

Appendix 1 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name of Policy/Service/Function	Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) Evidence Base
Date of Assessment	March 2008
Directorate	People, Policy & Performance
Head of Service	Satwant Pryce
Names and Roles of the people carrying out the EIA	Jane Brown, Head of Diversity Shahid Mallam, Diversity & Social Inclusion Manager Satwant Pryce, Head of Policy & Partnerhships Michael Toyer, Strategy & Research Manager Ben Plant Partnership Performance Manager Stephanie McEvaddy LSP Co-ordination Manager
Why is the Equality Impact Assessment being done?	To support the cabinet report of April 2008 and inform the development of the SCS.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Council and its partners are developing a long term view of the pressures and key drivers that will influence the development of the borough over the next 20 years – the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS).
- 1.2 The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is a collective, long-term set of ambitions and priorities that are specific to the borough and its position as part of a world city. The strategy sets out what the key agencies, in partnership with local people, will do to build a more sustainable, prosperous and cohesive community.
- 1.3 The key themes the SCS will focus on have been identified as:
- Managing population growth and change
 - Creating wealth and opportunity for residents
 - Retaining wealth in the borough
- 1.4 In working towards the development of the SCS, an in-depth exercise of collating and analysing the evidence base was undertaken:
- Waltham Forest Place Shaping (June 2007)
 - Supporting Evidence (June 2007)
 - Waltham Forest Shaping Our Future: Key Drivers for Change (June 2007)

- 1.5 The evidence base was used as the basis for developing a preferred scenario for the future, through scenario building workshops with members of the Local Strategic Partnership.
- 1.6 To inform the design, development and delivery of the SCS a number of thematic papers were produced across the following areas:
- Climate Change
 - Transport
 - Housing
 - Economy and Skills
 - Healthier Communities
 - Community Safety
 - Children and Young People (Education)
 - Community Cohesion
 - Public Space and Leisure

The scope for each of the thematic papers was to:

- Identify and agree the issues for the thematic paper
 - Assess the current situation
 - Scope and agree the changes needed
 - Develop the work programme to address the issues identified
- 1.7 There is a consensus across the authority and its partners that the SCS presents a rare opportunity to truly mainstream and embed equalities and diversity into the very fabric of what the council and its partners deliver over the next 15-20 years.
- 1.8 Given the SCS is a high level strategic document that will define the way in which we design and deliver services as well as planning for the future economic and spatial development of the borough its impact will be and should be for all groups and communities that live, work and socialise in the area.
- 1.9 This report will assess the implications of the SCS through an equalities lens, focusing particularly on maximizing opportunities for equality groups as well as ensuring that potential negative impact is identified early on and dealt with in an appropriate way.
- 1.10 The assessment focuses on the following key question:
- **Is the evidence base (including the thematic papers) inclusive and does it offer a sufficiently sound basis for priority setting and decision making from an equalities perspective?**

2. Profile of groups affected and the nature and significance of the impact

2.1.1 Age Equality

The SCS strategy will affect both young people and older people in our community.

As the issue of an ageing population is specifically mentioned in the preferred scenario (managing population growth and change) the issues arising from this are relevant to each of the thematic papers. Age equality is highlighted specifically in the community safety, health and housing papers but not specifically mentioned in climate change, economy and skills or community cohesion.

The needs of older people are specifically mentioned in respect of their vulnerability to crime and their fear of it. In respect of housing specific mention is made of the need to plan for a population that has an increasingly large number of over 65 and over 85 year olds and also of enabling people to stay in their own homes as they get older. The housing paper also explores how to effectively use limited land through higher density housing and recommends a density toolkit be developed to take this forward. The impact of higher density housing on older people is not explored.

With regard to younger people, specific mention is made of the issues faced by young people in respect of crime including their fear of it and the disproportionate number of young people involved in prolific crime. With regard to health specific mention is made of infant health and teenage conception rates. The need to significantly improve outputs and outcomes for all young people is stated in the education paper.

2.1.2 Disability equality

The SCS strategy will affect disabled people in our community especially as the strategy seeks to manage an ageing population and the incidence of disability increases with age.

