

DANBURY PARISH COUNCIL

**DANBURY
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

MARCH 2024



DANBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Danbury Parish Council
Danbury Neighbourhood Plan
Equalities Impact Assessment
March 2024



Danbury Parish Council
The Old School House
Main Road
Danbury
Chelmsford
Essex, CM3 4NQ

01245 225111

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Baseline Data	2
3. Process of Community Consultation	4
4. Likely Impact on Groups with Protected Characteristics	6
5. Conclusion	9

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document is the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) that has been prepared to accompany the submission version of the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 The Equalities Act places a duty on public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between persons who have a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not. 'Protected characteristics' are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 1.3 This report assesses the submission version of the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that Danbury Parish Council (as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the Neighbourhood Plan) is satisfying its statutory duties in this regard.
- 1.4 EqIA is a systematic analysis of a policy or policies, in order to explore the potential for an adverse impact on a particular group or community. It is a method of assessing and recording the likely differential and/or adverse impact of a policy on people from different groups. If a policy results in unfairness or discrimination, then changes to eliminate or lessen the impact should be considered.
- 1.5 The purpose of the analysis is to increase participation and inclusion, to change the culture of public decision-making and to place a more proactive approach to the promotion of equality and fairness at the heart of public policy. The processes involved in conducting the analysis should not be looked on as an end in themselves. Instead, it should be borne in mind that the aim is the promotion of fairness and equality of opportunity and thus it is the outcomes that are of primary concern. In undertaking the EqIA, it is important to keep in mind why the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan is needed, what the intended outcomes are, and how it will be ensured that the policies will work as intended.
- 1.6 For this purposes of this EqIA an assessment has been made on whether the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan has a positive, negative or neutral impact on each of the protected characteristics (in so far as data is available).

2. Baseline Data

- 2.1 Data for the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan area is available from the 2021 Census for the following protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race and religious belief. These are summarised in the box below and Illustrated overleaf (Figure 1).
- 2.2 No data is available for the following protected characteristics: gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation.

Danbury Neighbourhood Area – Population Characteristics

Total Population: 5,200

Age: 22.3% of the population are aged 19 or less, 50.1% are in the working age groups (ages 20-64), with 27.6% in the older age groups (over 64).

Sex: 2,548 (49.0%) males; 2,652 (51.7%) females.

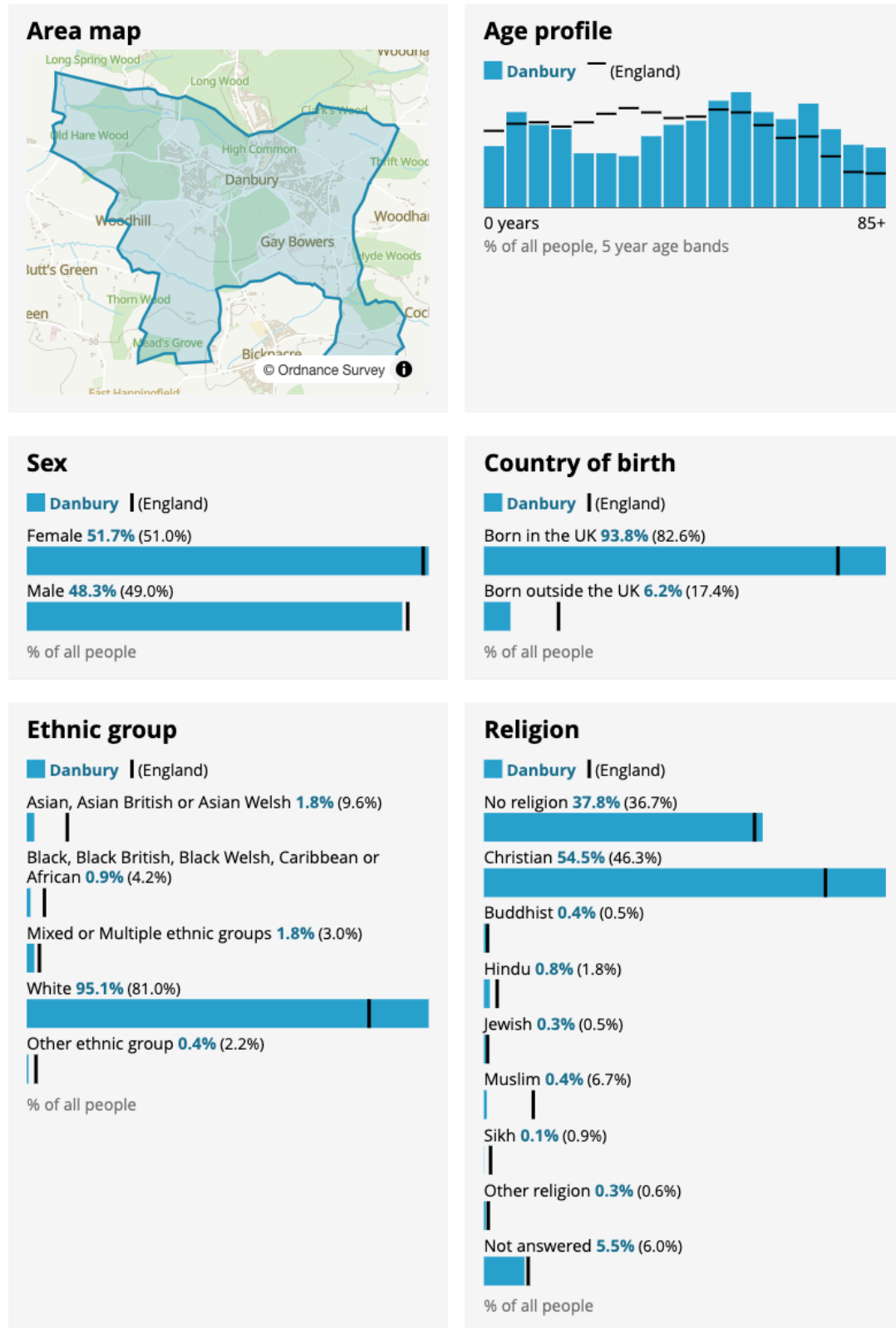
Country of Birth: 93.8% of residents were born in the UK; 6.2% were born in other countries.

