

Swindon Borough Council

Full Diversity Impact Assessment Form

Function/Policy: Swindon Borough Core Strategy and Development Control Policies

Date: 01/07/09

Please read guidance notes before completing this form.

The latest version of guidance notes are available on the Equality intranet pages.

To move around this form, please use the 'tab' key.

Full Diversity Impact Assessment (FDIA)

This section focuses on identifying whether the proposed or existing function/policy may have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for some equalities groups or on relations between different equalities groups and how this can subsequently be addressed.

A function is one of the Council's defined duties or powers. A policy is something that is put in place to deliver a function – this can include formal policy, procedure, guidance, strategy, plans, codes of practice or 'custom and practice'.

2.1 Setting up Responsibilities

a) Which Directorate is responsible for the function/policy?	Environment, Regeneration & Community
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b) Lead Officer carrying out the assessment	
Name: David Way	Job title: Strategic Environmental Assessment Officer
Phone number: 01793 466031	

c) Function/policy being assessed.
Is this function/policy: New/proposed (drop down menu)
When was the function/policy introduced: March 2008
Date of last Impact Assessment: February 2008

d) Please identify which equality group(s) you are focusing this assessment on?	This information can be found from the Relevance Test for Screening of Functions and Policy form
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion & Belief <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation

2.2 Function/Policy Description

(See guidance page 18 and checklist 1 on page 27)

<p>a) Please provide a brief description of the function/policy that is being assessed including its aims and objectives. (Help - press F1)</p>	<p>In your response please answer the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the function/policy objectives? 2. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to this function/policy? 3. How does the function/policy intend to benefit the main stakeholders?
<p>1. The Core Strategy is one of a suite of documents making up the Swindon Local Development Framework (LDF). The Core Strategy will, when adopted, provide a planning framework to guide development in the Borough over the period to 2026. Its proposals will affect everyone who has an interest in Swindon and will deliver the aspirations of the Council and the wider community.</p> <p>The Core Strategy establishes the spatial policies required to deliver the Borough Council's vision, its regeneration objectives and the regional planning agenda. It will allow Swindon to deliver a co-ordinated approach to development by providing a comprehensive framework for development within which more detailed policy can be developed, including decisions about infrastructure and investment priorities.</p> <p>The Core Strategy forms a part of the development plan alongside the Regional Spatial Strategy and helps deliver the objectives of the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy. Work on the Core Strategy is closely related to progress on the Sustainable Community Strategy, including working closely with the Swindon Strategic Partnership. It also takes account of the national emphasis on the accelerated delivery of housing to meet the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan. The aim is to create cleaner, safer and greener communities by improving the quality of planning, design, management and maintenance of public spaces and the built environment.</p> <p>The Core Strategy vision is as follows:</p> <p>"In 2026, Swindon will be a regional centre that has raised its image through developing its own identity built on sustainable economic growth and respect for its railway heritage. It will have a thriving regenerated town centre that includes a cutting edge new university, the reinstatement of the canal through central Swindon and linked to the countryside by a strategic network of multifunctional open spaces and water spaces. An integrated and sustainable transport system will enable easy movement around the Borough. Communities will be sustainable, cohesive and healthy, and residents will enjoy a quality of life that does not use more resources than the environment can provide".</p> <p>The objectives of the Core Strategy set out what it is aiming to achieve in spatial planning terms and these can be found in the Core Strategy document.</p> <p>2. The main stakeholders in relation to the Core Strategy are the people who live and work in the Borough, local businesses, those who visit Swindon for various reasons and those who travel through the Borough. The successful delivery of growth in Swindon depends upon the capacity of the Council to coordinate and manage the delivery programme, through effective and efficient project management. Swindon's long-term sustainable future can be delivered through effective partnership working with key external agencies and stakeholders.</p> <p>Planning and managing the growth of Swindon over the next 20 years is a corporate priority at Swindon Borough Council. The programme of development for delivering the vision integrates with the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Core Strategy. However, it's not</p>	

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only Swindon Borough Council services that are linked through the Swindon programme of development; plans for health, culture and education are advancing together through the holistic approach taken by the Swindon Infrastructure Delivery Board.

