

ROCHDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

**CORE STRATEGY – PREFERRED OPTIONS
STAGE**

OCTOBER 2009

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As part of our work on preferred options the Council has carried out an Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) on the Core Strategy Preferred Options.

1. What is an equality impact assessment?

The Council has a statutory duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the Gender Duty set out in the Equality Act 2006 to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. This is to ensure that policies, services and procedures do not have an adverse impact on a particular group of people due to their gender, sexuality, religion or belief, race, age or because they are disabled. The idea is to identify any unintended impacts that may have a detrimental affect individuals and communities.

In addition the equality impact assessment considers if there will be any potential positive impacts of the policy and ways in which the policy will actively promote equality or good community relations.

Guidance¹ on undertaking Equality Impact Assessments requires the Council to examine their policies and procedures with the aim of preventing discriminatory outcomes or unmet needs.

2. The Core Strategy Preferred Options Document – aims of the policy

This document represents the second stage in preparing Rochdale Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy. It has been produced for public consultation, and builds on earlier issues and options consultation.

The Core Strategy Preferred Options sets out the key elements of the planning framework for Rochdale borough. Its sets out the long term spatial vision for Rochdale and the strategic policies required to deliver that vision. It sets out the broad locations for housing and other strategic development needs such as employment, retail, leisure, community, essential public services and transport development. It also sets out clear and concise policies for delivering the strategy which will apply to the whole of the Rochdale borough.

3. Applying the Equality Impact Assessment procedure to the Core Strategy

The initial assessment of the policies in the Core Strategy Preferred Options is the screening the main issues and whether or not there are any adverse impacts on equality. The Core Strategy contains 27 policies. The stage 1 screening assessment of each these policies, is set out in the table below. The assessment seeks to highlight general and specific equality impacts likely to arise because of the nature of the policy and identifying likely positive or negative impacts and any potential mitigation outcomes. In this way the areas addressed can be considered both through community consultation and by the authors of the LDF Core Strategy so that they can be addressed at the final drafting stage of the Core Strategy.

The council has committed itself to implementation of the Standard across 6 areas of equality: gender, religion, disability, race, age and sexuality.

¹ Equality Framework for Local Government, I&DeA, March 2009

It is good practice to undertake an EqlA as early as possible when developing policies so that any issues can be addressed at the outset. A number of officers were involved in preparing this initial scoping report. Where it has been identified that a particular policy approach or option will have a detrimental impact on equality then a full assessment will be completed before the Core Strategy is submitted to government, incorporating any necessary changes.

We are consulting publicly on this EqlA alongside Preferred Options so that we can take account of any issues before we move forward to the final, formal stage of developing the Core Strategy, known as Publication stage.

4. Assessment of Preferred Options

Our assessment of the policies is set out in the table overleaf.

Colour coding – explanation

Green / +ve : potentially a positive impact

Blank / = : No direct impact

Yellow / = : will need more work in the detail to ensure that negative impacts are avoided and that, potentially this could be a positive impact with careful attention to detail which will come later on in the process.

Red / -ve: potential negative impact which will need measures to ensure this is mitigated.

5. What are the desired outcomes from our Core Strategy policies?

- To achieve a robust, clear and concise set of local planning policies. These should be clear enough for accurate interpretation by development control officers and understood by Councillors. The policies should also be clear to applicants and potential objectors.
- To ensure that the Core Strategy policies have been developed with full consideration of the needs and concerns of local communities in Rochdale.
- To achieve local plan policies that applies national and regional policy objectives to the local characteristics of Rochdale.
- The desired outcome from this public consultation is to obtain feedback on the draft planning policy options, to gather ideas regarding additional policy options and to help determine the future planning policy direction for the Council.

6. Summary of Effects

In conclusion, the policy approaches in the Core Strategy Preferred Options does provide benefits for all, with no negative impact in terms of promoting equality of opportunity for all of the six key equality groups set out earlier.

