

Impact Assessment Tool - v.1

Completing the tool should take between 30 - 45 minutes.

This does not include any time that might be needed to gather information or contact colleagues to be able to answer the questions asked.

Purpose

The purpose of this tool is to consider the wide range of possible impacts that a proposed project/policy could have on the environment. Completing this assessment as early as possible will help shape a project or policy into a strong proposal by highlighting positive areas and areas for improvement.

Guidance on completing this tool

Project Details Please provide information on the project, aims and responsible officer.

Assessment This tab asks questions on 10 environmental criteria. The first three questions of each criterion are multiple choice - please select the correct answer from the drop down options. Please add your justifications for your answers in the free text box at the end of each section. This helps with the review process and provides a track record as the project develops. For each criterion there are notes on the right hand side with more information on what to consider and guidance on the type of impact that might be positive or negative. Don't worry if you feel you are repeating yourself when answering the questions. There are some activities (e.g. reducing the distance travelled) which will be relevant under many of the criteria. You will not need to input any figures into this spreadsheet. Instead it relies on your judgement about the environmental impacts of your project. You will need to justify your answers.

Dashboard This tab will automatically be filled in based on the answers to the Assessment tab. You do not need to add anything to this tab.

YOUR RESULTS This tab will automatically be filled in based on the answers in the Assessment tab. The responses can be checked by the climate and biodiversity team who will, if necessary, make recommendation to improve.

Once completed, you can use the output of this tool to complete the climate and ecological implications sections of our project management forms and reports.

You should append a copy of your completed spreadsheet with your report.

If you need any support in using this tool please email climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk.

Many thanks to West Oxfordshire District Council for sharing their impact assessment tool with officers at South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, which has provided the basis for this version of the tool.



Summary

The purpose of the Impact Assessment Tool is to consider the wide range of possible impacts that a proposed project/policy could have on the environment.

Completing this assessment as early as possible will help shape a project or policy into a strong proposal by highlighting positive areas and areas for improvement.

Use of this tool will also help ensure projects and policies are meeting Council commitments to climate as well as other council priorities.

Please complete the following before moving to the **Assessment** tab

What is being assessed:

Corporate risk register review at Joint Audit and Governance committee

What type of proposal is being assessed?

Overarching programme or strategy

Service

Finance

Name of officer

Yvonne Cutler Greaves

Date

05/02/24

Aims, objectives, anticipated outcomes of project

The Joint audit and governance committee undertake a half yearly progress review of corporate risk register as outlined in risk management strategy.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Please answer all ten sections on this page. There are 3 questions (a-c) for each section. More information and example impacts are detailed in the notes on the right.

1. Greenhouse Gases

How will the proposals impact the levels of greenhouse gas emissions released? Consider:

- Any increase or decrease in energy use (liquid fuel, electricity, gas, water)
- Any increase or decrease in travel time or length by vehicles with a combustion engine (petrol/diesel)
- Any change in land use will have an impact on greenhouse gas emissions which needs to be considered
- Some parts of the proposals may increase greenhouse emissions while other parts reduce it so please select the overall net impact

For Part B, think about the 'deliverables' of your project. Will greenhouse emissions continue to be released as a result of your project/policy's activities once you have delivered the project aims?

Please select from the drop down options

a. Please specify the impact your project will have on greenhouse gas emissions:

No net change

b. Will this impact last beyond the delivery phase of the project?

No

c. Will this have an impact beyond the intended location of the policy/project?

No

d. Please explain why you have selected the above answers/detail expected impacts:

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2. Air Pollution

How will the proposals impact the level of pollutants in the air? Consider:

- Outdoor air pollution (e.g. exhaust fumes, particles from brake and tyre erosion, burning wood or coal, and industrial activity)
- Indoor air quality (e.g. mould, damp, gases/chemicals from building materials, emissions from cooking, fuel use and heating stoves)

Please select from the drop down options

a. Please specify the impact your project will have on air pollution:

No net change

b. Will this impact last beyond the delivery phase of the project?

No

c. Will this impact air quality beyond the intended delivery location of the project?