3. The Core Strategy has been produced by Swindon Borough Council for consultation purposes. In 2007, stakeholders and the general public were consulted on the Core Strategy Issues & Options paper, which sought views on how the vision for positive and sustainable growth at Swindon should be managed over the next twenty years. The Core Strategy Preferred Options document (March 2008) built on this by developing ideas and issues into a series of preferred options for the spatial framework and some possible planning policies for the Borough. It also set out alternative policy options and reasons why these were not taken forward as policy.

The Core Strategy is fundamental in shaping and achieving Swindon's aspirations to be the UK's most sustainable place. Only through the Core Strategy can Swindon deliver a co-ordinated spatial approach to development by providing a comprehensive framework for development within which more detailed policy can be developed including decisions about infrastructure and investment priorities.

The Core Strategy places equalities issues at the forefront of its strategy and states that future planning must ensure that development within the Borough fosters a sense of community, is inclusive and sustainable, meets the equalities/diversity agenda and enhances the quality of life for residents in all of Swindon's communities.

b) What opportunities does this function/policy offer to promote equal opportunities?

(Help - press F1)

In your response please consider whether the function/policy:

- Ensures fairness in its processes e.g. the way it is intending to deliver its service;
- If so how?

The Core Strategy is being developed within the Environment, Regeneration & Community Directorate of Swindon Borough Council. The Directorate states that it will 'deliver services that are accessible to all, meet the needs of customers and communities and not disadvantage any customer or community group because of Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Religion or Sexual Orientation'. This objective contributes to Promise 6 of the Councils 'Swindon 2010 – 50 Promises' - 'Your Council will be recognised under the national standard as one of the best in the country for it's approach to equalities'. The council has committed to reaching level 3 of the Generic Equalities Standard for Local Government (GES).

The Core Strategy can make a positive difference to people's lives in the Borough, helping to deliver homes, jobs, and better opportunities for all, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and conserving the countryside and open spaces that are vital resources for everyone. The Core Strategy is being developed through a positive and proactive process that operates in the public interest.

The Core Strategy is not just about land and buildings - it is also about communities. It can help in the creation or enhancement of inclusive communities, making sure that communities have a choice of housing, both public and private, rented and private market, and to ensuring that community facilities are available for all, whatever their age, gender, religion, race, or income. Planning and development activity needs to ensure that new communities connect with those that are already established. This can be achieved through redevelopment within existing communities, creating community facilities and attractions that encourage people to

visit and interact with other neighbourhoods and ensure that there is equal access to opportunities and services.

A number of studies have been undertaken to understand the needs of neighbourhoods in Swindon, including the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and the Sustainable Community Strategy. There are also a number of partnerships that operate in Swindon to help deliver improvements to neighbourhoods, including the Environmental Improvement Programme (Housing), Swindon Sure Start Partnership and the Children's and Young People Partnership. However, the Core Strategy states that it is appropriate to undertake additional research to gain insight into the future needs of Swindon's communities. This research will help identify those needs that are not being met to modern standards, and will establish those regeneration and renewal initiatives that are required in order to raise the quality of urban life for communities in Swindon.

The local community has been involved in the development of the Core Strategy throughout the process of preparation and the Core Strategy is tailoring techniques to engage the appropriate parts of the community at the various stages. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) forms part of the Swindon LDF and was adopted in January 2007. The SCI sets out the standards to be achieved by the local authority in involving the community in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of the Core Strategy and other planning documents. It is a clear public statement enabling the community to know how and when they will be involved in the preparation of local development documents and how they will be consulted on planning applications. Involving the community from the outset is essential to achieve local ownership and legitimacy for the policies that will shape the future distribution of land uses and development, and will help to minimise the need for a lengthy and controversial examination process.

The SCI sets out the authority's vision and strategy for community involvement and how this links with other community involvement initiatives, for example, the Sustainable Community Strategy. It identifies the community groups that need to be involved and the techniques required to effectively involve them both informally and formally - this includes groups who are not easy to reach using conventional methods of public participation. The development of the Core Strategy has taken account of the Government's principles for community involvement, which include:

- > Community involvement that is appropriate to the level of planning.
- > Front loading of involvement - opportunities for early community involvement and a sense of ownership of local policy decisions. Front loading will be key to the success of the new planning system by early identification of issues.
- > Using methods of involvement which are relevant to the communities concerned.
- > Clearly articulated opportunities for continuing involvement as part of a continuous programme, not a one-off event.
- > Transparency and accessibility.