7. Next steps

- We will consider the outcome of this stage and look at the comments made in our Preferred Options and in this Equalities Impact Assessment and make the relevant and necessary changes to the Core Strategy.
- We will then prepare our final Core Strategy along with an updated EqlA, consult on it further and make some minor changes before it is submitted to government.

Equalities Impact Assessment of Core Strategy Preferred Options

Preferred Options Policy Area	Description	Potential impact						Comments	+ve / -ve impact	Can it be mitigated ?	Does it need a full EqIA?
		Age	Gender	Disability	Race	Religion	Sexuality				
Vision and Spatial Approach											
	Vision	/	/	/	/	/	/	This is a broad strategic vision and therefore does not focus on a particular group. All the elements will however have a positive impact on the population as a whole and will not disadvantage any particular group.	Positive overall.	N/A	
Strategic Objectives											
SO1	To deliver a more prosperous economy	/	/	/	/	/	/	This objective potentially benefits all groups	Neutral		
SO2	To create successful and healthy communities	+	/	+	+	+	/	This objective is based on improving facilities and access to facilities for all groups and is therefore positive	Positive	N/A	
SO3	To improve design, image and quality of place	+	/	+	/	/	/	Better design can benefit all groups but the commitment to safety and security will be of particular benefit to some.	Positive	N/A	
SO4	To conserve and manage the natural environment and resources	/	/	/	/	/	/	The objective does not require a focus on any particular group.	Neutral	N/A	
SO5	To improve accessibility and deliver sustainable transport	+	+	+	+	+	+	This objective will benefit disadvantaged groups, in particular the less wealthy, the young, the elderly and those with impaired mobility i.e. those less likely to have easy access to a car.	Positive.		
Spatial Strategy											
(SP1)	Rochdale borough's role in the city region	/	/	/	/	/	/	This policy deals with accessibility to jobs and facilities within the city region and choice of housing etc. It does not therefore focus on particular groups but is positive overall.	Neutral	N/A	
(SP2)	The Spatial Strategy for the borough	+	+	+	+	+	+	This policy identifies the scale and location of development within the borough and is positive overall. The positive benefits for different groups are better appraised below.	Positive	N/A	

(SP3)	The Spatial Strategy in the south of the borough	+	+	+	+	+	/	The focus of development in accessible areas and areas in need of regeneration, the strengthening of centres and improvements to the urban environment and green infrastructure are all positive aspects for all groups. The focus on improving the range and quality of housing and local facilities in inner areas (where there is a substantial south Asian population) will be a particular benefit.	Positive	N/A	
(SP4)	The Spatial Strategy in the north of the borough	+	+	+	+	+	/	There is less of a focus on development in the north and deprivation, social issues are less significant than in the south. However, appropriate development is still sought to assist disadvantaged groups.	Positive	N/A	
(SP5)	The sequential approach to development	/	/	/	/	/	/	This policy Seeks to implement the above approaches	Neutral	N/A	
Achieving a more Prosperous Economy											
E1	Establishing thriving town and local centres	+	+	+	+	+	+	The purpose of this policy is to protect and maintain shopping in existing locations across the borough and to improve the existing retail and shopping offer in all the centres. This will encourage more people to shop in the borough by clawing back retail expenditure and compete with other town centres. By protecting existing centres from economic harm and improving the shopping and leisure offer of the centres then it will not discriminate against particular persons/groups.	Positive. With more people staying in the borough to shop, fewer people will have to travel out of town to access shops and facilities. By improving the retail and leisure offer shoppers, visitors and residents have a better quality and choice.	N/A	
E2	Supporting jobs and prosperity	+	+	+	+	+	+	This policy seeks to ensure a good supply of land and premises to support sufficient job creation in the borough to reduce unemployment, and increase employment levels and prosperity. This can benefit all groups. Any inequality in access to jobs is most likely to be due to approaches to recruitment which the	Positive	N/A	

