant housing, accessibility, community facilities and employment policies for potential benefits and barriers, including any difficulties arising from local-connection requirements.
Have the impacts identified above been assessed using up-to-date and reliable evidence and data?	Yes, the Stage 1 assessment draws on the Stoke Climsland “Our Community” evidence report and

Do you need to engage or consult with any identified groups?	related community engagement findings. As the plan progresses, engagement should continue to reach groups who may be less likely to respond through standard methods, including young people, older residents, disabled people, carers and those in smaller settlements with limited internet access.
Are any of these groups considered to be vulnerable? If so, have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with any relevant representative organisations?	Potentially affected groups include older people, disabled people, people with long-term health conditions, unpaid carers, younger households, and those experiencing rural isolation or housing affordability pressures. These groups should be considered explicitly in the engagement strategy and in discussions with relevant local organisations and service providers where appropriate.
What plans do you have in place, or are developing, that will mitigate the likely identified negative impacts?	The engagement strategy should use a mix of methods, for example paper and online material, accessible venues, clear language, targeted outreach and opportunities for face-to-face discussion. Draft plan objectives and policies should then be equalities-proofed at Stage 2, with mitigation introduced where barriers or unintended impacts are identified.
Do you have plans in place to monitor the impact of the proposals once implemented?	Yes. The Parish Council should monitor implementation through plan review, consultation feedback, and comments made on planning applications, with particular attention to whether adopted policies are supporting accessible, inclusive and sustainable development.
What course of action does this EQIA suggest?	Changes to plan objectives, policy wording and supporting text may be needed to remove barriers and promote equality more effectively. Some policy choices may still involve trade-offs, but these should be justified transparently and accompanied by mitigation and monitoring. The risk of exclusion during plan preparation is real and should be managed.

Summary of proposals

No unlawful discrimination has been identified at this stage. However, the evidence clearly indicates that some groups may be less visible or less able to influence a community-led planning process unless specific steps are taken.

The main equality risks for Stoke Climsland are exclusion from engagement, insufficient recognition of accessibility and mobility needs, weak reflection of the needs of younger households alongside an ageing population, and the compounding effects of rural isolation, transport limitations and housing affordability.

The next stages of the NDP should therefore be informed by an engagement strategy designed to reach under-represented groups, followed by a Stage 2 EQIA that tests the emerging vision, objectives and policies in detail.

Recommended actions arising from Stage 1

- Adopt an engagement approach that combines online, paper-based and face-to-face opportunities.
- Ensure that engagement methods use multiple channels such as online via social media, website, , physical as well as virtual documentation, drop-in sessions at accessible locations etc.
- Use plain, respectful and inclusive language in publicity, consultation material and policy drafting.
- Check emerging policies for accessibility, safe movement, location of services, housing suitability and the needs of carers and people with long-term health conditions.
- Undertake a Stage 2 equality assessment on the draft plan before Regulation 14 consultation.

Appendix A. Guide to terminology and inclusive engagement

The following good-practice points are intended to help ensure that Stoke Climsland NDP engagement is respectful and inclusive.

- Use normal, respectful language and avoid patronising terms.
- Speak directly to the person concerned, including disabled people, rather than only to companions or carers.
- Use current, neutral terminology, for example “disabled person” or “person with a disability”, “older people”, “wheelchair user”, “person with a mental health condition”, and “LGBTQ+” where a collective term is needed.
- If a person’s pronouns are known, use them correctly. If unsure, ask politely or use the person’s name until clarified.
- Provide information in clear and readable formats and, where possible, in more than one form, for example printed and digital copies.
- Choose accessible venues and meeting arrangements and be prepared to adapt communication methods where reasonable.

Appendix B. Stage 2 equalities statement template

The Stage 2 assessment should test the emerging NDP vision, objectives and policies against the protected characteristics and record whether impacts are likely to be positive, neutral or negative, together with any mitigation.

Objective / Policy	Protected characteristic	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Comments / mitigation