



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Partial Assessment Form

Policy, practice, function or project assessed	Community Engagement Strategy
Lead Officer	Gemma Barron, Partnerships Manager
Team	Gemma Barron, Paul Williams & Fran Goddard
Start date of assessment	19 th June 2009
Completion of assessment	

Please use this form to record your findings in relation to the assessment of an existing policy, function, service or practice.

A. POLICY, PRACTICE, FUNCTION OR PROJECT TO BE ASSESSED

A1. Please describe what are the main aims, objectives, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy or function?

The community engagement strategy sets out what we mean by engagement, why we are committed to engaging our local communities and partners and how we plan to engage now and in the future. It has been designed to ensure that engagement opportunities are provided in the most appropriate way for all stakeholders to be involved and give feedback. Community engagement is important to reduce community inequalities, as well as helping to:

- Strengthen the democratic legitimacy of government and the civic life of the community;
- Ensure more efficient and effective services that better reflect the needs of service users and have higher levels of customer satisfaction;
- Create safer and stronger communities, with a more attractive built environment that meets the people's needs;
- Increase local ownership of Council services;
- Better understand of how and why local services need to change and develop;
- Improve local reputation;
- Increase job satisfaction for Council staff who see that the services they provide are meeting expressed local needs

The strategy is aimed at the district as a whole.

A2. Is this policy or function associated with any other Council policy or priority?

Appropriate engagement activity will be central to achieving the Council's vision and is already included within many of our policies and service plans.

The strategy has strong links to the following Council policies and strategies:

- Comprehensive Equalities Policy
- Local Development Framework
- Customer Service Strategy
- Communications Strategy

The strategy also relates to the Duty to Involve, which came into effect in April 2009. The new duty is set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

A3. Who are the intended beneficiaries/stakeholders of the policy or function? How many people are affected and from what sections of the community?

The strategy will benefit all people living, working and visiting the district. The strategy pulls together the engagement activity that is occurring through the different council service areas so that it can be co-ordinated better and also sets out how the district will listen and respond to people in the future. The principles of engagement set out in the strategy include: effective communication, inclusivity and accessibility, and a willingness to respond to and deliver change which reflects the views of the public.

A4. Is the policy/function corporate and far-reaching?

Yes.

A5. Are you expecting to make any significant change to the policy or service in the near future? If so, please give details.

No, the strategy is new. The strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our local communities and the needs of our stakeholders. The action plan will be monitored on a 6-monthly basis.

A6. Is this a new or existing policy or function?

This is a new strategy, but it builds upon existing work across the Council.

B. EVIDENCE/ DATA and CONSULTATION

It is important to consider all information that is available in determining whether the policy or function could have a differential impact. Please attach examples of monitoring information, research or consultation reports.

B1. What monitoring or other information do you have about relevant target groups, which will show the impact of the policy or function?

The National Indicator Set, introduced in 2008, includes measures to monitor the progress of local authorities and their partners in developing community engagement, for example,

NI 2	Percentage of people who feel they belong to their neighbourhood
NI 3	Civic participation in the local area
NI 4	Percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
NI 6	Participation in regular volunteering
NI 7	Environment for a thriving third sector
NI 110	Young People's participation in positive activities
NI 138	Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood

Baseline data is available, however, comparative data is not yet available for most of these indicators.

B2. Have you compared the data you have with the equality profile of the local population? What does it show?

The data is very different in nature. The monitoring data for the National Indicator Set cannot at present be broken down into responses by each of the equality strands/groups. Some of the Place Survey indicators (e.g. NIs 2, 3, 4, 6, 138) data might be available at this level in the future and will then be analysed as such.

B3. Have you identified any improvements or other changes that could be made from monitoring the data?

The strategy includes an action plan for improving current engagement activity.

B4. Have you consulted or involved external stakeholders about the policy or function? If so, what were their views?

Yes. The strategy went out to public consultation for 12-weeks from 1st April 2009 and closes on 23rd June 2009. The strategy was widely circulated to our partners, including those from the voluntary sector and was also placed on the District Council website.

B5. Have you undertaken any consultation with staff to assess their perception of any impacts of the policy or function? If so, what has been learnt from them?

