

## Appendix D – Full Equality Impact Assessment

<b>Title</b>	Adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement and Developers' Engagement Charter
<b>Service</b>	Planning Policy – Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills
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<b>Date</b>	21 June 2024
<b>Detail of Assessment</b>	
<p>Royal Greenwich seeks to adopt the updated and final Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and Developers' Engagement Charter (DEC).</p> <p>A SCI is a statutory document which sets out the ways in which the Council will engage with residents, communities, businesses, local organisations and other groups to ensure as many people as possible are able to contribute to the plan-making process and input on individual planning decisions that affect them. The DEC is aimed at those developing land in Royal Greenwich to ensure best practice in early engagement with local residents, businesses and community organisations prior to formal planning applications being made.</p> <p>Consultation on the draft SCI and DEC was undertaken through the Commonplace platform from 25 March to 28 April 2024. 72 comments were received cumulatively on the two documents, and subsequently have been responded to. This has resulted in minor amendments to the draft SCI and DEC.</p>	
<p><b>What is its purpose?</b></p> <p><i>Is this a new service/policy or a change to an existing service/policy?</i></p>	
<p>Royal Greenwich has an existing SCI which was adopted in July 2020. The Council sought to replace the 2020 with an updated version to reflect recent consultation with residents and the current context for the Borough. As such in essence it is a new statement which if adopted would replace an existing Council statement.</p> <p>Royal Greenwich does not have a current DEC, and if it were to be adopted the new DEC would be a new document provided by the Council.</p>	
<p><b>What are its main objectives (of the new/revised service or policy)?</b></p>	
<p>The main objective of the SCI is to encourage and empower more residents to get involved and take an active role in the planning process for the borough. This can help ensure that development enhances the borough's local areas, is relevant to the local context, and meets the needs of its residents. The Council knows that part of this is making the process more transparent in a way that everyone can engage with as well as using tools and methods that encourage residents to engage.</p> <p>The DEC's main objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring all relevant and procedural requirements for community engagement and consulting on major developments are met at pre-application and application stages.</li> <li>• Ensuring developers take the opportunity to go beyond minimum requirements for consultation by using the best practice approach highlighted in the Community Engagement Pledge.</li> </ul>	

- Providing helpful tips to developers to ensure that engagement with different groups is carried out in a timely manner and at a formative stage where residents and communities can convey their views and influence the outcome of a design scheme.

## Context

SCI and DEC address the approach of the Council and developers respectively to community engagement. The SCI sets out how the Council will engage with residents, businesses, communities, local organisations and other groups throughout the planning process.

The SCI details Council's approach to community engagement, detailing the various planning duties performed by the Royal Borough of Greenwich and how the Council encourages community involvement with respect to these functions and at what different stages consultation takes place in these different planning areas. The functions include:

- Planning Policy;
- Processing and deciding planning applications;
- Planning Enforcement;
- Community Infrastructure Levy; and
- Working with neighbouring planning authorities.

The SCI acknowledges that decisions made with Royal Greenwich's local communities result in better outcomes for its residents and neighbourhoods. However, it also acknowledges that the planning system can be seen as complex and difficult to engage with and seeks to reduce this complexity and difficulty. The SCI describes how the Council will engage with communities, residents, and other stakeholders when it draws up planning policies and determines individual planning applications. It also sets out how the Council will support local communities in developing their own Neighbourhood Plans to use in determining planning applications.

The Council wants to enhance its communication methods, embracing digital tools and social media, alongside traditional methods like emails, letters and public meetings. It also wants to use Community Review Panels to ensure the largest developments are scrutinised by residents and members of the community so these views can be shared with developers and decision-makers while proposals are being drawn up.

Alongside the Developers' Engagement Charter, Royal Greenwich wants to empower residents to take an active role in the planning system so that development enhances the borough's local areas, is relevant to the local context, and meets the needs of local people.

The DEC has been prepared to be used by developers. It provides advice on the level of detail which is expected from developers when carrying out consultations on major development proposals, especially during the pre-application stage.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights that early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources, improved outcomes for the community and provides an opportunity for communities to influence thinking at the early stages of a development project.

The Council will expect developers to utilise a range of engagement methods to ensure that the consultation process is inclusive of all groups. Methods include tools such as:

- leaflets, use of traditional media and development information website;

- exhibitions, drop-in and consultation events;
- interactive digital engagement;
- focus groups;
- forums;
- Community Review Panels; and
- Ward Councillors.

A minimum of 14 days' notice (not including public holidays or festivals) of engagement events should be given when consulting for major developments. The council also welcomes feedback from those who have been engaged at an early stage as this enables officers to have a fuller understanding of the community view of emerging development when discussing proposed development with developers at pre-application stage.

**Criteria**

*Is this function designed to meet specific needs of groups with protected characteristics?*

The use of the SCI and DEC and their implementation within the Royal Greenwich planning process and development process are intended to be accessible to all groups and enable more local people to participate in these processes.

By ensuring accessibility for all residents, it is not designed specifically for the needs of individual groups with protected characteristics. Instead, all groups are enabled to proactively engage within the planning process in the borough and in development outcomes.

**Outcomes of Assessment**

*Identify which, if any of the protected groups will be affected (as identified by the initial screening form), including likelihood of impact (high, med, low, none)*

None of the protected groups below will be affected.