Ethnic group: 95.1% of residents are White; 1.8% of residents are Mixed/multiple ethnic groups; 1.78% are Asian/Asian British; 0.9% are Black, African, Caribbean or Black British; and 0.4% are of another ethnic group.

Religion: 54.5% of residents are Christian; 37.8% of residents do not have a religion; 2.2% of residents are either Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh or of another religious affiliation (The balance, 5.5%, did not answer this question on the Census).

Source: ONS – 2021 Census

Danbury



Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

Figure 1: Danbury Neighbourhood Area – Population Characteristics

3. Process of Community Consultation

- 3.1 All written communications were in English. It was not considered necessary to translate them into any other language.
- 3.2 Throughout the Plan preparation process the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has sought to ensure that local residents, their representatives, local businesses, interest groups and wider interested parties, including statutory and regulatory bodies, have been actively consulted and their views sought.
- 3.3 Agendas, key reports and updates have been regularly provided online on the Danbury Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan website.
- 3.4 The overarching principles of the stakeholder engagement process has been to engage in a manner that is extensive, effective, inclusive, fair, transparent and proportionate. Various communication channels have been used to keep residents informed, invite participation and share views. These included:
- Updates on the Neighbourhood Planning page of the Parish Council website and the bespoke website created specifically for the Neighbourhood Plan, including notes of meetings, progress updates, information, documents and contact details.
 - Regular meetings of the Steering Group, including opportunities for public participation.
 - Publication of questionnaires in the 'Danbury Times' (the village newsletter) distributed to all households in the Parish.
 - Regular updates on progress of the Neighbourhood Plan published in the Danbury Times.
 - Updates posted to the Danbury Parish Council Facebook page.
 - Presentations and updates at Annual Parish Meetings.
- 3.5 Widespread consultation was carried out during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Steering Group made every effort, using a variety of methods, to reach all of the local community. This included the following:
- Launch of the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan website in 2017.
 - Residents Questionnaires, exhibitions and drop-in sessions in 2017 and 2018.
 - Issuing of a Business Questionnaire in 2017.
 - A questionnaire for school-age pupils in 2017, supplementing the responses to the residents questionnaires and thus widening responses from across all age groups

in Danbury, with further visits to local schools undertaken in 2018 in parallel to wider consultation.

- A 'Call for Sites' in 2017 asking for suggestions to be put forward as to land that might be allocated for housing development in the Parish.
- Ongoing liaison with statutory consultees, including Essex County Council, through the site assessment process to help inform and refine the selection of sites for allocation and potential criteria associated with them in policies.
- A meeting with landowners of proposed sites to present preferred allocations for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- An exhibition and public meeting as part of a three-week consultation to present the preferred sites for allocations and seek feedback on these in 2022
- Ongoing liaison with Chelmsford City Council took place during production of the Plan to seek input and advice on the emerging Plan.
- The Regulation 14 consultation including an exhibition and surveys, which was undertaken in February and March 2023.

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

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

4. Likely Impact on Groups with Protected Characteristics

4.1 The Danbury Neighbourhood Plan Vision states that:

“Danbury in 2036 will be a flourishing village, separate from Chelmsford, with a strong community spirit, where people of all ages will be able to enjoy Danbury’s unique character and identity. Its countryside, woods, multifunctional green infrastructure and green spaces will be protected, as will its heritage and distinguishing features of local character.

