

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Deciding what needs to be assessed

In theory all policies, decisions, services, projects and programmes should be impact assessed. The most practical approach is to assess as the proposal is being developed or as processes, services and policies come up for review making the EQIA part of the development process. Do not be put off by the list below, it does not mean that long and detailed assessments are required every time you are engaged in one of the activities. However, it does mean that you should always consider the equalities implications of your proposals.

Policy

- New policy development
- Substantial revision of an existing policy or process
- Any change which may have a disproportionate impact on a particular group

Decision

- Key decision
- Decision for management board/cabinet
- Budget change decision

Service

- New service
- Service review, including the decommissioning of services
- Any service change which may have a disproportionate impact on a particular group

Projects and programmes

- All, at planning stage

Further information: [Equality Impact Assessments - a user's guide](#)

Section One

| Question | Response |
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| 1.1 | Name of policy/decision/service/project/programme being assessed | Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2024. |
| 1.2 | Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/decision/service/project/programme | <p>The SCI is a statutory planning document that sets out how and when the Council’s Planning Service will engage with local communities and key stakeholders on planning matters. The current SCI, adopted in February 2019, is outdated and no longer fit for purpose.</p> <p>It is important that during the creation of the SCI equality impacts are considered as the SCI strives to ensure the Planning Service is as inclusive and transparent as possible.</p> |
| 1.3 | Who is affected by the policy/decision/service/project/programme? (e.g. employees/service users/supplier/contractor) | <p>All Planning Service users across the Borough and the Council’s Planning Service employees will be impacted by the SCI.</p> <p>The aim of the SCI is to improve local community engagement of Planning Services including both plan-making and planning applications.</p> |
| 1.4 | What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this proposal? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders) | <p>The updated proposed SCI has been prepared by the Council’s Planning Policy Team. However, it is a statutory requirement that the SCI is publicly consulted. The draft SCI document was published for consultation between 29th January to 11th March 2024. The consultation was advertised through the council’s social media channels, the council website, a press release in local media and direct email notification to consultees on the consultation database the Policy Team hold.</p> <p>The consultation comprised an online survey including eleven questions, and a poll of preferred methods and frequency of communication. The ten questions in the online survey each related to relevant sections of the SCI document, with open-ended questions allowing members of the public to provide detailed feedback on each of the sections of the document. Alternatively, comments could be emailed or posted to us. There was also the opportunity to attend an online event which was attended by a member of a local organisation.</p> <p>The online consultation also invited the public to share ideas about how to overcome barriers to engaging with planning in communities in Swindon and across specific interest groups, and provided contact details to discuss further.</p> |

Section Two

The SCI includes details on how and when local communities and key stakeholders can be involved with the Council’s Planning Service. There is a need to ensure that this information is accessible for all. Therefore, the SCI

document’s accessibility has been checked and changes made where necessary. Plain English has been used to ensure minimal Planning jargon is used throughout the document so it is easy to read, understand and interpret.

The proposed SCI is in draft format and will be live for public consultation from 8th January 2024 to 19th February (6 weeks) (subject to Cabinet approval). Following public consultation any changes will be made and formally adopted.

| Protected Characteristic Group | Is there a potential for positive or negative impact? Is the impact neutral? | Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used | Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the proposal) |
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| Disability | Minor / major positive | <p>The SCI considers protected characteristics groups through the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The SCI will strive to ensure public consultations run are effective and provide maximum community engagement. Various consultation tools which are available to the Council will be employed through public consultations.</p> <p>These consultation tools will be carefully considered and tailored to the type of document/consultation. Where protected characteristics groups are underrepresented, the Council will strive to engage with those groups to attain representative responses. Engagement on plan-making and planning applications will need to be positively designed to ensure people with disabilities are able to effectively engage in planning. This could include for example visually accessible material and events held in physically accessible locations. The co-design of consultation events to meet resident needs.</p> | The SCI has been prepared in line with SBC identity guidelines. Following drafting the SCI has been checked for ‘accessibility’. |
| Gender Reassignment | Neutral / Minor positive | Non-binary consultation response information. | |

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| Marriage or Civil Partnership | Neutral / Minor positive | No major specialist interventions. | |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | Neutral / Minor positive | Risk assessment for relevant staff engaged in consultation events. | |
| Race | Minor / Major positive | Consultation material likely to be required in multiple languages. Working positively with different ethnic groups to build an effective approach to engagement. | |
| Religion or Belief | Neutral / Minor positive | Sensitive approach to timetabling consultation events to avoid major religious holidays, events and activities. | |
| Sexual Orientation | Neutral / Minor positive | No major specialist interventions. | |
| Sex (gender) | Minor / Major positive | Sensitivity to use of language and gender biases within consultation material and suitable events and timing thereof. | |
| Age | Minor / Major positive | Consultation activities will need to be designed to reflect the different need of different age groups including access and use of online material. | |
| Children in Care and Care Leavers | Neutral / Minor Positive | Positive interventions to support youth engagement. | |

Section Three

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| 3.1 | Potential Barriers to success and mitigating Actions – summary | <p>There is a potential risk of diminished Council Planning Service resources to ensure that the SCI is implemented and reviewed regularly to maximise community involvement. However, the currently adopted SCI (February 2019) is outdated and requires an update to ensure the PSED is addressed in the most appropriate way.</p> <p>Need to establish new communication networks to widen engagement.</p> |
| 3.2 | How will success be measured? | <p>Success of the SCI will be measured through monitoring the levels and range of community engagement, particularly through the Council’s consultation hub (EngagementHQ) and through feedback from local communities. The Council’s aim</p> |

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| | | is to maximise key stakeholder and local community involvement and ensuring all members of local communities are represented and have a voice. |
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| 3.3 | What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event? | <p>The SCI will be reviewed by the Council's Planning Service every five years or earlier if necessary (in line with legislation) to ensure it is still fit for purpose.</p> <p>As this is a new proposed SCI it will set the tone for the new Local Plan moving forward. Therefore, it is likely to be reviewed in line with the first stage of public consultation on the new Local Plan (Regulation 18).</p> <p>Equalities monitoring against consultation input.</p> |
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Section Four

| For the Record | | | |
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| Name of person leading this EQIA | Amy Colbran | Date Completed | 08/05/2025 |
| Names and roles of people involved in the consideration of impact | N/A | | |
| Name of Director signing EQIA | | Date Signed | |