



SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Equality Impact (Initial Analysis)

SKDC – Statement of Community Involvement 2021 (SCI)

Service Area:	Lead officer: Jake Horton	Date of Meeting
Planning Policy Development and Growth	Assessors: Shaza Brannon	24/08/21
	Neutral Assessor: Carol Drury	

1. Name and description of policy/service/function/strategy

The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the Council will consult on planning policy documents (including the Local Plan), engage with and support neighbourhood planning, and consult on planning applications. The updated document has a greater emphasis on online consultation methods and removes the minimum consultation requirement to have libraries and council offices as deposit points.

Is this a new or existing policy? Existing

2. Complete the table below, considering whether the proposed policy/service/function/strategy could have any potential positive, or negative impacts on groups from any of the protected characteristics (or diversity strands) listed, using demographic data, user surveys, local consultations evaluation forms, comments and complaints etc.

Equality Group	Does this policy/service/function/strategy have a positive or negative impact on any of the equality groups? Please state which for each group	Please describe why the impact is positive or negative. If you consider this policy etc is not relevant to a specific characteristic please explain why
Age	Positive (the document ensures that people can actively participate in consultations) Negative (increased utilisation of digital technology)	Removing the requirement for local authorities to place hard copies of consultations in public settings whilst increasing the reliance on technology to access and comment on planning policy documents could disproportionately impact older people who may be less likely to be online. In order to mitigate any negative impact the Council has the discretion to still deposit consultation documents at these points. The Statement of Community Involvement also makes commitment to provide documents in alternative formats (for example, large print) on request. Overall this would maintain the advancement of equality of opportunity.
Disability	Positive (the document ensures that people can actively participate in consultations)	Removing the requirement for local authorities to place hard copies of consultations in public

	Negative (increased utilisation of digital technology)	settings whilst increasing the reliance on technology to access and comment on planning policy documents could disproportionately impact people with disabilities who are unable to access or use online platforms. The Statement of Community Involvement however makes a commitment to make reasonable adjustments for equalities purposes upon request. This would particularly benefit individuals with certain disabilities. Documents will be provided in alternative formats if required. Overall the aim of this is to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity to respond to consultations.
Race	Positive (the document ensures that people can actively participate in consultations) Negative (increased utilisation of digital technology)	It is recognised that there may be challenges in engaging people whose first language is not English. To address this, the local plan consultation database has attempted to include the contact details for a range of different organisations representing different ethnicities who will be notified of any consultations. The Council is also committed to making reasonable adjustments to support equality of access therefore, relevant documents can be translated into other languages if required on request.
Gender Reassignment	Positive (the document ensures that people can actively participate in consultations) Negative (increased utilisation of digital technology)	Whilst there are no barriers to persons accessing the Statement of Community Involvement or any consultations for planning policy documents relating specifically to this protected characteristic it is acknowledged that the shift to increased reliance on digital technology to participate has the potential to impact on all people. Hard copies can be made available in accessible public settings on request.

<p>Religion or Belief</p>	<p>Positive (the document ensures that people can actively participate in consultations)</p> <p>Negative (increased utilisation of digital technology)</p>	<p>Whilst there are no barriers to persons accessing the Statement of Community Involvement or any consultations for planning policy documents relating specifically to this protected characteristic it is acknowledged that the shift to increased reliance on digital technology to participate has the potential to impact on all people.</p> <p>Hard copies can be made available in accessible public settings on request.</p>
<p>Sex</p>	<p>Positive (the document ensures that people can actively participate in consultations)</p> <p>Negative (increased utilisation of digital technology)</p>	<p>Whilst there are no barriers to persons accessing the Statement of Community Involvement or any consultations for planning policy documents relating specifically to this protected characteristic it is acknowledged that the shift to increased reliance on digital technology to participate has the potential to impact on all people.</p> <p>Hard copies can be made available in accessible public settings on request.</p>
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>Positive (the document ensures that people can actively participate in consultations)</p> <p>Negative (increased utilisation of digital technology)</p>	<p>Whilst there are no barriers to persons accessing the Statement of Community Involvement or any consultations for planning policy documents relating specifically to this protected characteristic it is acknowledged that the shift to increased reliance on digital technology to participate has the potential to impact on all people.</p> <p>Hard copies can be made available in accessible public settings on request.</p>
<p>Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	<p>Positive (the document ensures that people can actively participate in consultations)</p> <p>Negative (increased utilisation of digital technology)</p>	<p>Whilst there are no barriers to persons accessing the Statement of Community Involvement or any consultations for planning policy documents relating specifically to this protected characteristic it is acknowledged that the shift to</p>

