

**ROCHDALE COUNCIL**

**DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY  
INVOLVEMENT (SCI)**

**EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EQIA)**

**July 2015**



**ROCHDALE  
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

Function	Strategy	Policy	Project	Other, please specify below
		X		

<b>Service:</b> Economy and Environment	<b>Section:</b> Strategic Planning
<b>Responsible Officer:</b> Sohida Banu	<b>Name of function/strategy/ policy/ project assessed:</b> Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

<b>Date of Assessment:</b> 11 December 2014
<b>Officers Involved:</b> Sohida Banu Wayne Poole

**1.What is the purpose of the function/strategy/policy/project assessed?**  
*(Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the function/strategy/policy/project)*

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out an equal and positive approach on how and when the general public and stakeholders can get involved and influence new planning documents covering the Borough, and commenting on planning applications. The SCI is a statutory document and is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The Draft SCI demonstrates how the requirements of the 2004 Planning Act will be met to ensure the community has the opportunity to be involved in the planning process. This Draft SCI sets out how and when Rochdale Council will involve the community in preparing the Local Plan and in assessing planning applications. The Councils will be required to follow these procedures when preparing the Local Plan and when consulting on planning applications.

**2.Who are the key stakeholders?**

- Local residents within the Borough who might be affected by a land use development in their area and future occupiers of new development.
- Developers, land owners and design professionals involved in the planning process.
- National bodies, groups and organisations including statutory consultees
- Other professionals or organisations with an interest in the Borough.
- Internally, Planning Officers involved in determining applications and consulting.

**3. What is the scope of this equality impact assessment? That is, what is included in this assessment.**

The Council want as many stakeholders as possible to be involved in the planning process. This will make the planning process as inclusive as possible and planning related decisions will reflect the views of what the local residents, businesses and visitors want for the Borough.

**4. Which needs is this function/strategy/ policy/ project designed to meet?**

The SCI is a statutory document that sets out the requirements of the consultation process, as amended in the Local Plan Regulations 2012. It is intended to provide clarity and consistency in terms of engagement and consultation, both in the plan preparation process and planning decision-making. It sets out how the local community and key stakeholders will be involved in the planning process at the various different stages and how they can get involved.

The SCI also sets out the different consultation methods that the Council will undertake for all the different types of Planning documents, and for all planning applications. It identifies the various consultation groups that must be consulted and also the 'hard to reach' groups such as young people, people with disabilities, people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds, Gypsy's and travellers, elderly people and people with limited time. This ensures that the local community and stakeholders are aware and involved in the planning process at the various stages of the consultation.

**5. Has a needs analysis been undertaken?**

A specific needs analysis has not been undertaken. Mainly, because the SCI is a statutory document that is required by Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. However, because there have been a number of changes to both planning legislation/policy and technological advances which have changed the way public consultation is carried out, the SCI has been updated to reflect these changes.

**6. Who is affected by this function/strategy/ policy/ project?**

- Local residents within the Borough who might be affected by a land use development in their area and future occupiers of new development.
  - Developers, land owners and design professionals involved in the planning process.
  - National bodies, groups and organisations including statutory consultees
  - Other professionals or organisations with an interest in the Borough.
- Internally, Planning Officers involved in determining applications and consulting.

**7. Who has been involved in the review or development of this function/strategy/ policy/ project and who has been consulted? State your consultation/involvement methodology.**

The SCI is governed by specific regulations in terms of consultation. Prior to the approval of any final document, a Consultation Statement will be produced setting out who was consulted, the comments received and how they have been addressed within the final document. As well as statutory consultation bodies, general consultees will be consulted and they include:

- Voluntary bodies whose activities benefit the area
- Bodies representing interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the area
- Bodies representing the interests of different religious groups in the area
- Bodies representing the interests of disabled persons in the area
- Bodies representing the interests of businesses in the area

This list is not exhaustive and other organisations and individuals will be consulted, who are on our consultation database.

**8. What data have you considered for this assessment and have any gaps in the data been identified. What action will be taken to close any data gaps?**

The following section provides an overview of the relevant legislation and guidance that is applicable to the preparation of planning policy and consideration of Planning Applications. These documents set out statutory requirements in terms of engagement with different groups and the consultation processes. In undertaking consultation, we are also aware of and have taken into account the wider legislation such as the Data Protection Act, Human Rights Act and the Equality Act.

**National Context**

**Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (May 2004)**

This Act sets out the key requirements in the preparation of local development documents. In preparing local planning documents, the Local Planning Authority must have regard to:

- National policy and guidance
- Relevant regional spatial strategy policies
- The Community Strategy and any local development document which has been prepared by an authority
- The Statement of Community Involvement
- An appraisal of the sustainability of the proposals in each document (and produce a report of the findings of the appraisal).

