

Maidstone Borough Council

Core Strategy 2011

Appendices

Regulation 25 Public Participation Consultation

10. Equalities Impact Assessment

CORE STRATEGY APPENDIX 10

Equalities impact assessment

Stage 1: Equality Impact Assessment

1. What are the main aims purpose and outcomes of the policy and how do these fit with the wider aims of the organisation?

The Core Strategy sets out the strategy to achieve development across the borough over the plan period from 2006 to 2026. Policies to promote development and the overall spatial strategy and objectives were derived from the corporate objectives and the objectives in the Sustainable Community Strategy. The council also has a Corporate Equality Policy which is included as appendix 1 to this assessment.

2. How do these aims affect our duty to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act.**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**
- **Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

- The council's Corporate Equality Policy (appendix 1) would be applied to ensure that there was no unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that has been prohibited by the Act
- The Core Strategy contains policies that aim to advance opportunities and foster good relations between members of the community including those who share one of the following protected characteristics:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and civil Partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion and belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation

3. What aspects of the policy including how it is delivered or accessed could contribute to inequality?

The policy contained in the Core Strategy aim to ensure that development occurs in such a way and is delivered in such a manner that does not contribute to inequality. Policies in the Core Strategy have been developed to continue to promote access to services provided by the council and to ensure that services and opportunities provided by others do not contribute to inequality in so far as the council is able to influence such matters.

4. Will the policy have an impact (positive or negative) upon the lives of people, including particular communities and groups who have protected characteristics? What evidence do you have for this?

The Core Strategy and policies contained therein will have a range of impacts on the lives of people living, working and visiting the borough. All of these impacts have been assessed in the Sustainability Appraisal, a document required to accompany the Core Strategy by the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations that govern how the Core Strategy is produced.

If the answer to the second question has identified potential impacts and you have answered yes to any of the remaining questions then you should carry out a full EQIA set out as stage 2 below.

Stage 2: Equality Impact Assessment

Name of policy/service/function

Maidstone Borough Council Local Development Framework Draft Core Strategy Regulation 25 Consultation

Purpose

What are you trying to achieve with the policy/service/function?

The Core Strategy development plan document (DPD) is the key document within Maidstone's local development framework (LDF) that sets the framework to guide the future development of the borough. It explains the "Why, what, where, when and how" development will be delivered through a strategy that plans for growth and regeneration whilst at the same time protects and enhances the borough's environmental and built assets. The Core Strategy:

- Sets out the scale of development.
- Identifies where development will be located.
- Identifies when development will be built.
- Explains how Maidstone Borough Council and its partners will deliver the strategy.

Who defines and manages it?

The Core Strategy is defined through a process involving members via the informal Core Strategy Members Working Group, the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel and its previous iterations, the Cabinet and ultimately full council together with the work of the Spatial Policy team as well as other senior officers in the council.

The process is managed by the Director of Change, Planning and The Environment in collaboration with the Interim Head of Core Strategy Development and the Spatial Policy Team Leader.

Who do you intend to benefit from it and how?

The whole community should benefit from the Core Strategy through the provision of a framework to allow and encourage development to occur in a planned and co-ordinated manner and through a strategy that plans for growth and regeneration whilst at the same time protects and enhances the borough's environmental and built assets.

What could prevent people from getting the most out of the policy / service / function?

Adequate access to and understanding of the Core Strategy and Appendices could prevent people getting the most out of the Core Strategy.

How will you get your customers involved in the analysis and how will you tell people about it?

The Core Strategy and Appendices will be subject to a full, wide ranging and thorough consultation process. The procedure for consultation is guided by the Planning Regulations and a communications strategy has been produced to guide the consultation process.

Evidence

How will you know if the policy delivers its intended outcome/benefits?

Each of the constituent policies in the Core Strategy includes a section that details how the policy will be monitored. Monitoring indicators will be reported on each year via the Annual Monitoring Report or other arrangements that will replace the AMR.

How satisfied are your customers and how do you know?

This is one of the first stages in testing the Core Strategy in the public arena so until the results of the currently proposed consultation process are known it is not possible to determine how satisfied customers are.

What existing data do you have on the people that use the service and the wider population?

Data on people that will use the service are gathered from such sources as Mosaic and other information source such as the Office of National Statistics. Use is also made of results from historic and emerging Census data.

What other information would it be useful to have? How could you get this?

At the present moment no additional information requirements have been identified.

Are you breaking down data by equality groups where relevant (such as by gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity)?

Data is broken down by equality groups as appropriate and where relevant.

Are you using partners, stakeholders, and councillors to get information and feedback?

Through the consultation process and via the statutory consultation that is required we use a wide variety of partners, stakeholders and councillors to get information and feedback on the Core Strategy

Impact

Are some people benefiting more – or less - than others? If so, why might this be?