No

d. Please explain why you have selected the above answers/detail expected impacts:

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3. Sustainable Transport

How will the proposals support a transition from unsustainable transport (such as private petrol or diesel cars) to sustainable alternatives? Consider:

- Active travel (e.g. walking, scooting, and cycling)
- Public transport (e.g. buses and trains)
- Electric vehicles
- Provision of vehicles and infrastructure (e.g. charging points, bike racks, cycle lanes, pedestrian crossings)

Please select from the drop down options

a. Please specify the impact your project will have on sustainable transport:

No net change

b. Will this impact last beyond the delivery phase of the project?

No

c. Will this impact sustainable transport beyond the delivery location of the project?

No

d. Please explain why you have selected the above answers/ detail expected impacts:

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4. Land Use Change

How will the proposals change the current landscape and how it is used/maintained? Consider:

- Flood risk and managing water
- The amount of carbon stored in the soil
- Changes to surface permeability (e.g. non-permeable concrete or tarmac surfaces versus permeable gravel or paving)
- Changes in land use (e.g. grassland to agriculture or new developments)
- Green infrastructure (e.g. trees, retention ponds for flood management)

Please select from the drop down options

a. Please specify the impact your project will have on land use change:

No net change

b. Will this impact last beyond the delivery phase of the project?

No

c. Will this impact land use beyond the delivery location of the project?

No

d. Please explain why you have selected the above answers/ detail expected impacts:

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5. Biodiversity

How will the proposals impact plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms in the district? Consider:

- Direct impacts - change to a habitat, building, or piece of land
- Indirect impacts - noise or light pollution, litter or rubbish, water run-off from roads or fields
- Particular species

Please select from the drop down options

a. Please specify the impact your project will have on biodiversity:

No net change

b. Will this impact last beyond the delivery phase of the project?

No

c. Will this impact biodiversity beyond the intended delivery location of the project?

No

d. Please explain why you have selected the above answers/ detail expected impacts:

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NOTES

Need help?

What are greenhouse gases?

The greenhouse gases are (a) Carbon Dioxide, which is released when fossil fuels (coal, gas, oil) are burnt, e.g. to heat homes or drive vehicles; (b) Methane, which is primarily released by livestock and waste processes (landfill, incineration, treating water); (c) Nitrous Oxide, which primarily comes from fertilisers for agriculture; and (d) Fluorinated Gases, which are produced by industrial refrigeration and air-conditioning processes. High levels of these gases have led to the greenhouse effect, causing average temperatures to rise and the climate to change.

Does your project relate to or involve any of the following?

Likely to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

- Improving insulation in buildings
- Replacing gas/oil boilers with air-source heat pumps
- Encouraging public transport, walking, cycling
- Reducing the amount of waste produced
- Reducing use of petrol or diesel vehicles
- Planting trees or hedgerows
- Proactive greenhouse gas reduction in whole construction process

Likely to increase greenhouse gas emissions

- Construction
- Road closures with detours increase travel time
- Temporary relocation of a service (if further away)
- Increase in energy use of a building
- Replacing grassland/woodland with agriculture or development
- Industrial refrigeration or air conditioning
- Procurement of products or food from overseas

If there are some elements of the proposal that will increase emissions and some which will reduce emissions, consider the net impact and explain your reasoning in the comments in box (d).

Need help?

Air quality refers to the level of pollutants in the air, such as particulate matter, carbon monoxide, ozone, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide. As traffic is the main cause of air pollution in the UK, particular consideration should be given to whether the proposals will increase the length or number of car journeys, either permanently or temporarily. Air quality significantly impacts people's life and lifespan. In the UK, between 28,000 and 36,000 deaths a year are attributed to exposure to air pollution. Reducing pollution to improve air quality can save lives, protect our NHS, and improve our communities.

Does your project relate to or involve any of the following?

