

SUMMARY

Date of EIA: **October 2006**

Service: Planning Policy

Function or policy
to be assessed:

Is it a policy or function?	Function – Planning Policy comprises: All land use policy planning matters e.g. production of the local development plan (Local Development Framework and Regional Spatial Strategy) s.106 planning gain agreements Urban design and historic buildings Environmental policies Most of the services work is governed by statute
Is it a new or existing policy or function?	Existing
Aim/objective/purpose of the policy or function	To provide and maintain the spatial planning policy framework for the District.
Who is responsible for the policy or function?	The Planning Policy Manager
With regard to the equalities themes, which groups might be impacted by the policy or function?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age Potentially all of these groups <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion or Belief <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation Planning Policy provides the basic land-use framework within which North Dorset District Council's residents and visitors live and work. The section is aware that its work could have implications for some of the groups covered by the Council's equality and diversity commitments e.g. older people, younger people, disabled people, people of ethnic minority including Travellers and Gypsies.
Which groups might be adversely affected ?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age Potentially all of these groups <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion or Belief <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation Some of the groups covered by the Council's equality and diversity commitment could be adversely affected by Planning Policy's work e.g. older people, younger people, disabled people, people of ethnic minority origin.
What evidence has been found to indicate this? (include any consultation undertaken)	The 'statement of community involvement' is a key element of recent planning regulations. This requires local planning authorities to involve local people in all stages of producing the Local Development Plan. Planning Policy has therefore begun a major programme of research and consultation with the general public, faith based groups, disability organisations and older and younger people designed to find out how people's needs and how they would like to be involved in the future development of the LDP. Census and other local data was also used to identify needs.

On what grounds can adverse or differential impact be justified?	Not applicable
What changes are proposed to the policy or function to reduce or remove adverse or differential impact?	<p>Policy Planning seeks to ensure that when it consults it takes into account the communications needs of residents and holds meetings/exhibitions in suitable, accessible venues e.g. community and faith centres and schools. Some staff have also been trained in community engagement techniques designed to encourage the involvement of what are sometimes called 'hard to reach' groups.</p> <p>Government and Regional Planning policies require Planning Policy to take into account access issues in all aspects of its work and to identify the needs of Travellers and Gypsies and how their needs will be met through the New LDP. Planning Policy is doing this.</p>
In to which plan or strategy has the necessary action been incorporated?	The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which set out our commitment to community consultation is a key document within the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) which is a statutory process.
What monitoring arrangements have been put in place?	The LDF Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) will monitor the effectiveness of the Council's policies. A review of the SCI will take place if it is found deficient through the AMR – otherwise it will be reviewed within 5 years.
What conclusions have been drawn or recommendations have been made?	<p>Planning Policy's community involvement work is still at an early stage but some conclusions can already be drawn. PP sought advice from the Local Strategic Partnership but found it could offer little practical advice and guidance. PP also found that although the Council's Community Engagement Strategy gave some useful points it did not help that much. (Update since interview – the Community Engagement Strategy has progress and our understanding of how we may work within it has improved).</p> <p>PP is finding that the ways in which people want to be involved varies greatly from an annual feedback session to wanting to see copies of every draft report. PP is also finding that some organisations and individuals are complaining that the Council is forever asking them for their views. The Council needs to think how it can better co-ordinate such requests to avoid 'consultation overload', especially as its EIA work increases.</p> <p>The Council does not have a policy to provide information in Plain English. Planning Policy tries to do this but would welcome a council wide policy and advice to do this and when to provide information in languages other than English.</p>
Has the information in this EIA been made publicly available?	Yes – on the council website.

PART II

Further Actions			
Problem/barrier identified	Proposed actions to overcome problem/barrier	Responsibility	Target date
Documents required to be reviewed in accordance with Equality Policy.	Review Documentation	TW	March 2008