In preparing the Core Strategy, Swindon Borough Council has complied with the general duty in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to promote race equality. This duty means that authorities must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of

different racial groups. Local planning authorities should also comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which places a duty on all those responsible for providing a service to the public not to discriminate against disabled people by providing a lower standard of service. The planning function also complies Other relevant legislation

The LDF, and especially the Core Strategy, should take account of the principles and characteristics of other relevant strategies and programmes - this includes the Sustainable Community Strategy and strategies for education, health, social inclusion, waste, biodiversity, recycling and environmental protection. Strategies for urban and rural regeneration, housing and community development should also be taken account of. In particular, the Core Strategy should be a key component in the delivery of the community strategy, setting out its spatial aspects where appropriate and providing a long-term spatial vision.

DESIGN & ACCESS - the Core Strategy includes policies on design and access. Government guidance makes clear that good design, including consideration of access issues, are crucial to the delivery of sustainable development. Well designed development responds well to the local physical, social and economic context, being safe, clean, attractive and accessible for all users.

The Core Strategy states that design is seen as one of the most important planning considerations in Swindon from consultation responses. Policies will address sustainability targets in new development in accordance with the 'Swindon Standard' and demonstrate standards of inclusion and accessibility, including provision of access for disabled people, vehicle parking and service facilities that are within a safe and convenient layout. High quality design is about creating an environment that embraces inclusive principles such as understanding the needs of wheelchair users and mobility impaired users. It is also necessary to understand the barriers experienced by people with learning difficulties, visual and hearing impairments. Inclusive design will allow all members of society to move around in a safe, predictable and convenient manner.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - the Core Strategy has been prepared with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. At the heart of sustainable development is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations. One of the four aims of the Government's Strategy for Sustainable Development in the UK is 'social progress which recognises the needs of everyone'.

The Core Strategy has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal, the purpose of which is to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the policies from the outset of the preparation process. This will ensure that decisions are made that accord with sustainable development - helping to find a balance between social, environmental and economic impacts. The Sustainability Appraisal Report found that the Core Strategy is likely to lead to significant benefits for the people and communities in the Borough, through policies relating to neighbourhood renewal, economic growth, sustainable transport, high quality educational provision, developer contributions for community and healthcare facilities and policies for development in rural communities.

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c) What issues may prevent this function/policy from promoting equal opportunities?	In your response please consider whether the function/policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excludes/prevents any particular equality group from engaging or participating e.g. through the way it is intended to deliver its service• If so how?
The policy is all inclusive and is designed to target all the strands of equalities (see previous sections). Core Strategy policies are not expected to adversely impact any particular equalities group and consultation techniques are designed to reach as many community groups and individuals in the Borough as possible (see also 2.6).	

2.3 Consider the Existing Evidence

(See guidance page 18 and checklist 2 on page 28)

