



Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI) ADDENDUM

July 2020

Equality Impact Assessments

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) reviews the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Addendum. The assessment includes the temporary changes in respect of publicity of planning policy documents and planning applications during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- 1.2. The purpose of this EQIA is to assess what impact the temporary changes set out in the SCI Addendum will have on different sections of the community referred to as the 'protected characteristics' which include:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Sexual orientation
 - Race
 - Religion
 - Gender
- 1.3. Equality Impact Assessments systematically assess and record the actual, potential or likely impact of a service, policy or project – or a significant change in the same – on different groups of people. The consequences of policies and projects on particular groups are analysed and anticipated so that, as far as possible, any negative consequences can be eliminated or minimised and opportunities for ensuring equality can be maximised. This EQIA will be published on the Council's website with the SCI Addendum.
- 1.4. This EQIA highlights the steps that have been undertaken to evaluate the potential impact of the temporary publicity arrangements on those in the community with protected characteristics, and what steps have been taken to address any negative impacts. The assessment follows the Council's standard methodology as outlined below:

Stage 1 involves the Initial Screening of the assessment and is intended to check whether the SCI Addendum has an adverse impact on equality groups and identify relevant actions and likely costs/resources associated with any proposed improvement. **Appendix 1** contains the initial screening of the SCI Addendum.

Stage 2 of the Council's EQIA requires the completion of an In Depth (Full) Assessment if the answer is yes to more than one of the Initial Screening questions.
- 1.5. Following the initial screening of the SCI Addendum it is concluded that an In Depth (Full) Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

Equality Impact Assessment

APPENDIX 1 STAGE 1 - INITIAL SCREENING DETAILS ASSESSING POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES

Please tick/delete as appropriate: Is this EQIA for a,

Strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Existing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	New/Existing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	New/Existing

Name of Strategy, Policy or Service Development:

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Addendum: Temporary changes in respect of publicity of Planning Policy Documents and Planning Applications during the COVID-19 outbreak

AIMS, OBJECTIVES & PURPOSE OF THE POLICY OR ACTIVITY:

The purpose of the SCI Addendum is to reflect latest government planning advice in response to COVID-19 and make public reasonable steps to help the involvement of those in our community who may experience difficulties getting involved in the planning process through the internet.

The Addendum sets out:

- how documents will be publicised
- how documents can be accessed
- the period for representations to be made to planning applications
- how to respond to consultations

PLEASE LIST THE MAIN STAKEHOLDERS/BENEFICIARIES IN TERMS OF THE RECIPIENTS OF THE ACTIVITY OR THE TARGET GROUP AT WHOM THE POLICY IS AIMED:

The SCI Addendum sets out how planning applications and planning policy documents are publicised and explains how responses could be made, therefore this could have an impact on all those that live and work in the district. The main stakeholders are, therefore, the Cherwell community and those with an interest in the Cherwell District. These include residents, local businesses, stakeholders, staff, and partners.

IF THE ACTIVITY IS PROVIDED BY ANOTHER DEPARTMENT, ORGANISATION, PARTNERSHIP OR AGENCY ON BEHALF OF THE AUTHORITY, PLEASE GIVE THE NAMES OF THESE ORGANISATIONS/AGENCIES:

N/A

LEAD OFFICER: Yuen Wong **TEL:** 01295 227985
SERVICE AREA: Planning and Development
DIRECTORATE: Communities

