Introduction

As functions or policies are reviewed, or new ones developed, an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) should be carried out to address the following legislation:

- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000;
- Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Act 2006;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975;
- Emerging Equality Bill; and
- To help implement the Employment Equality Regulations on Sexual Orientation and Religion and Belief and Age.

EqIAs can help South Staffordshire Council to meet the various stages of the Equalities Standard for Local Government and increasingly service inspections are asking questions about the findings of EqIAs.

An EqIA is a process to determine whether a policy or function has any “differential impacts” that could have an adverse (negative) implication on the basis of a person’s race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief or age. It is a method to ensure that a function or policy will not create any barriers that could prevent access to services or employment opportunities.

Explaining the toolkit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equality Impact Assessment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 <strong>Title of Function or Policy to be assessed:</strong> South Staffordshire Local Development Framework 2006 – 2026 Core Strategy Development Plan Document DPD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 <strong>Date:</strong> February 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 <strong>Name of Lead Officer:</strong> Paul Collings – Development Plans and Conservation Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 <strong>EqIA Team</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Collings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Richards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Reference Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 <strong>Director/Head of Service/Service Manager:</strong> Andy Johnson – Director of Planning and Strategic Services Paul Collings – Development Plans and Conservation Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 <strong>Existing, new or review:</strong> The saved policies version of the South Staffordshire Local Plan adopted in 1996 currently forms part of the Development Plan for the District. The LDF, including the Core Strategy and other Development Plan Documents will eventually supersede the Local Plan and the saved policies within it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have any queries or comments about Equality Impact Assessments or about the toolkit, please contact: Becky Harris, Policy and Partnerships, 01902 696242 Or email: b.harris@sstaffs.gov.uk
Set out the aims/objectives/purposes/outcomes of the function or policy, and give a summary of the service provided:

A Local Development Framework (LDF) is being prepared to help to shape a sustainable future for South Staffordshire. It will replace the existing Local Plan adopted in 1996 and will set out the spatial planning strategy for the District up to 2026. The Local Development Framework will consist of a number of statutory and non-statutory documents that together will set out the planning policies and proposals to guide the development of the District.

Fundamental to the Local Development Framework is the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy will be at the heart of the Local Development Framework and will set out the long-term vision, objectives and planning policies to deliver the vision and secure a sustainable future for the District. It will be informed by and draw upon other strategies produced by the Council and other organisations particularly the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Core Strategy will contain broad policies for steering and shaping development as well as defining areas where development should be limited. It will also set out more detailed day-to-day development policies through which development will be delivered. The Core Strategy seeks to address these spatial issues through Locality Working under the six Sustainable Community Strategy themes of:

- Environmental Quality
- Housing
- Economic Vibrancy
- Community Safety
- Health and Well Being
- Children and Young People

The Council will be preparing a number of other documents for the LDF, including a Site Allocations DPD and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) covering village design guidance, affordable housing, developer contributions and sustainable development.

It is intended that each separate DPD and SPD will be subject to an EqIA as work on these documents progresses.

Linked policies, functions: Are there any other functions, policies or services that might be linked with this one for the purposes of this exercise?

The LDF links to a number of plans some of which are statutory and form part of the Development Plan for the District. These are:

- National Planning Policy Statements and Guidance - DCLG
- Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands
- Regional Sustainable Development Strategies
- Regional Economic Strategy
- Regional Housing Strategy
- Staffordshire Sustainable Community Strategy
- South Staffordshire Sustainable Community Strategy
- Parish Plans
- Corporate Strategy

The Development Plan for the District comprises the Regional Spatial Strategy.
9 **Who is it intended to affect or benefit (the target population):**

The LDF provides the statutory planning framework for the District and therefore affects all residents, stakeholders and businesses that operate in it.

10 **Within this table, state whether the policy or function will have a positive or negative impact across the following factors and provide any comments.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive Impact</th>
<th>Negative Impact</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>The LDF will provide a policy framework that will cover specialist elderly accommodation, Extra Care Homes, children’s play areas and other facilities and services across all age ranges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>The policy framework will take account of disabled access in building design, in access to areas of public open space and in the provision of sustainable communities with opportunities for home working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>The LDF will contain specific policies relating to Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion/belief</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Places of Worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 **What evidence do you have for the statements you have made above?**

