



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Screening Template

April 2020

Proposal/Brief Title: Statement of Community Involvement

Date: 22/10/2021 – update (current draft)

Type of strategy, policy, project or service: Community involvement policy

Please tick one of the following:

- Existing
- New or proposed
- Changing, update or revision
- Other (please explain)

This document is the first for Buckinghamshire Council and supersedes the former District and County Council SCIs.

This report was created by

Name Rosie Brake

Job Title: Planning Policy Team Leader

Email address: Rosie.Brake@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the proposal below:

The Statement of Community Involvement is a statutory document that sets out how Buckinghamshire Council will consult the public and other bodies, who have an interest in planning matters in Buckinghamshire, in the planning process.

What outcomes do we want to achieve?

1) Screening Questions

1.1 Does this proposal plan to withdraw a service, activity or presence? No

Please explain your answer: No, the planning service and its duties will remain as they currently are.

1.2 Does this proposal plan to reduce a service, activity or presence? No

Please explain your answer: No, however as the position of the Statement of Community Involvement for the new authority differs from the legacy councils there may be differences between old and new practices.

1.3 Does this proposal plan to introduce, review or change a policy, strategy or procedure? Yes

Please explain your answer: This SCI will set out the methods in which communities are engaged across Buckinghamshire for a variety of planning matters. This will therefore necessitate changes in procedure in order to align those used previously by the legacy Councils.



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1.4 Does this proposal affect service users and/or customers, or the wider community? Yes

Please explain your answer: This SCI sets out our commitments and optional actions as to how the Council will involve people in planning matters

1.5 Does this proposal affect employees? No

Please explain your answer: This policy does not impact employees directly, however colleagues in the planning service will be expected to adhere to the commitments set out in this Statement of Community Involvement.

1.6 Will employees require training to deliver this proposal? No

Please explain your answer: The commitments of this SCI are in line with our current means of service delivery.

1.7 Has any engagement /consultation been carried out? Yes

Please explain your answer: The draft SCI was consulted on between 16 February – 6 April 2021.

2) Are there any concerns at this stage which indicate that this proposal could have negative or unclear impacts on any of the group (s) below? (*protected characteristics). Please include any additional comments.

A) **Age* Yes** – the elderly may have less access / less confidence using online methods; they may have difficulty getting out of the house

B) **Disability* Yes** –

- a. people with impaired vision may not be able to see displayed notices / read consultation material;
- b. people with mobility difficulties may not be able to get out of the house, or access planning events;
- c. people with learning disabilities may have difficulty understanding notices and documents.

C) **Gender Reassignment* No**

D) **Pregnancy & maternity* No**

E) **Race & Ethnicity* No**

F) **Religion & Belief* No**

G) **Sex* No**

H) **Sexual Orientation* No**

I) **Marriage & Civil Partnership* No**

J) **Carers No**

K) **Rural isolation No**

L) **Single parent families No**

M) **Poverty (social & economic deprivation) No**

N) **Military families / veterans No**

O) **Gender identity No**

Additional comments (please indicate which of the protected groups you are commenting on):



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Whilst it is not anticipated that there will be any specific negative consequences on protected groups, we are aware that in order to advance equality of opportunity to participate in consultations may require extra actions to be taken where reasonable (see below)

As a result of this screening, is an EqIA required?

(If you have answered yes to any of the screening questions or any of the group (above), a full EqIA should be undertaken)

Yes

No

Briefly explain your answer:

EqIA Screening Sign off

Officer completing this Screening Template: Emily Hadley Date: 12/02/2021; updated **Rosie Brake** 5 August 2021

Equality Lead: Natalie Donhou Morley Date: 2/11/2021

Service Director Steve Bambrick Date: (To be added)

Buckinghamshire Corporate Board sign off (if required) (Please insert name) Date: (Please insert Date)

Please continue to the next page to complete a full EqIA.

EqIA – Full Equality Impact Assessment

Step 1: Introduction

Policy or Service to be assessed: Statement of Community Involvement – adoption version

Service and lead officer: Planning and Environment, Rosie Brake

Officers involved in the EqIA: Emily Hadley

What are you impact assessing?

