**APPENDIX B –**

**Equality Impact Assessment ‘Knowing the needs of your customers and employees’**

* **Background**

An Equality Impact Assessment is an improvement tool.  It will assist you in ensuring that you have thought about the needs and impacts of your service/policy/function in relation to the protected characteristics. It enables a systematic approach to identifying and recording gaps and actions.

* **Legislation- Equality Duty**

As a local authority that provides services to the public, Charnwood Borough Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that we can demonstrate having paid due regard to the need to:

     Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

     Advance Equality of Opportunity

     Foster good relations

For the following protected characteristics:

**1.**     Age

**2.**    Disability

**3.**     Gender reassignment

**4.**     Marriage and civil partnership

**5.**     Pregnancy and maternity

**6.**     Race

**7.**     Religion and belief

**8.**     Sex (Gender)

**9.**     Sexual orientation

What is prohibited?

**1.**     Direct Discrimination

**2.**    Indirect Discrimination

**3.**     Harassment

**4.**     Victimisation

**5.**     Discrimination by association

**6.**     Discrimination by perception

**7.**     Pregnancy and maternity discrimination

**8.**     Discrimination arising from disability

**9.**     Failing to make reasonable adjustments

**Note: Complete the action plan as you go through the questions**

* **Step 1 – Introductory information**

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| Title of the policy | Statement of Community Involvement |
| Name of lead officer and others undertaking this assessment | Seb Wilkins (Senior Planning Officer) |
| Date EIA started | 31/08/2020 |
| Date EIA completed | 06/10/2020 |

* **Step 2 – Overview of policy/function being assessed:**

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| Outline: What is the purpose of this policy? (Specify aims and objectives) |
| The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the Council will consult on planning policy documents (including the Local Plan), engage with and support neighbourhood planning, and consult on planning applications. |
| What specific group/s is the policy designed to affect/impact and what is the intended change or outcome for them? |
| None – relates to the general public. |
| Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy? |
| None. |

* **Step 3 – What we already know and where there are gaps**

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| List any existing information/data do you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? Such as in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation etc.  Data/information such as:   * Consultation * Previous Equality Impact Assessments * Demographic information * Anecdotal and other evidence |
| Consultations for plan-making and development management are applicable to the public generally. The Council’s policy towards neighbourhood planning engagement is applicable to neighbourhood planning groups generally.  In relation to plan-making, the Council maintains a consultation database that includes consultees that are considered ‘hard to reach’, some of which will represent groups with ptotected characteristics. The list is not exhaustive due to the wide range of potential groups, however the Council encourages interested groups to register onto the consultation database on its website. |
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| What does this information / data tell you about diverse groups? If you do not hold or have access to any data/information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating / monitoring? (Please list) |
| Community interest groups exist for a range of reasons that reflect the diversity of society. Each group may have a unique perspective that would make a valuable contribution to plan-making and it is incumbent on the Council to enable/facilitate these groups to participate in planning consultations. |

* **Step 4 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?**

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| In light of the answers you have given in Step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not please explain why. |
| No, the Statement of Community Involvement relates to the public generally. In relation to plan-making, a specific consultation commitment is made to respond to Equalities requests as a consultation method.  Public interest, or the interest of specific equalities groups, in plan-making and development management functions can vary significantly depending on the proposal. In any event the Council has a general equalities duty to respond to equalities matters accordingly. |