ASSESSMENT REVIEW DATE: 24 June 2020

Equality Impact Assessment

STAGE 1 – INITIAL SCREENING ASSESSMENT

Q	Screening Questions	Y/N
1.	Does the policy or activity knowingly prevent us in any way from meeting our statutory equality duties under the 2010 Equality Act?	N
2	Is there any evidence that any part of the proposed policy or activity could discriminate unlawfully, directly or indirectly, against particular equality groups?	N
3	Is there any evidence that information about the policy or activity is not accessible to any equality groups?	N
4	Has the Council received any complaints about the policy or activity under review, in respect of equality issues?	N
5	Have there been any recommendations in this area arising from, for example, internal/external audits or scrutiny reports?	N
6	Will the proposed policy or activity have negative consequences for people we employ, partner or contract with?	N
7	This Strategy, Policy or Service Development has an impact on other council services i.e. Customer Services and those services have not yet been consulted.	N
8	Will there be a negative impact on any equality groups? If so, please provide brief details below.	N
	<p>Equality Impact: Evidence:</p> <p><u>Current adopted Statement of Community Involvement</u></p> <p>The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted on 18 July 2016 and can be viewed on the Council's website. It sets out who the Council will engage with in preparing key planning policy documents and how and when they will be engaged. The SCI also includes how the Council will consult on planning applications. Its aim is to encourage community and stakeholder involvement.</p> <p>The Council as Local Planning Authority must produce a SCI under Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The Council must comply with the adopted SCI in preparing relevant planning policy documents and in consulting on planning applications.</p> <p>The current SCI sets out the types of engagement methods and identifies the purposes for each method. For example, is it for <i>Information, Consultation or Participation</i> purposes. This has been done for the different types of planning policy documents so that it is clear what is expected from the Council when it comes to engaging with the community.</p> <p>A range of engagement methods are used by the Council from publicising on social media, local newspapers and the Council's website to holding meetings and exhibitions. The Council also makes available hard copies of the key planning policy documents at deposit locations which includes Council offices, town councils and libraries across the district. The Council can also offer documents in large print, braille, audio tape or in other languages upon request. Those wishing to comment on policy documents or planning applications can do so by email, letter or online form.</p> <p>The Council has a 'Duty to Co-operate' under Section 110 of the Localism Act to engage with other local planning authorities and designated bodies. A list of groups who should be engaged are contained in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the SCI.</p> <p>Preparation of key planning policy documents involve consulting with individuals and bodies which represent the interests of different age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual</p>	

	<p>orientation, local or national groups, religious groups, and the elderly. The SCI affects those that live and work in the District and those with an interest in the district.</p> <p>Comments made to planning policy consultations or planning applications will be considered by Council officers and will help inform the next stage of plan preparation or determination of planning applications respectively.</p> <p>Comments on planning policy documents and planning applications are made available on the Council's website and in addition for planning policy documents these are captured in a Statement of Consultation. This is to demonstrate how officers have considered the comments and how this has influenced the plan.</p> <p><u>Changes in the Statement of Community Involvement Addendum</u></p> <p>The Council is maintaining most of the publicity and engagement measures in the adopted SCI. The SCI Addendum concerns temporary amendments to the SCI in terms of how we publicise planning policy documents and planning applications as a result of the current COVID-19 outbreak, in response to Government advice. The Addendum includes the measures to be taken whilst we are unable to make documents available for inspection at deposit locations. The revised arrangements do not affect the commitments set out in the SCI, as the Council will endeavour to make the necessary documents available in alternative ways as set out in the Addendum. All people will still have the opportunity to be involved in the preparation of planning policy documents and consideration of planning applications. The period for comments on planning applications remains at 21 days as per the new Government's advice.</p>	
9	<p>Is the proposed policy or activity likely to have a negative effect on our relations with certain equality groups or local community? If so, please explain.</p> <p>The changes in the SCI Addendum are not expected to have a detrimental impact on any groups as the temporary measures include alternative arrangements for accessing documents whilst deposit locations remain closed and the period during which comments on applications can be made remains at 21 days.</p>	N
10	<p>There has been no consultation with equality groups about this policy or activity? Answer yes if you agree with this statement. If there has been consultation, please list the equality groups you have consulted with:</p> <p>The adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2016 was subject to public consultation.</p> <p>The Council's EQIA contact officer was consulted on the preparation of this EQIA.</p> <p>The 2016 SCI sets out how the Council will engage with the community in the preparation of planning policy documents and planning decisions.</p> <p>The SCI Addendum has been prepared in response to Government guidance which encourages an immediate review of SCI policies to ensure that plan-making can continue during COVID-19. The changes contained in the Addendum are only temporary whilst restrictions related to COVID-19 are in place. It is considered that all sectors of the community still have the opportunity to have their say in how their community is planned and developed, irrespective of age, sex, ability, ethnicity, background or disability as a result of the measures contained in the Addendum.</p>	N
11	<p>Has this assessment missed opportunities to promote equality of opportunity and</p>	N

	<p>positive attitudes?</p> <p>No. The Council will continue to encourage the participation of all sectors of the community in the preparation of planning policy documents and consultation of planning applications.</p>	
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**Proceed to In Depth (Full) Assessment (complete Appendix 2) if the answer is YES to more than one of the above questions.
For any YES answers include an improvement action in your Equality Improvement Plan.**

Declaration

I am satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out on this policy or activity and an In Depth (Full) Equality Impact Assessment is not required. I understand that the EQIA is required by the Council and take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment.