A staff workshop was held in 2008 and although it was not specifically focussing on the equalities impact of the strategy it did raise general issues of how the council engages, which assisted in the development of the principles (see A3).

B6. Please provide information about any other consultation, research, or involvement undertaken in relation to this impact assessment.

Researched other community engagement strategies.

C1. IMPACT OF THE POLICY OR FUNCTION

Assess the potential impact on each of the equality strands/groups. The impact could be negative, positive or neutral. If you assess a negative impact for any of the groups then you will need to assess whether that impact is low, medium or high. Refer to the evidence you use.

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACT	Nature of Impact (Positive, Neutral, Adverse)	Extent of Impact (Low, Medium, High)
GENDER: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on men and women	Neutral	
The strategy has a district-wide focus and therefore was assessed as having a neutral impact.		
RACE: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different race/ethnic groups	Positive	
Setting out engagement principles and aims should ensure a positive impact.		
DISABILITY: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on disabled people	Positive	
Setting out engagement principles and aims should ensure a positive impact.		
AGE: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different age groups	Positive	
Setting out engagement principles and aims should ensure a positive impact.		
SEXUAL ORIENTATION: potential impact of the policy on lesbian, gay men, bisexual or heterosexual people	Neutral	
The strategy has a district-wide focus and therefore was assessed as having a neutral impact.		
RELIGION/FAITH: Identify the potential impact the policy on different religious/faith groups	Neutral	
The strategy has a district-wide focus and therefore was assessed as having a neutral impact.		
OTHER	Neutral	
The team also considered potential impacts upon single parents, those from low income backgrounds and transgender people. The impacts were all assessed as neutral.		

PLEASE NOTE: Following completion of the section above, if the nature of the impact is adverse then you may need to proceed to a full equality impact assessment.

C2. Could you minimise or remove any adverse or potential impact that is high, medium or low significance, in advance of a full impact assessment? Explain how.

N/A

C3. Does the policy or function actively promote equal opportunities and good community relations? Or could changes be made so that it does so?

Yes. The principles include inclusivity and accessibility and the strategy also refers to the Comprehensive Equalities Policy.

C4. Please provide any further information, qualitative or quantitative that does not fit into the questions but you feel has a likely impact on this assessment.

D. CONCLUSIONS			
D1. Was there sufficient data to complete the partial assessment?	Yes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If “NO”, what arrangements are in place for evidence gathering and continuing with the assessment?
	No?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
D2. Is the outcome of the partial assessment that the policy or function would have an adverse impact (medium or high impact) on one or more target group?	Yes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	If “YES”, will you proceed to a full assessment? If so, what arrangements are in place to carry out the full assessment?
	No?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
D3. Is the outcome of the partial assessment that the policy or function would have a neutral or positive impact on equalities?	Yes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>If “YES”, have you included proposals in the Action Plan to further improve the impact of the policy or function on equalities? No. As a new strategy it was decided that inclusion of actions might be necessary at a later date, but not immediately.</p> <p>Do you plan to review the service or policy again in future to assess whether there has been any change? If so, when? Yes. See A5.</p> <p>Has the Equalities Steering Group and the Consultative Forum reviewed the assessment? If so what were their comments?</p>
	No?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>This EQIA was passed before the SCDC QA Panel on 22/07/09. They were largely happy with the content, although encouraged expansion of section A1, and incorporated reference to the Action Plan formulated within the Strategy.</p>

D4. Do you have any other conclusions/outcomes from the partial assessment?

No.

ACTION PLAN for enhancing existing practice

Recommendation/ issue to be addressed	Planned Milestone	Planned completion of milestone (date)	Officer Responsible	Progress
See Community Engagement Strategy Action Plan	NA			

RESOURCES

Does the above action plan require any additional resources?

N/A

ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING

Please give your plans for monitoring the achievement of the above actions.

N/A

SIGN OFF: The officers below confirm that this partial assessment has been completed in accordance with the Council's guidance

Signature of Lead Officer

Date:

Signature of Corporate Manager or Chief Officer:

Date:

Please retain the original form on your service area and return a copy of the completed form to the Equality & Diversity Officer.