Likely to reduce air pollutants

- Removing log burners from homes
- Reducing use of petrol and diesel vehicles
- Encouraging public transport, walking, cycling
- Improving ventilation in buildings

Likely to increase air pollutants

- Road closures that increase standing traffic (idling)
- New industrial or construction sites
- Increasing the number of vehicles on roads
- Increasing the distance travelled by vehicles

Need help?

This factor is about whether this project or policy will support a transition from unsustainable transport to sustainable alternatives. It can also include preparing for future changes in travel such as locating services within a 15-minute walking or cycling radius or adding wiring for EV chargers in new-builds. Consider how people will get to and from a given location, or how goods/products will be transported.

Do the proposals relate to or involve any of the following?

Likely to encourage sustainable transport

- Moving services closer to communities
- Moving services closer to other services
- Increasing public transport options
- Locating bus stops near services
- Improving cycling and walking infrastructure
- Clear signposting and crossings
- Installing bike racks
- Installing electric vehicle charging points
- Enabling working from home

Likely to discourage sustainable transport

- Reducing bus services
- New petrol or diesel fleet vehicles
- Increasing car parking spaces
- Unsafe cycle paths or footpaths
- Holding events in places inaccessible by public transport
- Importing goods and products from overseas

Need help?

What do we mean by land use change?

Land use change is the process where human activities change the size and/or purpose of a piece of land, including how the land is managed. Key impacts are: water quality; availability of water resources; management of flood risk; storage of carbon in soil; habitats for species; and availability of green open space for communities. Considerations include changes to surface permeability (e.g. non-permeable concrete or tarmac surfaces versus permeable gravel or paving), changes in land use (e.g. grassland to agriculture or new developments), and green infrastructure (e.g. trees, retention ponds for flood management). Consider whether the change in land use or management is permanent or reversible when selecting the level of impact.

Do the proposals relate to or involve any of the following?

Land use change likely to have positive impacts

- Tree planting
- Sustainable Drainage Systems
- Removing concrete or tarmac to expose soil
- Increasing grassland
- Balancing ponds or retention ponds

Land use change likely to have negative impacts

- Covering soil or grass with tarmac or concrete
- Building on greenfield sites
- Removing woodland

Need help?

What do we mean by biodiversity?

Biodiversity relies on a range of habitats (e.g. woodland, grassland, ponds, living walls, green roofs, gardens), so protecting and improving the quality of these is key. It also involves protecting key species (e.g. doing bat surveys before approving a project or event), and soil and waterway health (e.g. low levels of pollutants).

Do the proposals relate to or involve any of the following?

Likely to have positive impacts on biodiversity

- Wildflower meadows
- Adding bird/bat boxes or creating ponds
- Litter picking
- Creating hedgerows or planting trees
- Creation of other green spaces
- Recording or monitoring species

Likely to have negative impacts on biodiversity

- Increasing noise or artificial light levels
- Outdoor events in the short term
- Increasing fertiliser, pesticide or other chemical use
- Reducing green space
- Interrupting a wildlife corridor
- Increasing vehicle traffic levels
- Increase in litter

6. Soil and Waterway Health

How will the proposals affect the health of soil and waterways? Consider:

- The use of fertilisers and pesticides in farming or land management
- Use of manure and risk of animal waste running off into waterways
- Sewage discharges or surface run-off during floods and heavy rain
- Leaks or spills from construction

Any project involving a change in land-use type or management practices should consider the impact on nitrate/phosphate levels.

Please select from the drop down options

a. Please specify the impact your project will have on contaminants:

b. Will this impact last beyond the delivery phase of the project?

c. Will this impact soil or waterway health beyond the delivery location of the project?

d. Please explain why you have selected the above answers/ detail expected impacts:

7. Climate Change Adaptation

How will the proposals impact our ability to withstand future climate change impacts, such as heat waves, cold, droughts, flooding, and water shortages. Consider:

- Physical infrastructure (e.g. flood defences, shading)
- Natural measures (e.g. green roofs, reforestation)
- Financial support (e.g. for housing retrofit)
- Behaviour change (e.g. conserving water, using less energy)

Please select from the drop down options

a. Please specify the impact your project will have on adaptation to climate change:

b. Will this impact last beyond the delivery phase of the project?

