

Title of proposed EIA: Temporary Amendments to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) due to Covid-19 restrictions

Reference No EQUA526

EA is in support of Amended Policy

Review Frequency Six Months

Date of first review 31/12/2020

Directorate Inclusive Growth

Division Planning and Development

Service Area Planning Policy

Responsible Officer(s) Martin Dando

Quality Control Officer(s) Richard Woodland

Accountable Officer(s) Uyen-Phan Han

Purpose of proposal Analysis of temporary amendments to the SCI

Data sources relevant reports/strategies; relevant research;

Please include any other sources of data Government Guidelines on restrictions due to the Covid-19 outbreak

ASSESS THE IMPACT AGAINST THE PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Protected characteristic: Age Wider Community

Age details:

The statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out principles and process as to how the Council will engage people in plan making as well as decision making on planning applications. In doing this it is envisaged that the SCI will help to make consultations more effective and meaningful to a wider audience and thereby encourage more people to take part in the planning process.

The SCI itself is in line with the City Council's Equality objectives in creating a fair and prosperous City through ensuring that all local people are engaged in Council decision making in a democratic way.

The temporary amendments to the SCI may potentially have a negative impact on the protected characteristic through the removal of face to face engagement and the preclusion of access to public buildings during consultations and more reliance on electronic communication. However, mitigation will be provided through extra resources and flexibility such as posting of documents on request to those who cannot access them.

Protected characteristic: Disability Wider Community

Disability details:

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This includes investigating and setting out methods which will enable people with disabilities along with others with protected characteristics to be actively involved through appropriate consultation methods.

The temporary amendments may potentially have a negative impact on people with disabilities while restrictions are currently in place due to Covid 19. Mitigation measures will include greater flexibility in engagement through use of social media and online technology, where appropriate, as an alternative to face to face engagement through means such as online exhibitions, 'virtual' drop-in events on video platforms and targeting people that represent disability groups to disseminate information effectively.

Protected characteristic: Gender Wider Community

Gender details:

The statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out principles and process as to how the Council will engage people in plan making as well as decision making on planning applications. In doing this it is envisaged that the SCI will help to make consultations more effective and meaningful to a wider audience and thereby encourage more people to take part in the planning process.

The SCI itself is in line with the City Council's Equality objectives in creating a fair and prosperous City through ensuring that all local people are engaged in Council decision making in a democratic way.

The temporary amendments to the SCI may potentially have a negative impact on the protected characteristic while restrictions are currently in place due to Covid 19, but no greater than any other group or individual. Mitigation measures will include greater flexibility in engagement through posting out more documents and use of social media and online technology where appropriate as an alternative to face to face engagement e.g. through online exhibitions and virtual drop-in events on video platforms.

Protected characteristics: Gender Reassignment - Not Applicable

Protected characteristics: Marriage and Civil Partnership - Not Applicable

Protected characteristics: Pregnancy and Maternity - Wider Community

Pregnancy and maternity details:

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Protected characteristics: Race - Wider Community

Race details:

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The SCI itself is in line with the City Council's Equality objectives in creating a fair and prosperous City through ensuring that all local people are engaged in Council decision making in a democratic way.

The temporary amendments may have a negative impact on BAME communities while restrictions are currently in place due to Covid 19. Mitigation measures will include greater flexibility in engagement through use of social media and online technology, where appropriate, as an alternative to face to face engagement through means such as online exhibitions, 'virtual' drop-in events on video platforms and targeting people that represent BAME communities to enable them to disseminate information effectively.

Protected characteristics: Religion or Beliefs - Wider Community

Religion or beliefs details:

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out principles and process as to how the Council will engage people in plan making as well as decision making on planning applications. In doing this it is envisaged that the SCI will help to make consultations more effective and meaningful to a wider audience and thereby encourage more people to take part in the planning process.

The SCI itself is in line with the City Council's Equality objectives in creating a fair and prosperous City through ensuring that all local people are engaged in Council decision making in a democratic way.