<p>What data, research or other forms of information is available?</p> <p>What does it show about the take-up rate, usage of services and other outcomes of this function/policy for different equalities groups?</p> <p>(Help - press F1)</p>	<p>In your response please consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do current practices and measures affect different groups, e.g. by making a positive contribution to equality of opportunity / good relations? • What gaps in data/information were identified? • Whether there is a need to gather better or more information than is currently available to assess this function/policy? • The ways in which services are delivered or communicated. • Whether there are alternative actions that would have a more positive effect.
<p>A wide range of evidence has been collated to inform Core Strategy policies.</p> <p>At the national level the emphasis on the accelerated delivery of housing is to meet the Government’s Sustainable Communities Plan. The aim is also to create cleaner, safer and greener communities by improving the quality of planning, design, management and maintenance of public spaces and the built environment.</p> <p>At the Regional level the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sets out the broad spatial strategy for Swindon, including the overall level of housing development. The RSS identifies Swindon as one of 21 Strategically Significant Towns and Cities at which an increased proportion of new development, particularly housing, is to be delivered.</p> <p>The Core Strategy takes account of a number of other documents, including the Swindon Sustainable Community Strategy, and has been developed in accordance with the Swindon Local Area Agreement. The Local Development Framework reflects the overall priorities of the Borough Council, in so far as they relate to spatial planning. The Core Strategy should be seen as the principal proactive tool for implementing the Council’s priorities as set out in the Borough’s Corporate Plan and Swindon 2010 (which sets out the Council’s 50 Promises).</p> <p>A wide range of studies have been undertaken to understand the needs of neighbourhoods and communities in Swindon, including the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and the Sustainable Community Strategy. There are also a number of partnerships that operate in Swindon to help deliver improvements to neighbourhoods including the Environmental Improvement Programme (Housing), Swindon Sure Start Partnership and the Children’s and Young People Partnership. These strategies and programmes aim to ‘narrow the gap’ between one area and another, focussing on improving those in the greatest need. In particular, the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy identified a number of priority neighbourhoods in Swindon and a series of action plans were produced to help facilitate positive action in each of these areas. The Action Plans were initiated by the communities themselves and serve as a good starting point for identifying needs and opportunities for each of these areas.</p> <p>Following on from this work and taking into consideration consultation comments and the Sustainable Communities Act, the Core Strategy considers that it is appropriate to undertake additional research to gain further insight into the future needs of Swindon’s</p>	

communities. The Study will help identify those needs that are not being met, and will establish those regeneration and renewal initiatives that are required in order to raise the quality of urban life for all communities in Swindon. Local communities know best what improvements are needed to enhance their area and the Core Strategy is keen to empower communities to make key decisions on the nature and extent of improvements to their area.

A significant issue frequently identified in stakeholder and public consultation is crime and the fear of crime in both urban and rural communities. Such fears can isolate certain sections of the population, particularly the elderly and lone women. Some of these fears can be addressed by giving crime prevention a high priority in the design of new development and by introducing crime prevention measures in existing areas. Community safety is a broad concept and includes a wide range of preventative measures associated with social provision in the community (facilities and resources in the neighbourhood); locational issues (e.g. lighting, safe cycle routes, communal space); planning (eg. secure by design); and individual (support structures to meet the needs of residents). The designing out of crime in new developments will reduce crime, the fear of crime, and thus improve the quality of life of residents.

2.4 Assessment of Impact

(See guidance page 19 and checklist 3 on page 29)

<p>Is there an adverse impact on any of the equality groups?</p> <p>(Help - press F1)</p> <p>(Help - use of General - press F1)</p>	<p>In your response please consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the function/policy will impact upon people from different equalities groups? • Factors that can hinder the implementation of the suggested actions such as financial resources, competencies, managerial support, commitment etc. • How current practices and actions affect different groups, e.g. by making a positive contribution to equality of opportunity? • Does this function/policy, or the way it is implemented, discriminate directly or indirectly? • If there is an adverse impact, what are the reasons? • Is the adverse impact justifiable based on positive action or other reason?
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Age</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Disability</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gender</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Race</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Religion & Belief</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> General</p>	<p>No adverse impacts envisaged.</p> <p>No adverse impacts envisaged.</p> <p>No adverse impacts envisaged.</p> <p>No adverse impacts envisaged.</p> <p>No adverse impacts envisaged.</p> <p>No adverse impacts envisaged.</p> <p>No adverse impacts envisaged.</p>

2.5 Consider the Alternatives (See guidance page 22 and checklist 4 on page 30)

<p>What changes or practical measures would eliminate or reduce the adverse impact on particular equality groups?</p>	<p>Please consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, changes in communication methods, language support, access measures, changes in eligibility criteria, venue, amended programmes, outreach methods, shared targets with other departments, etc...
<p>Impact</p>	<p>Action</p>
<p>No adverse impacts envisaged.</p>	
<p>No adverse impacts envisaged.</p>	
<p>No adverse impacts envisaged.</p>	
<p>No adverse impacts envisaged.</p>	
<p>No adverse impacts envisaged.</p>	
<p>No adverse impacts envisaged.</p>	
<p>No adverse impacts envisaged.</p>	
<p></p>	

2.6 Consult Formally

(See guidance page 22 and checklist 5 on page 31)