c. Will this impact adaptation beyond the delivery location of the project?

d. Please explain why you have selected the above answers/ detail expected impacts:

8. Energy Use

What impact will proposals have on the total amount of energy needed? This includes energy needed to heat homes and buildings, and to power machinery, appliances or equipment. Consider:

- Building design to reduce energy use (e.g. insulation, shading, natural light)
- Energy efficiency (e.g. energy rating of appliances, LEDs, switching to heat pumps)
- Shorter in-use hours (e.g. scheduled heating, motion sensors for lighting)
- Behaviour changes (e.g. turning off lights, computers, taps)

Please select from the drop down options

a. Please specify the impact your project will have on energy use:

b. Will this impact last beyond the delivery phase of the project?

c. Will this impact energy use beyond the delivery location of the project?

d. Does this project use fossil fuels (e.g. gas, oil, coal) or renewables (e.g. wind, solar)?

e. Please explain why you have selected the above answers/ detail expected impacts:

9. Sustainable Materials

How do the proposals ensure resources are being sourced, used, and disposed of in the most sustainable way? Consider whether:

- Materials come from a sustainable, renewable source
- Materials have low levels of associated CO₂, known as embodied carbon
- Materials have a low impact when disposed of
- Proposals will ensure that the minimum amount of resources needed are used

Please select from the drop down options

a. Please specify whether the project will use resources in the most sustainable way:

b. Will this impact last beyond the delivery phase of the project?

c. Will this impact sustainable material use beyond the delivery location?

d. Please explain why you have selected the above answers/ detail expected impacts:

10. Waste

How will the proposals impact the quantity of waste produced by activities in the district? Waste includes food, water, household waste, electrical items, and waste from industry or construction. Projects should consider what materials or products will be used and how these will be disposed of.

Consider the waste hierarchy:

- Prevent waste (e.g. buy only what you need, buy long-lasting and modular products, repair)
- Re-use (e.g. donate, hire/lease, refurbish, refill and share)
- Recycle (e.g. sort waste well, avoid buying or using non-recyclable products)

Please select from the drop down options

a. Please specify the impact your project will have on waste:

b. Will this impact last beyond the delivery phase of the project?

c. Will this impact waste beyond the delivery location of the project?

d. Please explain why you have selected the above answers/ detail expected impacts:

Thank you for completing this section.

Need help?

What is soil and waterway health?

Healthy soil and water depends on the correct concentration of nutrients, such as nitrates and phosphates. In a balanced system, nitrates and phosphates enrich the soil and the health of life which grows from or in it but many human activities unbalance the system by changing concentrations. This causes problems for plant growth and water retention in soil, harms aquatic life, can reduce crop yield and increase flood risk.

Do the proposals relate to or involve any of the following?

Likely to have positive impacts

- Decrease use of fertilisers or pesticides
- Trees, hedgerows and grasslands (filter pollutants and protect soils)
- Sustainable draining practices
- Reducing sewage discharges into rivers
- Increasing permeable surfaces

Likely to have negative impacts

- Increasing use of fertilisers or pesticides
- Non-permeable surfaces (e.g. tarmac) increase run-off
- Use of astro-turf
- Increasing the amount of animal waste in rivers
- Construction

Need help?

What does climate change adaptation mean?

Adaptation is about improving our resilience and ability to withstand future climate change impacts. A project or policy can also encourage maladaptation if it does not consider future climate impacts or increases future risk of climate impacts (e.g. a new highly-glazed, energy intensive building risks occupants overheating, or building on flood plains).

Do the proposals relate to or involve any of the following?

Likely to increase adaptation

- Flood defences and water management
- Artificial and natural shading
- Natural flood management (e.g. sustainable drainage systems)
- Insulating buildings
- Retrofitting homes
- Awareness campaigns
- Creation of refuges for wildlife

Likely to increase maladaptation

- Homes designed without consideration of overheating
- Homes which are difficult to keep warm in extreme cold
- Infrastructure on flood plains
- Removal of natural cooling (e.g. shading trees)
- Using materials which absorb heat (e.g. concrete and asphalt)

Need help?

