

Thanet District Council (TDC) Equality Impact Assessment Statement of Community Involvement

Thanet District Council (TDC) Equality Impact Assessment: Statement of Community Involvement

Step one: test for relevance

1 Person responsible for this assessment

Name:	Adrian Verrall		
Job title:	Strategic Planning Manager		
Phone:	01843 577139		
Service area:	Housing & Planning	Date of assessment:	April/May/June 2021

2 Others involved in carrying out the analysis

Name:	Jo Wadey, Strategic Planning Officer
Name:	Iain Livingstone, Planning Applications Manager
Name:	Estelle Culligan, Director of Law and Democracy

3. Description of strategy, policy, service, project, activity or decision

Title:	Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
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Is it new?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A review of existing?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.1 Aims and objectives

Consider: what you are doing? why you are doing it? who will benefit?

The purpose of the SCI is to set out the ways in which the Council will engage with local communities regarding planning matters, both in plan-making and planning applications. It is a statutory requirement for the Planning Service.

The SCI needs to be updated to reflect changes since the current SCI was adopted. This should benefit all parts of the local community in their engagement with the planning system.

It should be noted that this assessment relates only to the operation of the Statement of Community Involvement and to the methods by which the Council will consult on planning matters. It does not relate to the assessment of Local Plan proposals and planning applications, which are subject to separate statutory processes.

3.2 What outcomes are expected? Who is expected to benefit?

The intended outcome is to ensure that anyone in the district can participate in planning matters, by a range of different means.

This does not necessarily mean that more people will participate in planning consultations/ engagement, just that as many people as possible will have the opportunity to do so.

4 Who is affected?

4.1 Which groups or individuals does the strategy, policy, service, project, activity or decision affect? For example, the Council, employees (including temporary workers), other public authorities, contractors, partner organisations, wider community, others.

The Council; wider community; partner organisations; statutory consultees.

4.2 Does the strategy, policy, service, project, activity or decision relate to a service area with known inequalities? (Give a brief description).

No.

5 Equality Act 2010

How does the strategy, policy, service, project, activity or decision actively meet the public sector equality duties to:

Eliminate unlawful discrimination (including harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct)

N/A.

Advance equality of opportunity (between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it)

The SCI is intended to ensure that all members/sectors of the community have the opportunity to participate in the planning process; whether in terms of plan-making or planning applications.

Foster good relations (between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it). Could it have an adverse impact on relations between different diverse groups?

N/A.

6 Priority

The following questions will help you to identify whether this 'service' is a high priority. Please answer all questions with particular reference to the protected characteristics; race, gender, gender reassignment, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, marriage and civil marriage/partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

Please provide a comment for each answer, providing evidence for your answer, regardless whether you have answered yes or no.

Questions	Yes	No
1. Are there any particular groups who may have trouble accessing the 'service'?	x	
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Potential language barrier for some community groups - the Council offers translation services for people for whom English is not their first language. As the Local Plan itself is a large document, the Council could provide a translation of a non-technical summary document.</p> <p>Age - ability to access information - there is currently no evidence to indicate that fewer older people take part in planning consultations. There is a suggestion that online-only consultations may deter older people who either do not possess internet access, or perhaps the necessary IT knowledge, to participate. However, there is no intention to use such an approach, but just to broaden the use of IT as part of the response to changing lifestyles and to the impact of COVID19. This would be in addition to other consultation and engagement methods.</p>		
2. Does your information suggest that some groups of people are less satisfied than others with this 'service'?		x
<p>Comments:</p> <p>No specific indication has been given that particular groups of people are less satisfied than others.</p>		
3. Will this service have a significant impact on any of our residents?		x
<p>Comments:</p> <p>This EqIA relates to the SCI, not the operation of the planning system itself. The assessment of the impact of detailed proposals in Local Plans and planning applications are subject to separate processes.</p>		
4. Do you have any evidence that discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation could occur as part of this service?		x
<p>Comments:</p> <p>No.</p>		
5. Do you think the service will hinder communication and negatively impact relations between the organisation and its employees, residents, contractors or anyone else?		x
<p>Comments:</p> <p>No. It is designed to improve communication between these groups.</p>		
6. Does this service need to improve the way in which it is communicated to people who have literacy, numeracy or any other access needs?		x
<p>Comments:</p>		