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Gender (Sex)
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Gender Identity (Gender reassignment)
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Caring responsibilities
- Socio-economic background

**Please provide a summary in the table below of the level of impact, impact and mitigations/actions for each protected group**

*There may be more than one impact per protected group, in this case please add additional rows*

Group	Level of Impact <i>(high, med, low, none)</i>	Impact	Mitigation / action
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Age	None	There is no identified age-related impact from the potential adoption of the SCI and DEC.	The SCI and DEC contain a variety of consultation and engagement methods to be utilised by the Council and developers to ensure all age groups are enabled and supported to be able to engage in the planning process and development outcomes.
Disability	None	There is no identified disability-related impact from the potential adoption of the SCI and DEC.	The SCI and DEC contain a variety of consultation and engagement methods to be utilised by the Council and developers to ensure residents of all abilities are enabled and supported in engaging with the planning process. This includes providing both in-person and online events, and setting a high standard of expectation that engagement and consultation material is usable for any groups with identified disabilities. For example, providing large-print materials and ensuring content is compatible with e-readers.
Race	None	There is no identified race-related impact from the potential adoption of the SCI and DEC.	The SCI and DEC contain a variety of consultation and engagement methods to be utilised by the Council and developers to ensure all groups are enabled and supported to be able to engage in the planning process and development outcomes. Both the SCI and DEC encourage consideration of ensuring that consultation and engagement is done in a variety of locations and through various platforms to provide for a wide variety of groups.
Gender (sex)	None	There is no identified gender-related impact from the potential adoption of the SCI and DEC.	The SCI and DEC contain a variety of consultation and engagement methods to be utilised by the Council and developers to ensure all groups are enabled and

			supported to be able to engage in the planning process and development outcomes. Both the SCI and DEC encourage consideration of ensuring that consultation and engagement is done in a variety of locations and through various platforms to provide for a wide variety of groups.
Sexual orientation	None	There is no identified sexual orientation-related impact from the potential adoption of the SCI and DEC.	The SCI and DEC contain a variety of consultation and engagement methods to be utilised by the Council and developers to ensure all groups are enabled and supported to be able to engage in the planning process and development outcomes. Both the SCI and DEC encourage consideration of ensuring that consultation and engagement is done in a variety of locations and through various platforms to provide for a wide variety of groups.
Religion or belief	None	There is no identified religious or belief-related impact from the potential adoption of the SCI and DEC.	The SCI and DEC contain a variety of consultation and engagement methods to be utilised by the Council and developers to ensure all groups are enabled and supported to be able to engage in the planning process and development outcomes. Both the SCI and DEC encourage consideration of ensuring that consultation and engagement is done in a variety of locations and through various platforms to provide for a wide variety of groups.
Gender identity (Gender re-assignment)	None	There is no identified gender identity-related impact from the potential adoption of the SCI and DEC.	The SCI and DEC contain a variety of consultation and engagement methods to be utilised by the Council and developers to ensure all groups are enabled and supported to be able to

			engage in the planning process and development outcomes. Both the SCI and DEC encourage consideration of ensuring that consultation and engagement is done in a variety of locations and through various platforms to provide for a wide variety of groups.
Pregnancy or maternity	None	There is no identified pregnancy or maternity-related impact from the potential adoption of the SCI and DEC.	The SCI and DEC contain a variety of consultation and engagement methods to be utilised by the Council and developers to ensure all groups are enabled and supported to be able to engage in the planning process and development outcomes. Both the SCI and DEC encourage consideration of ensuring that consultation and engagement is done in a variety of locations and through various platforms to provide for a wide variety of groups. This means that events should be specifically designed to be accessible for pregnant women and should be child friendly as far as practicable to enable parents to engage also.
Caring responsibilities	None	There is no identified caring responsibilities-related impact from the potential adoption of the SCI and DEC.	The SCI and DEC contain a variety of consultation and engagement methods to be utilised by the Council and developers to ensure all groups are enabled and supported to be able to engage in the planning process and development outcomes. Both the SCI and DEC encourage consideration of ensuring that consultation and engagement is done in a variety of locations and through various platforms to provide for a wide variety of groups.

Socio-economic background	None	There is no identified socio-economic background-related impact from the potential adoption of the SCI and DEC.	The SCI and DEC contain a variety of consultation and engagement methods to be utilised by the Council and developers to ensure all groups are enabled and supported to be able to engage in the planning process and development outcomes. Both the SCI and DEC encourage consideration of ensuring that consultation and engagement is done in a variety of locations and through various platforms to provide for a wide variety of groups.
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<p><b>Consultation</b></p> <p><i>How were groups/individuals consulted (in particular those groups identified as being affected)?</i></p> <p><i>What research was used to help decision-makers understand the different impact on protected groups?</i></p>
<p>The SCI and DEC consultation was open to all residents and sought to enable all residents to be able to engage in the process and provide feedback to inform the final adopted versions. The consultation was held on the Council’s online Commonplace platform which holds high standards of accessibility, including being e-reader friendly (as were the PDFs included on the website containing the draft SCI and DEC). In addition, for residents who did not seek to engage and provide feedback via the Commonplace platform, they were encouraged to provide feedback via the Planning Policy team’s email address in whatever format they preferred. This provided additional flexibility for residents engaging with the consultation process.</p> <p>For accessibility purposes, the Commonplace post was signposted with a message about inclusivity, inviting people to email or call the planning policy team if the consultation was not accessible to anyone. Additionally, printed copies of the Commonplace consultation were distributed in the Royal Borough’s main local libraries, and in some community centres. The text on Commonplace was checked as being screen readable. The consultation was also publicised through an announcement post in Greenwich Info, in the Greenwich Resident Bulletin and on Talk Greenwich.</p> <p>Feedback was received from a range of stakeholders including residents, residents’ associations, organisations and businesses which provided a variety of community input. The consultation was also extended for a week to provide residents additional time to engage with the SCI and DEC and provide feedback.</p>
<p><b>Monitoring of Impact</b></p>
<p><b>Decision</b></p>

**Date of Review**

The Council is required under legislation to update the SCI every five years to ensure there is effective community involvement at all stages of the planning process. This provides an opportunity to also review equalities impacts if any issues had arisen during this period.