**Localism Act (November 2011)**

The Localism Act introduced a number of changes which apply to consultation on planning applications and the preparation of local plans:

- Duty to Co-operate. The Act establishes the duty to co-operate in relation to the planning of sustainable development. It requires a Local Planning Authority to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis on strategic matters with other Local Planning Authorities and designated bodies. The specific bodies prescribed for the purposes of the duty to cooperate are outlined in Appendix A.
- Neighbourhood Planning. The Act also introduces a new tier of planning policy documents known as Neighbourhood Development Plans. Parish and Town Councils are able to instigate the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for all or part of their area. The Local Planning Authority has a duty to support the preparation of such a plan, including the appointment of a person to examine the document and hold a referendum. Any plan needs to conform to the strategic elements of the Development Plan and national policy.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)**

The NPPF replaces the Government's previous suite of Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Policy Statements, and sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It identifies the following roles for the planning system:

- Economic - building a strong economy by ensuring the right type of land is available in the right places to support growth, including the provision of infrastructure.
- Social - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing sufficient housing to meet the needs of future generations, and creating a high quality environment with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs
- Environmental - contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment,

minimising waste and pollution, and adapting to climate change.

The NPPF promotes a plan-led system, and re-iterates the duty to co-operate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those related to the strategic priorities, including the homes and jobs needed in the area.

The NPPF sets out that Local Planning Authorities should approach taking decisions on planning applications in a positive way to help the deliver sustainable development, should look for solutions rather than problems, and should work proactively with applicants to secure development that improves the economic, environmental and social conditions of an area.

#### **Local Plan Regulations (April 2012)**

The Town and Country (Local Plan) (England) Regulations set out revised procedural arrangements for preparing Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), and specifies certain bodies that Local Planning Authorities must engage with in the preparation of planning policy documents.

#### **Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (April 2012)**

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations contain the provisions for neighbourhood planning, introduced by the Localism Act. This includes the procedures for setting up neighbourhood areas and forums and for preparing neighbourhood development plans, neighbourhood development orders and community right to build orders.

#### **The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (April 2010)**

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations set out the provisions for CIL, which was introduced by the Planning Act 2008. This includes the procedures and the bodies to be consulted during the preparation of a CIL.

#### **Development Management Procedure Order (October 2010)**

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order sets out the statutory provisions for consultation on planning applications, and specifies the bodies to be consulted, depending on the type of planning application.

#### **General Permitted Development (Amendment) Order 2013**

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2013 sets out the requirements for statutory notices to be served on adjacent premises in respect of householder extension prior approvals.

#### **Local Context**

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Local Planning Authorities to have regard to any Community Strategy prepared by the Authority. For Rochdale there are two relevant documents that need to be taken into account in preparing Local Development Documents.

The Rochdale Local Public Service Board (LPSB) is the Local Strategic Partnership for the Borough, and is a collaboration of a number of parties and agencies that deliver public services (the Council, Police, Fire and Rescue Service and Primary Care Trust) together with businesses and representatives of voluntary and community organisations.

#### **Rochdale Borough Sustainable Community Strategy**

This document was prepared by the Rochdale LPSB and covers the period 2011-2021. It sets out a vision for Rochdale and a set of priorities relating to people, place and prosperity. The latest version can be viewed on this link: <http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/pdf/2012-01-11-LSP-Community-Strategy-v1.pdf>

## Corporate Plan

This document outlines how partners will work together to ensure local communities are informed, involved, consulted and enabled to take action themselves to contribute to the vision of the Partnership in a way that is most appropriate for them.

The current Plan covers the period 2012-2015.

**9. Are there any other documents or strategies which are linked to this assessment? If so, please include hyperlinks to these documents below, where available.**

See links within the response to question 8.

**10. What impact will this function/strategy/policy/project have on all the protected groups? This includes both positive and potentially negative impacts.**

### Race Equality

It is recognised that there may be challenges in engaging all racial groups through language barriers, or cultural differences. To address this, documents will be made available in a range of languages on request. The Local Plan consultation database also includes contact details for a range of different racial groups who will be notified of any consultations. The SCI also identifies many racial groups as 'hard to reach groups'.

Therefore, it is not anticipated that this SCI is likely to have a negative impact upon this group.

### Disabled People

The Council will seek to hold meetings in places that are accessible to those who have mobility issues, where possible. In addition, make documents and information available at a wide variety of locations and in alternative formats on requests (e.g. Braille, Large Print and Audio), offer one-to-one meetings to assist understanding, utilise Disability Networks/organisation off the consultation database to promote information. Therefore, it is not anticipated that this SCI is likely to have a negative impact upon this group.

### Carers

It is not anticipated that this SCI is likely to have a negative impact upon this group.

### Gender

It is not anticipated that this SPD is likely to have a negative impact upon this group.