<p>This service does involve the dissemination of quite a lot of technical information. However, both parts of the service offer “help-lines” for people to telephone for advice, and during Local Plan consultations, it is standard practice to arrange drop-in sessions/ exhibitions, which provide people the opportunity to ask questions.</p>			
<p>7. Does consultation need to be carried out?</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;"></td> <td style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">x</td> </tr> </table>		x
	x		
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Consultation has been undertaken in relation to the draft SCI. 74 responses were received, a number of which related directly to equalities matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The changes in communications methods since the last review offer new opportunities but also risk greater exclusion, particularly for those unable to access digital systems ● Face-to-face engagement should be held in venues that provide reasonable access to all, in line with the Equality Duty 2010 ● Online documents should meet the Government's accessibility requirements ● Are there additional ways to support and reach out to people with protected characteristics and other marginalised or harder to reach communities – for example, through correspondence with faith, voluntary, community and social enterprises and other stakeholder organisations in Thanet? ● For exhibitions and drop-in sessions, venues should provide reasonable access to all, in line with the Equality Duty 2010. <p>The SCI provides a “menu” of engagement and consultation methods, and the Council will seek to use those methods flexibly, depending on the nature of the topic. The Council always uses a combination of digital, non-digital and in-person engagement and consultation for the Local Plan process (although this has necessarily been limited by the COVID pandemic in the latter stages of the Local Plan process). The Council is producing all new documentation in an accessible format.</p>			

In order to assess the priority of your ‘service’ please complete the table below by adding up how many questions you answered yes to and following the appropriate action.

Priority	Number of questions answered ‘yes’	Rating	Action
High	3 or more		Continue to section 2
Medium	1 to 2	*	<p>Please provide evidence to any questions you answered ‘yes’ to in section 1.</p> <p>Test for relevance complete (sometimes a full assessment may be required).</p>
Low	0		Test for relevance complete.

If, following the completion of the test for relevance, a full assessment is not required, go straight to the declaration. If a full assessment is required, go to Step two: full equality impact assessment.

Step two: full equality impact assessment

1 Could the strategy, policy, service, project, activity or decision have a **negative, positive or neutral** effect on groups or individuals?

Consider:

What you are doing?

Why you are doing it?

How you are doing it?

Who can access the service easily and who may not be able to access the service and **why**?

The full analysis explores ways to reduce or eliminate barriers and/or negative impacts.

Protected characteristics	N e g a t i v e	P o s i t i v e	N e u t r a l	Evidence/Reasoning (Consider any barriers which will have negative impact and/or good practices giving positive impact)
<p>Age</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way younger and older people access services may be different • Use of technology • Child care/care of other dependant • Timings/flexibility, such as work patterns • Transport arrangements • Venue location 				<p>Recommendations:</p>
<p>Disability (Includes: physical, learning, sensory (deaf/blind), mental health)</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication methods • Accessibility – venue, location, transport • Range of support needed to participate • Hearing Loops/Interpreters • Disability awareness training for employees 				<p>Recommendations:</p>
<p>Race (Includes; gypsy, travelling, refugee and migrant communities)</p> <p>Consider:</p>				<p>Recommendations:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size of the BME communities that your service/project affects. • Language(s) spoken/understood. • Culture, such as hygiene, clothing, physical activities, mixed gender activities. • What access support can you offer? 				
<p>Religion, faith or belief</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The diversity within the communities that your service/project affect • Prayer times, meal times, food (some religions do not eat meat), cultural habit or belief, religious holidays such as Ramadan • Awareness training for employees 				<p>Recommendations:</p>
<p>Pregnancy and maternity</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible hours of the service/project • Is there access to private area for breastfeeding mothers? 				<p>Recommendations:</p>
<p>Gender</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact on men and women • Child care/care of other dependant • Mixed/single gender groups/activities • Timing of services/projects 				<p>Recommendations:</p>
<p>Sexual orientation (Includes: lesbian, gay, bisexual)</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGB people should feel safe to disclose their sexual orientation without fear of prejudice • Make it clear you recognised civil 				<p>Recommendations:</p>

marriage and partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness training for employees 				
Transgender Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trans people should be able to disclose their gender identity without fear of prejudice • Making it clear you have a Trans policy and process • Awareness training for employees 				Recommendations:
Marriage and civil marriage/partnership Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All couples or partners, regardless of gender, should be able to access services 				Recommendations:

Outsourced services	
If your policy/process is partly or wholly provided by external organisations/agencies (such as Civica or Capita), please list any arrangements you plan to ensure that they promote equality and diversity. Include this in your improvement plan	
Relations between different equality groups	
Does your assessment show that a strategy, policy or process may amount to potential adverse impact between different equality groups? If yes please explain how the improvement plan is going to tackle this issue	
Consultation responses	
Summary of replies from individuals and stakeholders consulted including any previous complaints on equality and diversity issues about the strategy, policy or process	

Summary of recommendations		
Actions	By Who	By When

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Declaration

I am satisfied that a Test for Relevance has been carried out on the matter named in this Analysis and conclude that a full Equality Impact Assessment **is not required**.

Yes No

If you do not think that a full Equality Impact Assessment is required – please give your reasons:

The Test for Relevance identifies two groups who might potentially be affected by the service, and the assessment sets out the Council’s current practice in relation to these matters.

I confirm that a full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

Yes No

Signature of Head of Service:	Date:

Recommendations agreed:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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Signed: (Director):	EIA date:
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