* **Step 5 – Assessing the impact**

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| In light of any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge and awareness, please identify whether the policy has a positive or negative impact on the individuals or community groups (including what barriers these individuals or groups may face) who identify with any ‘protected characteristics’ and provide an explanation for your decision (please refer to the general duties on the front page). | |
|  | **Comments** |
| **Age** | Neutral – The document has a greater emphasis on online consultation methods and removes libraries as deposit points which could disproportionatly impact older people who are less likely to be online. However, a phycisal deposit point at the council offices is retained; site notices near proposed allocations will be used to publicise consultations within the direct locality; and the document makes a specific commitment to make reasonable adjustments for equalities purposes upon request. Overall this would maintain the advancement of equality of opportunity. |
| **Disability**  **(Physical, visual, hearing, learning disabilities, mental health)** | Positive – the document makes a specific commitment to make reasonable adjustments for equalities purposes upon request. This would particularly benefit individuals with certain disabilities. Overall the aim of this is to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity to respond to consultations. |
| **Gender Reassignment**  **(Transgender)** | Neutral – benefits of the document would be equal as they apply to the public generally. |
| **Race** | Positive – the document makes a specific commitment to make reasonable adjustments for equalities purposes upon request. This would particularly benefit individuals with language barriers. Overall the aim of this is to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity to respond to consultations. |
| **Religion or Belief**  **(Includes no belief)** | Neutral – benefits of the document would be equal as they apply to the public generally. |
| **Sex**  **(Gender)** | Neutral – benefits of the document would be equal as they apply to the public generally. |
| **Sexual Orientation** | Neutral – benefits of the document would be equal as they apply to the public generally. |
| **Other protected groups (Pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership)** | Neutral – benefits of the document would be equal as they apply to the public generally. |
| **Other socially excluded groups**  **(armed forces families/ communities, carers, low literacy, priority neighbourhoods, health inequalities, rural isolation, asylum seeker and refugee communities etc.)** | Positive – the document makes a specific commitment to facilitate focused meetings with interest groups, organisations and community advocates where there is demand. Overall the aim of this is to advance equality of opportunity to respond to consultations. |

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| Where there are potential barriers, negative impacts identified and/ or barriers or impacts are unknown, please outline how you propose to minimise all negative impact or discrimination.  Please note:   1. If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately. 2. Additionally, if you have identified adverse impact that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people. |
| No negative impacts or barriers have been identified. |
| Summarise your findings and give an overview as to whether the policy will meet Charnwood Borough Council’s responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity (please refer to the general duties on the front page). |
| The Statement of Community Involvement has been drafted with equalities considerations as a corporate priority. The policies contained apply to the public generally and are not intended to focus on any specific group. For plan-making the Council has committed to maintaining a mix of online and offline consultation methods and to make reasonable adjustments for equalities requests in line with the general equality duty. In all cases, and considering that planning issues can vary significantly depending on individual proposals, the general equality duty applies irrespective of the Statement of Community Involvement. |

* **Step 6- Monitoring, evaluation and review**

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| Are there processes in place to review the findings of this Assessment and make appropriate changes? In particular, how will you monitor potential barriers and any positive/ negative impact? |
| There is a legal requirement to review the Statement of Community Involvement every five years. The Council can also review the document at any time. Should unintended barriers become apparent, the Council is within its right to amend the document accordingly. |
| How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes?  e.g. policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems. |
| The Council will remain vigilant of equalities/access considerations in undertaking its planning functions. When the Statement of Community Involement is next reviewed, equalities considerations at that point in time will inform the review. |

* **Step 7- Action Plan**

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| **Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan:**  **The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan** | | | |
| **Reference**  **Number** | **Action** | **Responsible Officer** | **Target Date** |
|  | None |  |  |

* **Step 8- Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed?**

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|  | **Who needs to know**  (Please tick) | **How they will be informed**  (we have a legal duty to publish EIA’s) |
| **Employees** | Planning staff | If Cabinet adopts the Statement of Community Involvement, planning staff will be notified of this decision. The document will be published online for the reference of all service users (general public and organisations). |
| **Service users** | General public |
| **Partners and stakeholders** |  |
| **Others** |  |
| **To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are there?** |  | Accessibility requests will be responded to in a positive manner. |

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| **Please delete as appropriate** |
| **I agree / disagree with this assessment / action plan** |
| **If *disagree*, state action/s required, reasons and details of who is to carry them out with timescales:** |
| **Signed (Service Head):** |
| **Date: 19/10/20** |
| **Please send completed & signed assessment to Suzanne Kinder for publishing.** |

* **Step 9- Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the Service Head)**