### Age

The SCI includes various consultation methods aimed at everyone. In particular, for young people, it may be more appealing to use social media such as Facebook or Twitter to ensure the Council actively engages them in the process. Whereas, on the other hand, it may be appropriate, for some older people, to use other forms of communication such as making documents available in public libraries, publicity through the local press, along with local meetings and forums, where appropriate.

Therefore, it is not anticipated that this SCI is likely to have a negative impact upon this group.
<b>Armed Forces and Ex-Armed Forces Personnel</b>
It is not anticipated that this SPD is likely to have a negative impact upon this group.
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>
It is not anticipated that this SPD is likely to have a negative impact upon this group.
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>
It is not anticipated that this SPD is likely to have a negative impact upon this group.
<b>Religion or Belief</b>
It is not anticipated that this SPD is likely to have a negative impact upon this group.
<b>Pregnant Women or Those on Maternity Leave</b>
It is not anticipated that this SPD is likely to have a negative impact upon this group.
<b>Marriage or Civil Partnership</b>
It is not anticipated that this SPD is likely to have a negative impact upon this group.
<b>11.What are your main conclusions from this analysis?</b>
<p>The Statement of Community Involvement relates directly to how we propose to involve all parts of the community in the borough and in some instances, neighbouring authorities, and the various consultation and communication procedures for all our policy documents and development management processes stem from the SCI.</p> <p>The SCI is a statutory requirement, and sets out an equal and positive approach on how the Council will engage and consult with different groups and bodies within the consultation process. In producing this document we have taken into account various statutory legislations and policy, and also the wider legislation such as the Data Protection Act, Human Rights Act and the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>It is not anticipated that there will be any negative impacts on any of the groups above.</p>
<b>12.What are your recommendations?</b>
No further recommendations at this stage.
<b>13.What actions are you going to take to address the findings of this assessment? Please attach an action plan including details of designated officers responsible for completing these actions.</b>
No actions required at this stage.

Signed (Completing Officer): *Sohida Banu*

Date: 15 July 2015

Signed (Head of Service): *Mark Robinson*

Date: 15 July 2015

## Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan 2014/15

Action	Outcome	Target Date For Completion	Resource Implications	Lead Officer
<p><b>1. Promoting the SCI effectively to ensure all the relevant groups are aware of it and are aware of the opportunities to get involved by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Having a six weeks consultation period to allow sufficient time for people to get involved and comment.</li> <li>- Making consultation documents available for inspection at designated deposit points (under Chapter 7 – Contact Us).</li> <li>- Copies of documents will also be available to download via the council's website.</li> <li>- Sending notification letters to 'specific' consultees. (see Appendix A)</li> <li>- Sending notification letters to 'general' and 'other' consultees as appropriate (see Appendix B), including,               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary bodies whose activities benefit the area</li> <li>• Bodies representing interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the area</li> <li>• Bodies representing the interests of different religious groups in the area</li> <li>• Bodies representing the interests of disabled persons in the area</li> <li>• Bodies representing the interests of businesses in the area</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Providing hard copies of consultation documents to residents of the borough on request (available to purchase)</li> <li>- The council's website will also be updated to inform consultees about different stages of plan preparation.</li> <li>- Using the council corporate online consultation portal where all consultations across the different council service areas can be displayed and consulted on in one place. This portal is called 'Have Your Say' and has already been extensively utilised by the planning department when consulting on Local Plan documents.</li> </ul>	<p>Ensuring that residents and stakeholders are aware of the SCI and allowing people and stakeholders the opportunity to get involved through the various consultation methods. All the different consultation methods will ensure that as many people are engaged in the process as possible. It will also keep people informed of future stages of consultation.</p>	<p>Spring 2015</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Sohida Banu</p>
<p><b>2. Attending the Equality Listening Event 2015</b> and asking how people would like to be involved in the consultation process and what consultation methods are best for them. Other issues around 'hard to reach' groups</p>	<p>Increasing the awareness and promoting the importance of the SCI to residents, local organisations and other</p>	<p>Equality Listening Event 2015 (TBA)</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Sohida Banu</p>



<p>and how they could be engaged in the process can also be looked at.</p> <p>3. <b>Ongoing monitoring</b> to find out who is getting involved in consultation exercises about planning issues so that if certain sections of the community are not getting engaged one can target these and find out what steps could be taken to address this.</p> <p>Completion of the Equalities Monitoring Form when undertaking public consultation on Local plan documents, which is voluntary, and will remain anonymous. The information will be collated enable the Council to monitor whether the consultation has reached the community effectively. The Council has confirmed the importance of this monitoring by including the use of this form in the adopted SCI</p>	<p>stakeholders.</p> <p>The data collected maybe published in the Annual Monitoring Report, if it's considered appropriate. Particularly, if there are problems arising with the existing methods of consultation or improvements could be made to the way the Council involves the community and stakeholders in consultations on planning matters then changes may need to be made to the SCI.</p>	<p>April 2016</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Sohida Banu</p>
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