There will be policies in the Core Strategy which will cover sustainable communities, building design, provision of housing (including specialist elderly, affordable housing and extra care homes) gypsy and traveller accommodation needs, open space and recreation, community, medical and health care facilities, employment opportunities, retail and environmental improvement and protection.
12. From evidence given at Q.11 what actions, if any, will you need to take against each of the following equality strands:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>Inclusion of policies for disabled access to buildings and recreation facilities. The LDF is available in a range of formats and at locations across the District. Policies to encourage working from home and improved health and public transport opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Inclusion of policies for Gypsy and Traveller Pitch provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Inclusion of policies for different areas of housing needs including affordable housing, specialist elderly accommodation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion/belief</td>
<td>Recognition of the role that places of worship play in communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Briefly explain how the policy or function contributes to Community Cohesion by answering the following questions:

- How will it provide equality of access to services, information and employment?
- Does it or could it celebrate diversity?
- Will it or could it promote good relationships within and between communities?
- How will it help to prevent social exclusion?
- Will it help to reintegrate those who have become excluded?
- How will it provide good quality, inclusive services?

Sustainable development must be treated as an integral part of the Local Development Framework, in particular the interrelationship between social inclusion, protecting and enhancing the environment, prudent use of natural resources and economic development. The Core Strategy document will have an important role to play in delivering sustainable development in South Staffordshire.

The key issues and challenges that will drive change in the District, the spatial issues that arise and which the Core Strategy will seek to address are summarised below under the Sustainable Community Strategy themes which are:

- Environmental Quality
- Housing
- Economic Vibrancy
- Community Safety
- Health and Well Being
- Children and Young People

**Environmental Quality**

- Protecting the Green Belt and Open Countryside.
- Determining the best way of achieving sustainable development in South
South Staffordshire Council  
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- Staffordshire.  
- Protecting and improving the environment.  
- Protecting and enhancing South Staffordshire’s biodiversity.  
- Maintaining the historic character of villages and enhancing the historic environment.

**Housing**

- Delivering affordable housing to meet local needs.  
- Delivering Decent Homes.  
- Meeting the Provision of Extra Care or specialist elderly accommodation.

**Economic Vibrancy**

- Ensuring that local people have access to a diverse range of employment opportunities within South Staffordshire and the Black Country.  
- Supporting the development of the Black Country Economy.  
- Supporting farm diversification.  
- Developing tourism and raising awareness of the District.  
- Ensuring that local people have access to a good range of essential facilities and services.  
- Ensuring the provision of a better public transport service.

**Community Safety**

- Keeping the population safe.

**Health and Well Being**

- Meeting the needs of the elderly population in the District  
- Keeping the population healthier longer.

### 14. Consultation:

Describe what consultation has been undertaken on this function or policy, who was involved and the outcome.

One of the purposes of the new planning system is to promote more significant involvement of the community in order to shape a sustainable future for South Staffordshire. As part of the LDF, the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the Council’s standards and approach to involving stakeholders and the community in the preparation and review of the LDF and respective Local Development Documents and their involvement in decisions on planning applications. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, all local planning authorities must produce an SCI so that it is clear who should be consulted, when consultation will take place and how that consultation will be undertaken. This document was considered sound by an Independent Inspector at Examination, and was formally adopted by the Council on 31st October 2006.

Consultation undertaken for the LDF is wide ranging and extends district wide and to adjoining authorities, stakeholders, developers and other interested parties. Methods of consultation include:

- Exhibitions are held across the District in Community Halls in a number of villages across all localities.  
- Council website  
- Discrete consultation with those on the Council’s LDF database  
- Workshops and Stakeholder Events  
- Direct consultation with Parish Councils  
- Focus Groups

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- Agents’ Forum
- Consultation portal - Limehouse
- Residents’ Panel – The panel consists of around 1,200 local residents who are consulted three-four times a year via a postal survey.

Key target groups for engagement are:

- General Public
- Central/Regional/Local Government
- Council Members
- Parish Councils
- Residents’ Associations
- Statutory Bodies and Groups
- Key Infrastructure and Delivery Agencies
- Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)
- Business Groups
- Developers/Agents/Landowners
- Interest Groups e.g. Local Amenity Organisations
- Hard-to-Reach Groups
- The Media
- Registered Social Landlords

The comments received from consultation inform the policy making process. Final outcomes are not yet known as the Core Strategy is still being developed.

**Director/Head of Service:**

*I am satisfied with the results of this EqIA*

*I have seen the Councils Equality Schemes or Equality Action Plan and am satisfied with the contribution it can make to these.*

**Signature of Head of Service:**

**Completion of the Toolkit:**

Legislation requires the publication of the results of impact assessments and these will be published on the South Staffordshire Council website. Completed toolkits and any action plans should be forwarded to the Diversity Reference Group who will quality check the EqIA, ensure that the results of the EqIA is added to the Website and assist with monitoring any actions identified in Q. 12.

Please send all completed forms/EqIAs to:

**Becky Harris**

**Policy & Partnerships**

*b.harris@sstaffs.gov.uk*

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