Existing

New/proposed

Changing/Update revision

Other, please list:



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Step 2: Scoping – what are you assessing?

What is the title of your service/strategy/policy/project? Statement of Community Involvement

What is the aim of your service/strategy/policy/project? To set out how the Council will consult the public and other bodies on how they can get involved in planning issues, including the Local Plan and planning applications.

Who does/will it have an impact on? E.g. public, visitors, staff, members, partners? Public and other stakeholders.

Will there be an impact on any other functions, services or policies? If so, please provide more detail. No.

Are there any potential barriers to implementing changes to your service/strategy/policy/project? No.

Step 3: Information gathering – what do you need to know about your customers and making a judgement about impacts

What data do you already have about your service users, or the people your policy or strategy will have an impact on, that is broken down by equality strand?

Age/Disability: None

Gender re-assignment: None

Race: None

Religion or belief: None

Sex: None

Sexual orientation: None

Pregnancy and maternity: None

Marriage & Civil Partnership: None

Do you need any further information broken down by equality strand to inform this EqIA?

Yes

No

This will affect the total population for Buckinghamshire Council area and it is therefore considered that no further breakdown will be required at this stage.

If yes, list here with actions to help you gather data for the improvement plan in Step 5

Is there any potential for direct or indirect discrimination?



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X Yes

No

If yes, please provide more detail on how you will monitor/overcome this – The potential for such discrimination is not yet fully known however it is anticipated that any potential will be highlighted as part of the consultation and improvements can then be considered and implemented where possible as part of the improvement plan detailed below.

A successful consultation will require sight of the consultation by the public and stakeholders, therefore issues regarding reach e.g.:

- display of public notices not coming to the attention of blind people and those who are not able to go outside easily
- content of notices (language barriers) (ease of understanding),
- replying to a consultation (different formats, use of technology – are they available for non-internet users, range of methods and available for those with health issues or disabled) will need to be considered as part of the process.

Conclusion:

The SCI is for all those who live, work and carry out business in Buckinghamshire and anyone else who has an interest in planning matters in the council area, regardless of any equalities characteristics. The principal consideration is that Council engagement on planning matters is accessible to all, by employing a range of means of communication and following accessibility guidelines in all our publications. These principles are embedded within the SCI itself, which sets out this range.

Step 4: Improvement plan – what are you going to change?

We have updated the SCI to take account of the issues identified. Since the SCI sets out the principles of the Council's engagement on planning matters, rather than specific engagement exercises, we have added a number of options to the SCI that the Council will draw upon when developing engagement activities. These options are set out in the table below.

Issue	Action	Performance target (what difference will it make)	Lead Officer	Achieved
Access to consultation – public notices – how to have maximum number of people see the notice	Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- letters to affected properties- notifications to organisations	Reduce potential for missed consultation by members of public in protected groups. Increased consultation and feedback	Various	Ongoing, as part of business as usual and for successive engagement exercises



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Issue	Action	Performance target (what difference will it make)	Lead Officer	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - list of hard to reach people (opt in only) - different formats - font size <p>Prepare – a Neighbour consultation procedure note</p>		Mark Aughterlony	Scheduled for end 2021
Language barriers	<p>Consider notices and consultation – ensure alternative formats notified and available or obtainable where possible</p> <p>Prepare – a Neighbour consultation procedure note</p>	As above	Various Mark Aughterlony	Ongoing, as part of business as usual and for successive engagement exercises Scheduled for end 2021
Ease of response	<p>Consider response options for accessibility for all groups e.g. telephone, in person, internet, software conversation.</p> <p>Prepare – a Neighbour consultation procedure note</p>	As above	Various Mark Aughterlony	Ongoing, as part of business as usual and for successive engagement exercises Scheduled for end 2021

As implementation will not necessarily apply to all cases, this has the potential to be discriminatory and therefore further procedures and guidance will need to be considered on how to do this consistently.

EqIA approved by: Natalie Donhou-Morley

Date: 2/11/2021

Next review date: 2/11/2022