								strategy has little impact on. (see DM2 below)			
E3	Focusing on economic growth corridors	+	+	+	+	+	+	This policy focuses employment development in four economic growth corridors in the south of the borough. These are in accessible locations for residents across the borough, but are very accessible from most the areas of high social deprivation, where there may be a higher representation of some groups.	Positive	N/A	
E4	Encouraging the visitor economy	+	+	+	+	+	+	This policy seeks to improve visitor attractions to attract / benefit people both in and outside the borough. A variety of different types of attraction / facility are to be promoted with no obvious dis benefit to any particular groups. The accessibility / attractiveness of these projects will be dependent on their implementation and marketing.	Positive	N/A	
E5	Diversifying the rural economy	/	/	/	/	/	/	The direct benefits of diversification of the rural economy will impact on only a small part of the borough's population. There are, however, unlikely to be any direct dis benefit for any groups.	Positive	N/A	
Creating Successful and Healthy Communities											
C1	Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places	+	+	+	+	+	+	Seeking to deliver a choice of housing across the borough is positive for all groups. The only potential issue is if the housing provided on particular sites is aimed more at attracting new residents this may preclude existing residents in certain areas e.g. though cost. However, this is more of an income issue that actually precluding certain groups within the community.	Less need for people to move out of the borough to access housing appropriate to there needs.	N/A	
C2	Focusing on regeneration areas	+	+	+	+	+	+	Regeneration of areas to improve housing, increase job opportunities, enhance community facilities and provide quality open space will assist all these groups within the more deprived areas of the borough.	Regeneration will have a positive impact on the quality of life of all groups	N/A	
C3	Delivering the right type of housing	+	+	+	+	+	+	Seeking to deliver a choice of housing across the borough is positive for all groups. Better deign and quality through link to design policies.	Less need for people to move out of the borough to access housing	N/A	

										appropriate to these needs. Requirements for good quality design will mean homes are more appropriate to meet specific needs.		
C4	Providing affordable homes	+	+	+	+	+	+		The aim of the policy is to make more housing affordable. This would benefit people in all groups who are struggling to access market housing.	Positive impact on making housing more accessible.	N/A	
C5	Meeting the needs of gypsies and travellers	+	+	+	+	+	+		Whilst this policy does aim at meeting the needs of a specific group it does not negatively impact on meeting the housing needs of other groups	Provides a positive impact for the gypsy and travelling community. Unlikely to have a negative impact in terms of meeting the needs of other groups.	N/A	
C6	Improving health and well being	+	+	+	+	+	+		The aim of this policy supports the proposal for all people to live more active lives through the provision of sports facilities, walking and cycling routes, improvements to transport routes, open space, climate change, ensuring new facilities are in accessible locations, better designed buildings etc. This policy has no specific target group at this strategic stage in terms of equality as the opportunity to keep healthy is relevant to all groups and therefore everyone benefits.	Positive	N/A	
C7	Delivering education facilities	+	+	+	+	+	+		The provision of new and improved educational facilities will provide the opportunity for more people to acquire new skills. It will lead to more people gaining	Generally positive but the closure of some	N/A	

							<p>better qualification and give them more opportunities to pursue further education and/or be better equipped for employment. It will provide opportunities for social interaction and community cohesion. Therefore all groups benefit from this policy.</p> <p>However, it is recognised that where certain school closures are concerned some groups may be at a disadvantage in terms of sending their children to a school of their first choice and may be required to travel further to access a school. However, the development of new schools will be in accessible locations along transport corridors.</p>	<p>schools will lead to longer travel times to access another school. However, these will be provided along accessible locations and transport corridors.</p>		
C8	Improving community, sport and leisure and cultural facilities	+	+	+	+	+	<p>This supports the provision and retention of a variety of local facilities in accessible locations and areas of greatest need. So that people do not have to travel to access the things they need in everyday life. This policy caters for all groups in the community so everyone benefits.</p>	Positive	N/A	
Improving Design, Image and Quality of Place										
P1	Protecting and enhancing the borough's character and heritage	+	+	=	+	+	<p>The protection and enhancement of the character of the area will benefit all residents because it will improve the quality of the environment in which people live and make the borough more attractive for investment. However, the protection of heritage can mean the protection of buildings and spaces which are not necessarily up to modern accessibility standards.</p>	Generally positive, but policy should encourage sensitive alterations to make heritage buildings and spaces more accessible.	Yes	No
P2	Improving the borough's Image	+	+	+	+	+	<p>Improving the borough's image will help all people in the borough by improving quality of life and encouraging investment into the borough.</p>	Positive	N/A	
P3	Improving design of new development	+	+	+	+	+	<p>This design policy refers to specific aspects of good design which promote inclusiveness and accessibility. This policy will aid all people in the borough and is very inclusive.</p>	Positive	N/A	