This is about the total amount of energy needed and used to power our lives. Reducing our energy demand is an important step towards meeting our climate targets. Where possible, replacing fossil fuel use with renewable sources of energy generation should be prioritised.

Do the proposals relate to or involve any of the following?

Likely to reduce energy use

- Installing low-energy LED lighting
- Behaviour change e.g. switching off equipment
- Renewable energy generation (e.g. solar)
- Improving insulation in buildings
- Equipment with high energy efficiency ratings

Likely to increase energy use

- Opening a new service
- Bringing an unused building back into use
- Extending service opening hours
- New machinery
- Increasing room temperatures
- Increasing distance travelled

Need help?

What is sustainable resource use?

Sustainable materials is about the use of materials which are sourced, used and disposed of in a way which does not have a lasting impact on the environment.

- **Renewable sources** include recycled or natural materials that are grown or produced in a responsible way.
- **Embodied carbon** covers emissions from transport (long distances increase emissions) and manufacture.
- **Low impact** materials can be deconstructed (modular), reused and/or recycled.

Do the proposals relate to or involve any of the following?

Likely to be more sustainable

- Leasing or renting an item if only using once
- FSC-certified wood products
- Sustainably produced materials
- Recyclable products
- Travelled shorter distances
- Re-using materials or products
- Avoiding single use items

Likely to be less sustainable

- Single-use products/non-recyclable products
- Hazardous materials that will go to landfill
- Materials made of fossil fuels, such as plastic
- Products manufactured and transported from overseas
- Construction
- Temporary fixtures/installations

Need help?

What is meant by waste?

Waste is about the quantity of waste produced by activities in the district. The aim is to decrease the total amount of waste being produced by following the principles of the waste hierarchy:

- Prevent waste (e.g. only buy and use what you need, buy long-lasting and modular products, repair)
- Re-use (e.g. donate, hire/lease, refurbish, refill, and share)
- Recycle (e.g. sort waste well, avoid non-recyclable products).

After recycling, other forms of recovery (e.g. incineration, anaerobic digestion and industrial composting) should be prioritised to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. Waste includes food, water, household waste, electrical items, and waste from industry or construction.

Does your project relate to any of the following?

Likely to reduce waste

- Leasing or renting an item if only using once
- Improved recycling services or bin provision
- Repair cafes or workshops
- Composting green waste
- Reusing items or materials for future projects or passing on to other organisations for reuse

Likely to increase waste

- Buying single use products
- Demolishing a building (unless rubble is re-used)
- New housing development