		<p>increased reliance on digital technology to participate has the potential to impact on all people.</p> <p>Hard copies can be made available in accessible public settings on request.</p>
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<p>Positive (the document ensures that people can actively participate in consultations)</p> <p>Negative (increased utilisation of digital technology)</p>	<p>Whilst there are no barriers to persons accessing the Statement of Community Involvement or any consultations for planning policy documents relating specifically to this protected characteristic it is acknowledged that the shift to increased reliance on digital technology to participate has the potential to impact on all people.</p> <p>Hard copies can be made available in accessible public settings on request.</p>
Carers	<p>Positive (the document ensures that people can actively participate in consultations)</p> <p>Negative (increased utilisation of digital technology)</p>	<p>Whilst there are no barriers to persons accessing the Statement of Community Involvement or any consultations for planning policy documents relating specifically to this protected characteristic it is acknowledged that the shift to increased reliance on digital technology to participate has the potential to impact on all people.</p> <p>Hard copies can be made available in accessible public settings on request.</p>
<p>Other Groups (e.g. those from deprived (IMD*) communities; those from rural communities, those with an offending past)</p> <p>*(IMD = Indices of multiple deprivation)</p>	Positive	<p>The document makes a specific commitment to facilitate focused meetings with interest groups, organisations, and community advocates where there is demand. Overall the aim of this is to advance equality of opportunity to respond to planning consultations.</p>

<p>General comments</p>	<p>The Statement of Community Involvement has been drafted with equalities considerations as a corporate priority. The information contained applies to the public generally and are not intended to focus on any specific group. For plan-making the Council has committed to maintaining a mix of online and offline consultation methods (where appropriate in consideration to COVID 19 guidance) and to make reasonable adjustments for equalities requests in line with the general equality duty. In all cases and considering that planning issues can vary significantly depending on individual proposals, the general equality duty applies irrespective of the Statement of Community Involvement.</p>
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3. What equality data/information did you use to inform the outcomes of the proposed policy/service/function/strategy? (Note any relevant consultation who took part and key findings)

<p>The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) under paragraph 16 states that - Plans should:</p> <p><i>“c) be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees”</i></p> <p>It is a legislative requirement within section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for all councils to have an up-to-date Statement of Community Involvement in place which prescribes who should be consulted, when consultations should take place, and how.</p> <p>The document is based on setting out consultation methods in accordance with Local Planning Regulations, Neighbourhood Planning Regulations and The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure). These regulations provide the requirements for when it should happen and how it should take place.</p> <p>The regulations also set out defined stages of plan production, and lists individuals who need to be consulted known as ‘specific consultation bodies’. Furthermore, the Council has discretion to identify a number of other bodies representing certain interests known as ‘general consultation bodies’ and SKDC has therefore looked to broaden the scope as much as possible across the district.</p> <p>On 13th May 2020 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published temporary measures designed to make it easier to operate the planning system in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures have been included within the updated SCI and include information such as how the council is still committed to consulting with those who may be “<i>shielding</i>” due to the pandemic.</p> <p>While there is no specific requirement to consult on the SCI itself, a 6 week public consultation on the draft revised SCI was undertaken between the 5th of February 2021 and the 16th of March 2021. The SCI consultation document was made available to view and access from the Council website A general notification of</p>
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the consultation was sent out via email and letter to those on our consultation database, including town / parish councils, statutory bodies, and Ward Cllrs. The SCI has been refined, taking into account the comments made during the consultation.

If there are any gaps in the consultation/monitoring data, how will this be addressed?

The Council is also committed to involving a wide range of other individuals including members of the public, local community voluntary groups, and hard to reach groups. SKDC is constantly monitoring its contact database and looking for ways in which to effectively improve constatations to have more effective communications with the Local Authority

4. Outcomes of analysis and recommendations (please note you will be required to provide evidence to support the recommendations made): Please check one of the options.

a)	No major change needed: equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or for negative impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option a) you can now send this form to the Lead Officer and your Neutral Assessor for sign off</i>		
b)	Adjust the proposal to remove barriers identified by equality analysis or to better promote equality.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option b) you will need to answer questions b.1 and b.2</i>		
c)	Adverse impact but continue	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option c) you will need to answer questions c.1</i>		
d)	Stop and remove the policy/function/service/strategy as equality analysis has shown actual or potential unlawful	<input type="checkbox"/>

b.1 In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your proposed policy/service/function/strategy to minimise or eliminate the negative equality impacts?

b.2 Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

If you have checked option b) you will need to complete a Stage 2 equality analysis

c.1 Please provide an explanation in the box below that clearly sets out your justification for continuing with the proposed policy/function/service/strategy.

If you have checked option c) you will need to complete a Stage 2 equality analysis. You should consider in stage 2 whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact.

Signed (Lead Officer):
(Name and title)

Jake Horton
Planning Policy Officer

Date completed:

24/08/21

Signed (Neutral Assessor):
(Name and title)

Carol Drury
Senior Community Development Officer

Date signed off:

27/08/21