The temporary amendments may have a negative impact on Religious and faith groups while restrictions are currently in place due to Covid 19. Mitigation measures will include greater flexibility in engagement through use of social media and online technology, where appropriate, as an alternative to face to face engagement through means such as online exhibitions, 'virtual' drop-in events on video platforms and targeting people that represent religious and belief groups to enable them to disseminate information effectively.

Protected characteristics: Sexual Orientation - Wider Community

Sexual orientation details:

The statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out principles and process as to how the Council will engage people in plan making as well as decision making on planning applications. In doing this it is envisaged that the SCI will help to make consultations more effective and meaningful to a wider audience and thereby encourage more people to take part in the planning process.

The SCI itself is in line with the City Council's Equality objectives in creating a fair and prosperous City through ensuring that all local people are engaged in Council decision making in a democratic way.

The temporary amendments to the SCI may have a negative impact on the protected characteristic while restrictions are currently in place due to Covid 19, but no greater than any other group or individual. Mitigation measures will include greater flexibility in engagement through posting out more documents and use of social media and online technology where appropriate as an alternative to face to face engagement e.g. through online exhibitions and 'virtual' drop-in events on video platforms.

Please indicate any actions arising from completing this screening exercise.

None

Please indicate whether a full impact assessment is recommended No

What data has been collected to facilitate the assessment of this policy/proposal?

The original SCI has only recently been adopted and was subject to public consultation for three months after which comments were taken on board to strengthen key elements of the document and the processes described within it. The temporary measures have been proposed to enable Government guidelines and restrictions due to Covid-19 to operate effectively.

Consultation analysis

The adopted SCI was subject to consultation in June 2019 including all known representative groups for the protected characteristics via Be Heard, letters, emails and social media. This was done using a database of consultees and contacts which is under constant review. Responses were reviewed and, changes were made as a result to strengthen further the Council's commitment to equality issues which are still carried forward into the proposed amended version. The temporary changes due to the Covid 19 restrictions will also be subject to a short consultation period prior to their adoption

Adverse impact on any people with protected characteristics.

The temporary changes due to the Covid 19 restrictions, whilst not changing the emphasis and principles of the SCI, may have the potential to have a negative impact on people with protected characteristics, but mitigation measures are in place to ensure that effective consultation and engagement can continue as much as possible.

Could the policy/proposal be modified to reduce or eliminate any adverse impact?

Further modifications may be made as a result of the Consultation on the temporary changes. However the proposed temporary changes have included greater flexibility and mitigation measures to ensure that any negative impacts are minimal or can be accounted.

How will the effect(s) of this policy/proposal on equality be monitored?

The current SCI contains a number of monitoring indicators to ensure that the effects of the SCI on consultation and engagement will achieve the principles identified and the temporary changes also include these indicators. The Council is committed to constant monitoring and review of the principles and ensure that the consultation database is continually updated to ensure new groups are captured in future consultation exercises.

What data is required in the future?

Data will continue to be collected as part of the monitoring of the SCI and is set out within the monitoring section of the document. This includes the number of individuals/groups participating in consultations with the protected characteristics and how much participants value their involvement in the process.

Are there any adverse impacts on any particular group(s) No

Summary and evidence of findings from your EIA

It is envisaged that a full assessment of the temporary changes to the SCI due to the Covid-19 restrictions is not required.

The temporary changes due to the Covid 19 restrictions, whilst not changing the emphasis and principles of the SCI, may have the potential to have a negative impact on people with protected characteristics, but mitigation measures are in place to ensure that effective consultation and engagement can continue as much as possible.

QUALITY CONTORL SECTION

Submit to the Quality Control Officer for reviewing? Yes

Quality Control Officer comments None

Decision by Quality Control Officer Proceed for final approval

Submit draft to Accountable Officer? Yes

Decision by Accountable Officer Approve

Date approved / rejected by the Accountable Officer Approve - 15/06/2020

Created at 11/06/2020 04:22 PM by Martin Dando

Last modified at 15/06/2020 02:52 PM by Workflow on behalf of Uyen-Phan Han