Completed by: Yuen Wong

Date: 24 June 2020

Countersigned by Assistant Director Planning and Development: David Peckford

Date: 24 June 2020

Equality Impact Assessment

Please detail below your evidence which has determined whether you have answered either Yes or No to the initial screening questions.

Screening Questions	Screening Narrative
Does the policy or activity knowingly prevent us in any way from meeting our statutory equality duties under the 2010 Equality Act?	The adopted Statement of Community Involvement, which sets out how we will engage our community in the preparation of planning documents and planning applications are consulted, actively seeks involvement in planning from all areas of the community.
Is there any evidence that any part of the proposed policy or activity could discriminate unlawfully, directly or indirectly, against particular equality groups?	There is no evidence to suggest that any of the protected groups have been disadvantaged by the SCI or the SCI Addendum as the aim of these documents are to try and help people engage in the planning process.
Is there any evidence that information about the policy or activity is not accessible to any equality groups?	<p>The aims of the SCI and SCI Addendum are to encourage community and stakeholder involvement.</p> <p>Key planning policy documents are available on the Council's website, with the Addendum containing temporary measures to ensure availability of documents for those without access to the internet whilst deposit locations are unavailable. Advertisements concerning these documents are also placed in the local press.</p> <p>The adopted SCI encourages exhibitions and meetings, and the SCI Addendum ensures that other online methods including virtual meetings can be used.</p> <p>We also offer all our publications in large print, braille, audio tap or in other languages upon request.</p>

Has the Council received any complaints about the policy or activity under review, in respect of equality issues?	No. There is no evidence to suggest that any equality issue related complaints have been received.
Have there been any recommendations in this area arising from, for example, internal/external audits or scrutiny reports?	No recommendations received
Will the proposed policy or activity have negative consequences for people we employ, partner or contract with?	There are no negative outcomes identified.
This Strategy, Policy or Service Development has an impact on other council services i.e. Customer Services and those services have not yet been consulted.	The SCI Addendum has been prepared in consultation with the Council's EQIA contact officer and the changes do not affect how other Council services are provided.
Will there be a negative impact on any equality groups?	The changes in the SCI Addendum are not expected to have a detrimental impact on any groups as the temporary measures include alternative arrangements for accessing documents whilst deposit locations remain closed and the period during which comments on applications can be made remains at 21 days as per the new Government's advice.
Is the proposed policy or activity likely to have a negative affect on our relations with certain equality groups or local community? If so, please explain.	The changes in the SCI Addendum are not expected to have a detrimental impact on any groups as the temporary measures include alternative arrangements for accessing documents whilst deposit locations remain closed and the period during which comments on applications can be made remains at 21 days as per the new Government's advice.
There has been no consultation with equality groups about this policy or activity? Answer yes if you agree with this statement. If there has been consultation, please list the equality groups you have consulted with:	<p>The adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2016 was subject to public consultation.</p> <p>The Council's EQIA contact officer was consulted on the preparation of this EQIA.</p> <p>The aims of the SCI and SCI Addendum are to encourage community and stakeholder involvement.</p> <p>Consultations on planning policy documents and planning applications are open to everyone to comment. These are widely publicised to give opportunities to anyone who wish to be involved.</p> <p>Consultation responses to planning policy documents are captured in Statements of Consultation, which are published on the Council's website.</p> <p>A Public notice about the SCI Addendum is being made on the Council's website, in local newspapers, and by contacting all people and organisations registered on the Council's planning policy database.</p>

Has this assessment missed opportunities to promote equality of opportunity and positive attitudes?	No
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