<p>What do relevant stakeholders think about the function/policy?</p> <p>(Help - press F1)</p>	<p>In your response please consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How you have consulted with key stakeholders? • Which stakeholders have you consulted with? • Please note that it is important to receive feedback and challenge from informed or interested groups and individuals to ensure that the final function/policy is robust and understood by key stakeholders.
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Age</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Disability</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gender</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Race</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Religion & Belief</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>	<p>The Core Strategy document has been produced by Swindon Borough Council for consultation purposes and the Submissions Draft document (July 2009) forms the third stage of preparing the Core Strategy. In April 2007, stakeholders and the general public were consulted on the Core Strategy Issues & Options paper, and in March 2008 a Preferred Options document was published for consultation.</p> <p>Since 1998, the Council has supported five community based coalitions - encouraging local people who are often not heard to be given a way to talk to the council. The five coalitions are:</p>

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- > Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender coalition
- > Older People's Coalition
- > Disabled People's Coalition (through the Swindon Coalition of Disabled People)
- > Race Coalition
- > Women's Coalition

These five coalition groups are included in the Core Strategy consultation.

Officers have engaged with external groups and organisations in the Core Strategy preparation process to ensure the document is as inclusive as possible and truly reflects community aspirations. These groups include:

- > Local Policy Forum
- > Internal Stakeholder events (i.e. Borough Council service areas)
- > Swindon Strategic Partnership (SSP)
- > Swindon Developers Forum
- > Swindon Community Forum
- > Community Organisations Advisory Forum (COAF)
- > Primary Care Trust Board
- > Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC)

The consultation process to be followed in the preparation of the Core Strategy is set out in the Council's 'Statement of Community Involvement', which was adopted in January 2007. This document is available online through the planning pages at www.swindon.gov.uk/environment

Available with the latest version of the Core Strategy is a 'Statement of Consultation'. This document explains the consultation strategy used and explains how the comments/representations of local people and key stakeholders have been considered and how they have shaped Core Strategy policy.

2.7 Decide whether to proceed with the Function/Policy

(See guidance page 24 and checklist 6 on page 32)

On the basis of the FDIA to date and information gathered from the consultation process, what decision has been made about taking the function/policy forward?

Can the aims of the function/policy be met? Yes, without amendments (drop down menu)

2.8 Monitoring Arrangements (See guidance page 24 and checklist 7 on page 33)

<p>How will the function/policy be monitored in practice in the future for any adverse impact?</p>	<p>In your response please consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who will be responsible for monitoring?• What has to be monitored?• Can existing monitoring procedures be adapted to collect the additional information required in relation to this function/policy?• What performance indicators or targets will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the function/policy?• In what format will the monitoring information be published?
<p>The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced the requirement to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), containing information on the implementation of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the extent to which policies in plans that form the LDF are being achieved. Performance of Core Strategy policies will be monitored through the AMR in future years.</p> <p>Monitoring is crucial to the successful delivery of the spatial vision and objectives of the LDF and is undertaken on a continuous pro-active basis. The AMR assesses nationally determined core indicators, and local indicators that relate to specific policies in the plan. Local indicators have been chosen to help monitor characteristics and issues which are important in the area, but which are not touched upon in detail by core indicators. The AMR also includes background information on each policy area in the form of contextual indicators.</p>	

2.9 Implementation and Review

At this stage an Action / Improvement Plan should be developed to address any concerns or issues related to equality in the proposed function/policy. These plans should be integrated into the appropriate Service or Business Plan.

Please use the following template to develop the Action / Improvement Plan:

Adverse Impact	Actions Required	Timescale	Resources	Lead Officer	Performance Indicators
No adverse impacts envisaged.					
No adverse impacts envisaged.					
No adverse impacts envisaged.					
No adverse impacts envisaged.					
No adverse impacts envisaged.					
No adverse impacts envisaged.					
No adverse impacts envisaged.					

Review date: July 2010

Confirm inclusion of actions in Equality Service Plan – date:

Signed (completing Officer): David Way. Date: 01/07/09

Signed (Director): David Potter

Please send an electronic copy of the completed form with an electronic link to the function/policy to the Equality and Diversity Unit:
equality@swindon.gov.uk

Please keep a copy on file for audit purposes