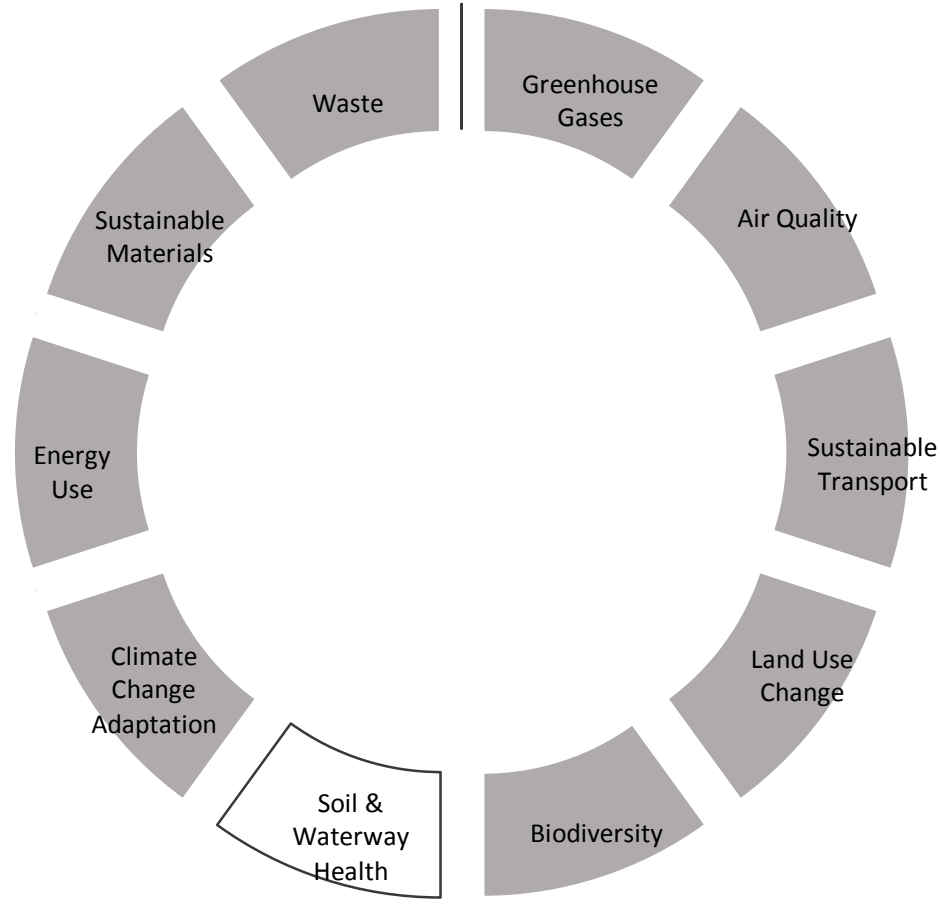
Resources

Check if something is recyclable: www.recyclenow.com

Information on compostable packaging: <https://wrap.org.uk/resources/guide/compostable-plastic-packaging-guidance>

Compostable certifications to look for: https://www.bpf.co.uk/topics/Standards_for_compostability.aspx

Report: Corporate risk register review at Joint Audit and Governance committee



CHECKS

ENVIRONMENTAL	Scores	Action	Justification
GHGs	0	No action required.	A report on corporate risks
Air quality	0	No action required.	A report on corporate risks
Sustainable Transport	0	No action required.	A report on corporate risks
Land use change	0	No action required.	A report on corporate risks
Biodiversity	0	No action required.	A report on corporate risks
Soil and waterway health	0	No action required.	0
Climate Change Adaptation	0	No action required.	A report on corporate risks
Energy Use	0	No action required.	A report on corporate risks
Sustainable Materials	0	No action required.	A report on corporate risks
Waste	0	No action required.	A report on corporate risks

Key

	Significant and/or long-term positive impact identified. No changes needed.
	Slight or short-term positive impact identified. No changes needed but could be reviewed to improve.
	No net change.
	Slight or short-term negative impact identified. Review to identify possible improvements.
	Significant and/or long-term negative impact identified. Changes needed before proceeding.
	Not applicable.