*At this initial stage in the process it is not possible to tell if the Core Strategy is benefitting some people more than others. Such an analysis will be possible later on in the Core Strategy process.

Actions

If the evidence suggests that the policy/service/function benefits a particular group – or disadvantages another - is there a justifiable reason for this and if so, what is it?

Not applicable at this stage – see *answer above.

Is it discriminatory in any way?

See answer re impact.*

Is there a possible impact in relationships or perceptions between different parts of the community?

See answer re impact marked *

What measures can you put in place to reduce disadvantages?

Until we have information about how the policies within the Core Strategy are operating in practice it is not possible to prescribe measures to reduce disadvantages. This will be dealt with in the latter stages of the Core Strategy process.

Do you need to consult further?

Yes further consultation is planned as part of the statutory process governing the Core Strategy process.

Have you identified any potential improvements to customer service?

No potential improvements to customer service have yet been identified although this may happen during the latter stages of the Core Strategy process.

Who should you tell about the outcomes of this analysis?

The wider community will be informed of the outcomes of this analysis as this Equalities Impact Assessment will be published alongside the Core Strategy.

Have you built the actions into your Service Plan or Policy Implementation Plan with a clear timescale?

The Core Strategy process is governed by the Local Development Scheme, a statutory requirement of the Local Development Framework process.

When will this assessment need to be repeated?

This assessment will be repeated at Publication Stage and at Submission Stage.

Maidstone Borough Council

Corporate Equality Policy



01622 602000
www.maidstone.gov.uk



As a public authority, we believe we have a leading role to play in the promotion of equal opportunity in the community, both as employer and provider of services to the population of Maidstone and its visitors.

We recognise our statutory equality duties under legislation*, and are committed to meeting them. We are further committed to improving equality practice at both corporate and departmental level, and will provide resources from the budget earmarked for this purpose.

We will ensure that all employees and all users of the Council's services will be treated with fairness and consistency, without discrimination.

We will take action to combat direct and indirect discrimination in all areas of employment, service provision and delivery in respect of disability, gender, race, age, family or marital status, religion or belief, and sexual orientation as far as is permitted by statute law and associated Codes of Practice.

We recognise the need to identify groups within the community whose needs and requirements are less well met by Council services than those of other groups, and to consult them in a systematic way.

We will profile our workforce and the community. We will monitor our service delivery and usage to ensure equality of treatment for all, and take action where unequal treatment is identified.

We will monitor Council recruitment, promotion, training opportunities, and take up, pay, grievances and exit from employment to ensure equal treatment for all, and take action where unequal treatment is identified.

We will ensure that equality action plans and targets are regularly set, monitored and reviewed across the Council.

We will use local and nationally developed performance indicators to self-assess, audit and scrutinise our own performance.

* Current legislation includes the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Sex Discrimination Act (1975), Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006, the Human Rights Act (1998), Equal Pay Legislation, Codes of Practice issued by the Disability Rights Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality, Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam, and European Directives.

How will we do this?

- The establishment of a Cabinet Member and Council Officer with specific responsibilities for overseeing the Corporate Equality Policy.
- Our Social Inclusion Policy and Strategy.
- Our Race Equality Policy and Scheme.
- Our Code of Practice on The Recruitment and Selection of Employees.
- Our Corporate Equality Plan.
- Service Plans, which address equality issues.
- Best Value Reviews, which assess equality performance in service areas as a routine quality improvement measure.
- Active participation in, and where necessary creation of, community stakeholder groups to develop,
- monitor and review equality policies and practices within the Council.
- Ensuring that employees are fully conversant with the Policy and receive training in its operation.

Responsibilities for implementation

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Social Inclusion has overall political responsibility for the Corporate Equality Policy and Plan.

The Chief Executive has overall managerial responsibility for the Corporate Equality Policy and the Plan.

The Social Inclusion Manager has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating the Corporate Equality Policy and the Plan.

All staff have a responsibility to ensure their behaviour and that of others for which they are responsible comply at all times with the Policy.

Responsibilities for handling complaints

Initial complaints regarding employment issues made under this Policy will be dealt with by the Head of Human Resources.

Initial complaints involving service issues will be dealt with by the Customer Care Manager.

Auditing of the Policy will be through the Performance Review system; monitoring will be by the Social Inclusion Manager.

Complaints and outcomes will be passed to the Social Inclusion Manager for liaison and advice. The Cabinet Member responsible will be updated on these.

Further details

If you require any details please contact the Human Resources team on 01622 602172 or email internalrecruitmentteam@maidstone.gov.uk

This leaflet is available in alternative formats and can be translated into other languages.

01622 602000
www.maidstone.gov.uk



