




Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer or www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment

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|---|--|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------|---|--|
| Organisation prepared for (mark as appropriate) |  Somerset Council | <p style="text-align: center;">x</p> |  NHS Somerset | |  NHS Somerset <small>NHS Foundation Trust</small> | |
| Version | 1 | | Date Completed | 18/08/2023 | | |
| Description of what is being impact assessed | | | | | | |
| <p>The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is an important planning document which defines how and when local residents, community groups and stakeholders can be involved in the planning process, both in the consultation on planning applications for development and when we write new planning policy documents.</p> <p>The SCI has been prepared to consolidate the SCIs of the existing/former Somerset authorities to ensure that engagement in planning applications and new policy documents is consistent across the new Unitary Authority area.</p> | | | | | | |
| Evidence | | | | | | |
| <p>What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the Office of National Statistics, Somerset Intelligence Partnership, Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA), Staff and/ or area profiles, should be detailed here</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>The assessment of potential impact on protected groups from the SCI has been informed by demographic information and equalities analysis statistics for Somerset, available via Somerset Intelligence Partnership: http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk</p> | | | | | | |

The SCI has also been informed by planning officer experiences in engaging and consulting on planning policy and planning applications previously, including best ways to ensure protected characteristics do not affect people's ability to engage in the planning system and have their view heard.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

The draft SCI was subject to a full public consultation between 1st February and 16th March 2023. This included consulting local communities via Parish/Town and City Councils. Representative organisations of protected groups, including those that represent disabled people, religious groups and different racial and ethnic groups were also notified in relation to the consultation. Organisations notified included Compass Disability, Somerset Community Care Matters, National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups, The Traveller Movement, Friends Family and Travellers, Somerset Multicultural Association, Somerset Churches Together. Age UK Somerset.

The draft SCI and accompanying Equalities Impact Assessment was also shared with the Somerset Council equalities team for review and comment prior to being finalised.

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

| Protected group | Summary of impact | Negative outcome | Neutral outcome | Positive outcome |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|

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|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <p>Age</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following public consultation feedback consideration has been given in barriers of engaging the elderly in planning, specifically regarding lack of computer literacy, movement issues, blindness (eyesight), deaf. The final SCI has been updated to be clear on the range of consultation methods that can be used and that responses to planning applications can be provided in a variety of formats (e.g. including hand written response). • Barriers of engaging the youth include a lack of knowledge or interest, or a lack of understanding of plan marking and the impact this could have on the future. The SCI sets out the intention to utilise online consultation and engagement methods, likely to suit the younger population as they do not have to go out of their way to access them. The SCI commits that documents should be written clearly and concisely, with any technical terms or language explained – it will be important that different age audiences can understand the subject. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>Disability</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SCI has an equalities section which sets out that planning documents can be made available in a variety of formats. Following consultation feedback this section has been further improved to be clear who people should contact to request information in different formats, consistent with the Council's wider equalities policy. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>Gender reassignment</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific impacts identified. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Marriage and civil partnership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific impacts identified | □ | ⊗ | □ |
| Pregnancy and maternity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific impacts identified | □ | ⊗ | □ |
| Race and ethnicity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Race and ethnicity may in some circumstances present barriers to consultation, including language, under representation in organisations, or access to consultation material due to their way of life. The SCI equalities section is clear that documents can be made available in a variety of formats. In relation to consultation on planning policy document the SCI sets out that a variety of methods will be used to enable a greater range of people to be involved in the consultation, and the Council will make every reasonable effort to encourage under-represented groups to participate in the planning process. This will be particularly important when Development Plan documents are trying to directly address the needs of a particular groups, such as the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community. | □ | ⊗ | □ |
| Religion or belief | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific impacts identified | □ | ⊗ | □ |
| Sex | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific impacts identified | □ | ⊗ | □ |

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|--|---|---|---|---|
| Sexual orientation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific impacts identified | □ | ⊗ | □ |
| Armed Forces (including serving personnel, families and veterans) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific impacts identified | □ | ⊗ | □ |
| Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rurality is a consideration in the methods included in the SCI. Barriers to engagement could include a lack or poor internet access and the location of events. This is mitigated by documents being available to view in person and a broad range of locations for events, and the use of local news to advertise consultations. Low income households may struggle to have access to the internet or travel to events. This is mitigated by the range of events indicated in the SCI – in person and online in a range of locations. | □ | ⊗ | □ |

Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

| Action taken/to be taken | Date | Person responsible | How will it be monitored? | Action complete |
|--|------------|----------------------|---|-----------------|
| Legislation sets out that the SCI should be reviewed every five years. This should include the SCI being reviewed against any updated equalities legislation and guidance. | 14/09/2023 | Planning Policy Team | The needed to review the document in five years will be identified in | □ |

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| | | | the adopted document | |
| Planning policy team should engage with the Council's equalities team when establishing more detailed communication and engagement strategies for relevant planning policy documents to establish the best way to engage with specific groups. | 14/09/2023 | Planning Policy Team and Equalities Team | As part of the consultation exercise associated with the preparation of policy documents. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Consultation should include appropriate monitoring to determine whether there are any gaps in consultation with 'hard to reach' groups and how this could be addressed. | 14/09/2023 | Planning Policy Team and Equalities Team | As part of the consultation exercise associated with the preparation of policy documents. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below. | | | | |
| No remaining negative impacts have been identified. | | | | |
| Completed by: | Andrew Reading | | | |
| Date | 18/08/2023 | | | |
| Signed off by: | Alison Blom-Cooper | | | |

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| Date | 25/08/2023 |
| Equality Lead/Manager sign off date: | Angela Farmer, 15th September 2023 |
| To be reviewed by: (officer name) | TBC – Planning Policy Team |
| Review date: | 5 yearly - 18/08/2028 at latest |