Statement	Score				
Significant increase	2	Long-term	Accepted	Overarching programme or strategy	Development and Corporate Landlord
Slight increase	1	Short-term	Queried	Policy	Planning
No change or n/a	0		Rejected	Project	Housing and Environment
Slight decrease	-1			Event	Finance
Significant decrease	-2			S106 application	Legal and Democratic
Significant involvement	2	Yes	Yes - slightly	No further action needed	Corporate Services
Some involvement	1	No	Yes - significantly	Recommendation applied	Policy and Programmes
N/A	0	N/A	No	Recommendation not applied	Transformation
No involvement	-2				Partnerships
Food		Air Quality		GHGs	Protected C
Significantly promote healthy and/or affordable food		Significantly decrease air pollutants		Significantly reduce GHGs released	Potential positive impact
Slightly promote healthy and/or affordable food		Slightly decrease air pollutants		Slightly reduce GHGs released	Potential negative impact
No net change		No net change		No net change	No impact
Slightly limit healthy and/or affordable food		Slightly increase air pollutants		Slightly increase GHGs released	
Significantly limit healthy and/or affordable food		Significantly increase air pollutants		Significantly increase GHGs released	
Health		Sustainable Transport			Evidence
Significantly increase positive health outcomes		Significantly encourage the use of sustainable transport			Demographic data and other statistics
Slightly increase positive health outcomes		Slightly encourage the use of sustainable transport			Recent research findings
No net change		No net change			Results of recent consultations and surveys
Slightly decrease positive health outcomes		Slightly discourage the use of sustainable transport			Results of ethnic monitoring data
Significantly decrease positive health outcomes		Significantly discourage the use of sustainable transport			Anecdotal information from community groups
Housing		Land Use Change			Comparisons between similar functions/policies elsewhere
Significantly increase the number of or access to quality and/or affordable homes		Significant change to land use that increases positive impacts			Analysis of audit reports
Slightly increase the number of or access to quality and/or affordable homes		Slight change to land use that increases positive impacts			Other
No net change		No net change			None
Slightly decrease the number of or access to quality and/or affordable homes		Slight change to land use that increases negative impacts			
Significantly decrease the number of or access to quality and/or affordable homes		Significant change to land use that increases negative impacts			
Education		Biodiversity			
Significantly increase the availability of learning opportunities		Significantly improve biodiversity by restoring or creating new habitats			
Slightly increase the availability of learning opportunities		Slightly improve biodiversity by improving existing habitats or supporting species			
No net change		No net change			
Slightly decrease the availability of learning opportunities		Slightly reduce biodiversity by impacting the quality of habitats or affecting species			
Significantly decrease the availability of learning opportunities		Significantly reduce biodiversity by reducing or replacing existing habitat(s)			
Built community		Soil and Waterway Health			
Significantly improve facilities, shared spaces, connectivity or resources		Significant decrease in pollutants in soil or water			
Slightly improve facilities, shared spaces, connectivity or resources		Slight decrease in pollutants in soil or water			
No net change		No net change			
Slightly reduce facilities, shared spaces, connectivity or resources		Slight increase in pollutants in soil or water			
Significantly reduce facilities, shared spaces, connectivity or resources		Significant increase in pollutants in soil or water			
Cultural Community		Climate Change Adaptation			
Significantly increase social or cultural resources or support		Significantly increase adaptation			
Slightly increase social or cultural resources or support		Slightly increase adaptation			
No net change		No net change			
Slightly reduce social or cultural resources or support		Slightly decrease adaptation			
Significantly reduce social or cultural resources or support		Significantly decrease adaptation			
Accessibility		Energy Use		Renewables	
Actively reduces barriers to increase access		Significantly decrease energy use		Fossil fuels	
Presents no barriers to access		Slightly decrease energy use		Electricity from the grid	
No net change		No net change		Renewables	
Risk of some barriers to access		Slightly increase energy use		A mix of electricity from the grid and renewables	
Presents barriers to access in one or more areas		Significantly increase energy use			
Local economy and employment		Sustainable Materials			
Significant support for the local economy and/or employment		All materials used in the project will be sourced, used and disposed of in the most sustainable way			
Slight support for the local economy and/or employment		Most of the materials used in the project will be sourced, used and disposed of in then most sustainable way			
No net change		No net change/business as usual			
Slightly undermine support for the local economy and/or employment		Some of the materials used in the project will be sourced, used and disposed of in then most sustainable way			
Significantly undermine support for the local economy and/or employment		None of the materials used in the project will be sourced, used and disposed of in then most sustainable way			
Safety/Crime		Waste			
Significantly increase safety and/or significantly reduce risk of harm		Significantly reduce overall quantities of waste			
Slightly increase safety and/or significantly reduce risk of harm		Slightly reduce overall quantities of waste			
No net change		No net change			
Slightly decrease safety and/or increase risk of harm		Slightly increase overall quantities of waste			
Significantly decrease safety and/or increase risk of harm		Significantly increase overall quantities of waste			
Equity					
No groups differentially impacted and active promotion of safeguards					
No groups differentially impacted					
Not applicable					
Some groups differentially impacted but with safeguards in place					
Some groups differentially impacted					
Democratic Voice					
Significant opportunities for involvement in and influence on planning and/or decisions					
Some engagement with opportunities for involvement or consultation					
Advisory engagement with no opportunities for involvement					
No communication or engagement					