Conserving and managing the natural environment and resources											
R1	Tackling climate change	+	+	+	+	+	+	Tackling climate change will benefit all people in the borough through reducing the negative impacts of climate change which could impact on health and quality of life.	Positive	N/A	
R2	Managing Green Belt	+	+	+	+	+	+	This policy will benefit all people in the borough, especially in terms of health and quality of life.	Positive	N/A	
R3	Managing other protected / reserved land	+	+	+	+	+	+	This policy will benefit all people in the borough, especially in terms of health and quality of life.	Positive	N/A	
R4	Enhancing green infrastructure	+	+	+	+	+	+	The provision of new, enhanced and quality green infrastructure will bring benefits to all groups in the community through the provision of accessible open spaces and river valleys for recreation, sport, biodiversity etc; improved access to the countryside, and adaptation to climate change and environmental risk especially flooding.	Positive. Access enhancements will provide more and better quality greenspace, paths etc and increase opportunities for a healthier lifestyle.	N/A	
R5	Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity	+	+	+	+	+	+	This policy will enhance biodiversity and geodiversity and increase access to these assets as a recreation and education resource. Biodiversity will be included within development, bringing potential ecological benefits and increase opportunities for the understanding, observation and accessing the natural world.	Positive. Access to biodiversity etc can be part of healthier lifestyles, reducing stress and are part of the education and recreational resource of the borough.	N/A	
R6	Managing water resources and flood risk	+	+	+	+	+	+	This policy will benefit all people in the borough, especially in terms of health and quality of life.	Positive	N/A	
R7	Reducing the impact of pollution	+	+	+	+	+	+	This policy will benefit all people in the borough, especially in terms of health and quality of life.	Positive	N/A	
R8	Managing mineral resources	+	+	+	+	+	+	This policy will benefit all people in the borough, especially in terms of health and quality of life.	Positive	N/A	

R9	Managing waste	+	+	+	+	+	+	This policy will benefit all people in the borough, especially in terms of health and quality of life.	Positive	N/A	
Improving Accessibility and Delivering Sustainable Transport											
T1	Delivering sustainable transport	+	+	+	+	+	+	This policy predominantly promotes measures to enhance the sustainable transport network widening travel choice for all users. Specific highway improvements enable, or are supported by measures also promoting non-car travel. With regard to age, gender and disability, more frequent public transport services will be available to access more destinations they wish to travel with a safer travel experience.	Positive. All the proposals aim to improve access to employment, residential training, and education shopping and leisure opportunities.	N/A	
T2	Improving accessibility	+	+	+	+	+	+	This policy focuses on strengthening transport accessibility in the planning application decision process. The Accessibility hierarchy, more robust guidance on developers that deliver the expectations and mitigation measures expected by local communities through Transport Assessments, travel plans and standards that the Council can more easily enforce. Many of these groups will benefit from these. Developers will be expected to invest in infrastructure to mitigate their impact.	Positive. This policy regulates and seeks contributions from developers to meet the needs of local communities particular to address the travel needs of these groups. This requires them to invest in community infrastructure in return for it supplying labour.	N/A	
Managing delivery and monitoring progress											
DM1	Delivery and management of new development	/	/	/	/	/	/	This policy sets out all the factors that should be taken into account in determining planning applications, primarily referring to all the policies assessed above. It is therefore the sum of all the above policies.	Neutral	N/A	
DM2	Delivering planning	/	/	/	/	/	/	This seeks planning contributions to mitigate the			

	contributions and infrastructure						possible impact of a development and / or to provide infrastructure to support a development.			
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