Any development will be sympathetic to, and not detract from, the character of the village, will be sustainable and appropriate to its scale and nature and be integrated with the landscape and existing housing.

Opportunities will be taken to improve leisure, recreation, and retail facilities for residents. Danbury’s geographical position within the area’s road network is likely to continue to be a challenge and ways to improve this will be actively sought with other agencies over the plan period.”

4.2 The vision of the Neighbourhood Plan is expected to have a positive likely impact on groups with protected characteristics. It recognises and supports access for the whole community to local social, employment, leisure and environmental amenities.

4.3 The Neighbourhood Plan contains a series of objectives that set out how the Parish Council proposes to deliver its vision for the Parish up to 2036. Delivery of the objectives will be through a combination of planning policies, projects and community action. Each objective is reviewed to assess whether it is likely to have an impact on groups within the Parish with protected characteristics:

Objective	Likely Impact	Commentary
<p>1. Housing and Development:</p> <p>To ensure there is a mix of house types, size and high-quality housing provision for all ages, which meets the development needs of Danbury. It will also be appropriate to the scale and nature of the</p>	Positive	Through Objective 1 the Neighbourhood Plan proactively allocates land for housing to meet the identified housing need and is supported by policies in respect of housing types and tenures. It has a positive impact on everyone,

<p>Parish, with the distinct and separate identity of Danbury retained. Green energy in new developments will be encouraged.</p>		<p>including those with protected characteristics, as it seeks to meet the housing needs of the community.</p>
<p>2. Environment:</p> <p>To seek protection, conservation, and enhancement of this significant element of Danbury's character, open spaces, multifunctional green infrastructure and local lanes.</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The purpose of Objective 2 is to preserve and enhance the rural setting of the village, the quality of the surrounding landscape, to ensure that open green spaces are protected and available for recreational use, and that where new green spaces are provided these are designed to be accessible to and enjoyed by all. It thus has a positive impact on residents with protected characteristics, providing access to open space as well as good quality green space.</p>
<p>3. Transport and Movement:</p> <p>To promote clean, attractive, safe streets and spaces, seeking creative solutions to the traffic issues that currently affect Danbury, encouraging active and sustainable transport modes, addressing parking issues and improvements to footways where possible.</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>This Objective seeks to make it safer and easier for all to move around by means other than the private car, supporting access to local services and facilities, making walking and cycling and public transport an attractive everyday proposition. This will have a positive impact on residents with protected characteristics.</p>
<p>4. Recreation and Leisure:</p> <p>To improve Danbury's recreation and leisure facilities and increase provision where a shortfall exists.</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The purpose of Objective 4 is to ensure that open green spaces are protected and available for recreational use, and is intended to help provide access to green space for residents with protected characteristics and thus have a positive impact.</p>
<p>5. Business and Economy:</p> <p>To maintain existing businesses and encourage new economic growth and local employment opportunities, including working</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>This Objective seeks to sustain existing local small businesses and encourage new small business to become established, where it fits with the rural nature of the</p>

from home, to meet and support village needs.		surroundings. The provision of employment opportunities is not directly related to but is considered to have a positive impact on residents with protected characteristics.
<p>6. Heritage:</p> <p>Conserve and enhance Danbury's historic environment which contribute to the village. Development should respond positively to and contribute to the special character and qualities that help define Danbury.</p>	Neutral	The purpose of Objective is to ensure that new development responds to and strengthens the qualities that characterise Danbury. Through site specific policies in the Neighbourhood Plan important design principles are also established to ensure that these are well designed and respond appropriately to site and context, strengthen sense of place. There is no specific impact on residents with protected characteristics.
<p>7. Amenities:</p> <p>To ensure that important amenities are retained and sufficient for the future needs of residents.</p>	Positive	This Objective seeks to ensure that community facilities and amenities are available for and serve the needs of the community, supporting daily life, social inclusiveness and community cohesion. It is deemed to have a positive impact on residents with protected characteristics.

- 4.4 All of the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan objectives are considered to have a **positive or neutral impact** on those with protected characteristics. There are no individual objectives that are considered likely to have a negative impact.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The Danbury Neighbourhood Plan provides a suite of objectives and policies to respond to the vision for the benefit of the local community as a whole including those with protected characteristics.
- 5.2 In preparing the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan, Danbury Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have sought to engage widely with all of the local community. They have gone beyond minimum consultation requirements to gather the views of the community.
- 5.3 In conclusion, the assessment finds the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan to be appropriate and that the duty of care prescribed by the Equalities Act (2010) is met.

Danbury Parish Council
Danbury Neighbourhood Plan
Equalities Impact Assessment
March 2024

Danbury Parish Council
The Old School House
Main Road
Danbury
Chelmsford
Essex, CM3 4NQ

01245 225111