



# **Equality Impact Assessment**

## *Statement of Community Involvement Review*

Ref: EQIA2018013049

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**Title of report:** Statement of Community Involvement Review

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**What is the report trying to achieve?:**

Ipswich's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how we will involve local people, local businesses and other key organisations and stakeholders when we prepare our planning policies and consider planning applications. All local planning authorities are required under section 18 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, to prepare and maintain a SCI.

The SCI has the potential to impact upon equality as its implementation will affect how the Council consults all those who live and work in Ipswich and other key organisations and stakeholders on planning policies and planning applications.

**What evidence/data is being used to support this equality analysis?:**

Customers complaints/comments, issues arising from Area Committees, Ipswich Direct/other social media, findings from surveys, focus groups & consultations, information from statutory partners (e.g police), information from voluntary & community sector (e.g ISCRE, ICVS), published data - e.g census data, State of Ipswich report, analysis of service data (e.g I-card)

**Supporting documents (if available):**

N.A

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**Is there potential for positive or negative impact on any of the protected characteristics?**

- **Age:** *Negative*
- **Disability:** *Positive*
- **Marriage & Civil Partnership:** *No Impact*
- **Race:** *Negative*
- **Pregnancy & Maternity:** *No Impact*
- **Religion or Belief:** *No Impact*
- **Gender Reassignment:** *No Impact*
- **Sex:** *No Impact*
- **Sexual Orientation:** *No Impact*

**If 'No Impact' explain why**

The revised SCI is not expected to create any barriers to participation for people with the following protected characteristics: marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion or belief; gender reassignment; sex; and sexual orientation.

**If you have identified any negative impacts (above) how can they be minimised or removed?**

The revised SCI could act as a barrier to participation for people with the following protected characteristics; age and race. The Council have put measures in place to mitigate against these negative impacts.

Age - Under the revised SCI, the predominant means of consulting those on the local plan database will be via email, rather than letter. Based on digital capabilities the age group in which a higher percentage of people (52%) do not have basic digital skills is the 65 plus age group. In Ipswich, this age group accounts for 16.5% of the population. For those who are not digitally enabled, the Council will continue to use other forms of communication such as making documents available at the County Library and the Council's offices at Grafton House, publicity through the local press, along with local meetings and forums, where appropriate.

Race - It is recognised that there may be challenges in engaging all racial groups due to language barriers, or cultural differences. To address this, the local plan consultation database includes contact details for a range of different organisations representing different racial groups who will be notified of any consultations.

**The report helps us to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment & victimisation' in the following way(s):**

The SCI aims to remove barriers to participation in the planning process. Where barriers to participation have been identified, the Council has sought to put measures in place to negate any direct negative impacts.

As stated above, the Council is moving towards greater reliance on electronic means of communication/consultation. Research indicates that those aged 65 plus are less likely to be computer literate, which may impede their ability to participate in the planning process. To guard against this, the Council will continue to use other methods of consultation such as making documents available at the County Library, publicity through the local press, along with local meetings and forums, where appropriate.

It is recognised that there may be challenges in engaging all racial groups due to language barriers, or cultural differences. To address this, the local plan consultation database includes contact details for a range of different organisations representing different racial groups who will be notified of any consultations.

In order to ensure those with physical disabilities are not denied access to public consultation events, the Council will seek to hold meetings in places that are accessible to those who have mobility issues, where possible. In addition, we will make documents and information available at a variety of locations and utilise disability networks/organisation from the consultation database to promote information.

**The report helps us to 'advance equality of opportunity...' in the following way(s):** The revised SCI promotes the use of multiple forms of communication in order to reach local people, local businesses and other key organisations and stakeholders.

In order to advance equality of opportunity for young adults the Council will continue to use social media as a means of involving the community in planning policy, namely through platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

Research suggests that young adults are difficult/reluctant to engage in the planning process. Social media is a popular means of interaction for young adults and the Council is committed to the use of online platforms to engage younger people on planning matters, as a means of enhancing equality of opportunity.

**The policy helps us to 'foster good relations...' in the following way(s):** The SCI helps to foster good relations by ensuring that the Council is open about how it will engage with the community in the delivery of its planning function, thus removing barriers to participation in the planning process.