

## **Diversity Impact Assessment**

### **Statement of Community Involvement**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

##### What is a DIA?

- 1.1 A Diversity Impact Assessment assesses whether the Council is carrying out its functions and delivering its services in the way they are intended and to everybody. This is undertaken through identifying potential impacts the Statement of Community Involvement may have upon equality groups including age, disability, gender, race, religion, belief, sexual orientation and also groups which face social inequalities. Assessing these impacts includes identifying whether we are meeting the Council's equality duties and the dimensions of equality which examines how the policy will affect the life chances of the equality groups. These are explained in the Council's Diversity Impact Assessment Framework shown in Appendix 2.

##### Structure of the Report

- 1.2 This report follows the Council's approach to undertaking DIA's.
- Section 1 is a brief introduction to what a DIA is
  - Section 2 includes an overview of the Statement of Community Involvement
  - Section 3 identifies who the document is aimed at
  - Section 4 is the impact assessment, which establishes the potential equality benefits, negative impacts and recommendations in light of the assessment
  - Section 5 provides a summary and next steps.

#### **2.0 What is it about?**

##### What is the Statement of Community Involvement?

- 2.1 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the Council intends to achieve continuous community involvement in the preparation of planning policies and the assessment of planning applications in Swindon Borough. Effective and widespread involvement of communities will ensure policies and applications are shaped and influenced by the community.
- 2.2 The Statement of Community Involvement is split into two main sections, the first section relates to community involvement in regards to planning policies and the second section relations to community involvement in relation to planning applications.

- 2.3 The first section explains who will be consulted, the methods used to engage the community, the process of engaging the community and how representations and feedback can be made.
- 2.4 The second section includes how the community are involved in the planning application process, the techniques and methods of consultation, how to comment on applications and the monitoring and review of the SCI.

#### What is it set up to deliver?

- 2.5 The Statement of Consultation aims to ensure as many people as possible are aware of the local plan preparation process and planning application process. It also aims to make the community and stakeholders aware of how they can contribute and influence the evolution of local policy and how they can have their say on planning applications.
- 2.6 There are various benefits of continuous community engagement; these include more informed and involved communities, a greater sense of public ownership and even the potential to reduce delays and objections to policies and plans.

#### Alignment with the Local Development Framework (LDF)

- 2.7 The Statement of Community Involvement forms part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is the collective name for the portfolio of Local Development Documents (LDDs) that will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy. The SCI sets out who the Council will consult, the methods and techniques and how representations can be made on plans within the LDF.

#### What equality benefits does this create?

- 2.8 The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the Council will involve all members of the community including local communities, stakeholders, landowners, businesses, hard to reach groups, the young, people from deprived areas and those who are disabled. This will encourage and inform all members of the community of how they can influence the future of Swindon. This can have the potential to increase the sense of pride in the community and encourage participation in public life.

### **3.0 Who is it for?**

#### Who is expected to benefit or use this service?

- 3.1 The Statement of Community Involvement aims to reach all members of the community and includes how the various sectors will be

consulted. Therefore the whole of the population of the Borough is likely to benefit.

#### What do we know about them?

- 3.2 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been undertaken on the Revised Proposed Submission Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD and provides a profile of the equality groups within Swindon Borough. This data should be referred to when reading the impact assessment in this report. This document can be accessed on our website at: <http://www.swindon.gov.uk/ep/ep-planning/ep-planning-localdev/Pages/ep-planning-localdev-corestrategy.aspx>

### **4.0 Impact**

#### How will this service be successfully delivered to a diverse group of people?

- 4.1 This stage of the Diversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken using a matrix to assess the impacts of community engagement in regards to planning policies and planning applications, which can be seen in Appendix 1. The matrix includes which equality groups will benefit and whether the dimensions of equality are being met. There is also explanation on the key impacts in relation to various elements of community engagement.

#### Consultation Process

- 4.2 It is intended the SCI and accompany documents will go out to consultation in January 2012 for a six week period. If the SCI is amended in light of changes as a result of consultation, then the DIA will need to be reviewed.

### **5.0 So What?**

#### Summary of Impacts

- 5.1 The DIA has assessed whether the Statement of Community Involvement will have either a positive or negative impact upon equality groups in particular in relation to the dimensions of equality which can be seen in Appendix 1.
- 5.2 The overall outcome of the assessment has shown that the SCI will promote public participation in the evolution of local planning policies and planning applications. In particular there are details on how hard to reach groups will be consulted and encouraged to participate.
- 5.3 There is only one recommendation as a result of the assessment and this relates to how to make representations on local planning policy. It is clear how representations can be made however further details could

be provided on how equality groups / hard to reach groups could make representations.

Have any changes been identified?

- 5.4 The impact assessment in Appendix 1 provides recommendations in light of the equalities assessment; however there is only one recommendation due to mainly positive impacts predicted. The recommendation is highlighted in the previous section.

How will success be measured

- 5.5 The Annual Monitoring Report monitors the planning policies within the Local Development Framework and this will include any monitoring arrangement arising from the SCI.

When will thus be reviewed?

- 5.6 The implementation of the SCI will begin once the document is adopted.

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## Appendix 1: Equality Assessment Matrix

Guidelines	Who will Benefit? (Equality Groups)	Key Impacts	Does it meet the Equality Dimensions
<b>PLANNING POLICY PROCESS</b>			
Whom to consult	All Equality Groups	Actively involving and consulting the local community and stakeholders is encouraging the community to get involved and participate in decision making. It ensures all sectors of community will be involved and the Council will actively try to consult hard to reach groups through various forums, this could certain equality groups.	8 & 9
Methods of consultation	All Equality Groups	The method and techniques adopted exceed the required minimum levels. By using an array of methods and techniques will maximise the amount of people who are informed in regards to planning policies including equality groups. This will encourage and hopefully increase the number of people involved in influencing local planning policies and potentially increase participation in public activities.	8 & 9
Community involvement and how to make representation	All Equality Groups	Through informing the community of the plan making process will aid understanding and consequently encourage participation. Also through promoting various ways of how to make representations will further increase participation. There are not any details on how people from hard to reach groups / equality groups can make representations.  <i>Recommendation: Include details on how equality groups / hard to reach groups can make representations and/or a link to Appendix 8 which includes guidance on engaging with Hard to Reach groups.</i>	8 & 9
<b>PLANNING APPLICATION PROCESS</b>			

## Appendix 1: Equality Assessment Matrix

Guidelines	Who will Benefit? (Equality Groups)	Key Impacts	Does it meet the Equality Dimensions
Community Involvement	All Equality Groups	Through informing the community of the types of applications and where they can make comments especially through promoting applicants to consult pre-applications can increase participation but also can potentially influence the form of development which will reflect community needs.	8 & 9
Techniques / methods	All Equality Groups	The methods and techniques used for consultation on planning applications do range from onsite notices to informing town and parish councils. This will ensure all those affected by the planning application are informed.	8 & 9

## Appendix 2: Swindon Borough Council's DIA Framework