Disability is specifically mentioned in the community safety, health, housing and education papers and less well covered in the climate change, community cohesion and economy and skills papers

The particular vulnerability of disabled people is specifically mentioned in respect of community safety. The community safety thematic paper also points out the

high incidence of people with mental illness amongst detainees in custody which is a disability issue.

The focus on economic participation and wealth creation offers potential benefits for disabled people who experience economic exclusion and poverty as a consequence. This issue is not explicitly explored in the thematic paper.

The health thematic paper covers disability equality issues by raising health conditions which are covered under disability discrimination legislation such as diabetes and HIV infection and addresses health inequalities amongst different ethnic groups and by gender.

The education paper highlights the opportunity to provide inclusive education for pupils with special education needs (some of which will constitute a disability).

The housing paper explores how to effectively use limited land through higher density housing and recommends a density toolkit be developed to take this forward. The impact of higher density housing on disabled people is not explored.

The emphasis on community cohesion is an opportunity to better promote the Council's duty to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.

2.1.3 Gender equality

The SCS strategy will affect both women and men in our community. As women generally live longer than men an ageing population is likely to include a high proportion of elderly women, in addition women are generally lower paid than men so the emphasis on wealth creation offers potential benefits for women in particular. In turn this will support the Council's duty to promote equality and eliminate discrimination including the pay gap. The economic disadvantage and exclusion of lone parents is raised in the economy and skills paper.

The community safety paper analyses the fear of crime by different equality groups and recognises the different experiences of women and men. There is no specific mention of domestic violence and it is unclear whether this is expected to increase or decrease in the preferred scenario although developing a multi-agency approach to addressing domestic violence is a commitment as part of the priority to improve community safety and address anti-social behaviour. In respect of community safety there is recognition of the risk of an emerging sex trade which is a gender equality issue. Recent Government Equality Office information indicates that 85% of sex workers are now women from abroad.

The health paper identifies the HIV infection rates of Black African women and in doing so identifies issues of multiple disadvantage. By highlighting this issue in the thematic paper we have taken this to mean that health data is sufficiently sensitive to precisely identify this group and that the women concerned are already in the health care system.

The housing paper makes no comment on the implications of housing an ageing population where the majority may be women. Given that 70% of council tenants are currently women there may be unexplored issues here.

2.1.4 Race equality

The SCS strategy will affect both the white and ethnic minority populations. The preferred scenario makes clear that the ethnic diversity of the community will increase with the arrival of new communities and that this will have implications for community cohesion in particular.

Race equality issues are raised in the health, community safety and economy and skills papers but not raised in the climate change or housing papers. In respect of housing in particular it is not clear what is known about the predicted family sizes of different ethnic groups and the implications of this for the types of housing the borough will need. However this information is being gathered via the housing strategy.

There are no specific references to the growth of the “mixed” ethnic group which is currently the fastest growing ethnic group nationally. Little is known about the needs, experiences and life chances of children and young people in this group although they appear to be becoming increasingly involved as users of youth offending services.

The health paper confirms that BAME communities are more likely to have diabetes. By highlighting this issue in the thematic paper we have taken this to mean that health data is sufficiently sensitive to precisely identify this group and that the BAME people concerned are already in the health care system.

2.1.5 Religion/Beliefs

The SCS strategy will affect people from different faiths. The preferred scenario makes clear that the ethnic diversity of the community will increase and with that may come increasing religious diversity and that this will have implications for community cohesion in particular.

The points raised above in race equality in respect of health, economy and skills and housing may also be relevant here in cases where ethnic and religious diversity intersect.

The community safety paper recognises that young people will come from increasingly more ethnic and religiously diverse background and that this will form part of the context in which community safety will need to be addressed. The implication of this are not very clear.

2.1.6 Sexual Orientation

The evidence base and thematic papers make no reference to issues around sexual orientation and this is therefore the least developed element of the evidence base. During the next 20 years a generation of people will have grown up in a world where legal protections for LGBT people will have been in place for most of their life. As a result homophobic attitudes may have lessened. There may be currently unexplored issues and risks arising from this in terms of community cohesion and community safety in the event that newcomers arrive from places with negative or hostile attitudes and as the LGBT community grows in confidence and becomes more visible.