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Form to be used for the Full Equalities Impact Assessment

Service Area: Planning	Section: Planning Policy	Date of Initial assessment: 12/05/2020	Key Person responsible for assessment: Juliet Evans	Date assessment commenced: 15/05/20
Name of Policy to be assessed:		Addendum to Statement of Community Involvement in Planning 2015 in relation to Covid-19		
1. In what area are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact		Race	Disability	Age
		Gender reassignment	Religion or Belief	Sexual Orientation
		Sex	Pregnancy and Maternity	Marriage & Civil Partnership
Other strategic/ equalities considerations		Safeguarding/ Welfare of Children and vulnerable adults	Mental Wellbeing/ Community Resilience	
2. Background: Give the background information to the policy and the perceived problems with the policy which are the reason for the Impact Assessment.		The Statement of Community Involvement in Planning is a vital document which sets out the City Council's approach to involving the community and stakeholders in the production of planning policy documents and planning control decisions in the city. The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the City Council will involve the community when preparing planning policy documents and deciding on planning applications. In summary, it is about how the Council inform, involve and consult local people in our planning decisions. Coronavirus (Covid-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. In order		

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	<p>to control the spread of the virus and the pandemic in UK, the UK government introduced several restrictions from March 2020 including social distancing measures. As a result of Covid-19 and the restrictions implemented by the UK government, a number of public places have been closed and are not open to the public. Due to the restrictions imposed by the UK government in relation to COVID-19, there are a number of current methods of publication requirements stated in the Statement of Community Involvement in Planning 2015 which are not currently possible to adhere to. Oxford City Council therefore wishes to make an addendum to its Statement of Community Involvement in Planning 2015 in relation to the Coronavirus pandemic.</p>
3. Methodology and Sources of Data: The methods used to collect data and what sources of data	The measures set out in the addendum have been chosen for implementation as a result of careful consideration into the best methods to engage with the public given the COVID-19 restrictions and also the result of formal legal advice. This seeks to ensure that the measures we have chosen seek to minimise the impact on the public as a result of the council not being able to make hard copies available in key deposit locations.
4. Consultation This section should outline all the consultation that has taken place on the EIA. It should include the following. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why you carried out the consultation.• Details about how you went about it.• A summary of the replies you received from people you consulted.• An assessment of your proposed policy (or policy	An addendum to a Statement of Community Involvement can be made without consultation. This is confirmed in the National Planning Policy Guidance under paragraph 035 (Reference ID: 61-035-20190723, revision date: 23 07 2019). Additionally, we will not be undertaking a consultation on the addendum to the SCI, as they need to be implemented urgently due to COVID-19 restrictions. Therefore there is not enough time to undertake a consultation. The restrictions associated with the Coronavirus pandemic provide only limited options as to how this can be achieved, and these have been set out in the measures. The City Council seeks to ensure that by implementing the measures set in the addendum, that we are taking all reasonably practical steps to limit the prospect of any prejudice arising if it remains unable to make hard copies of key planning documents and decisions available for inspection at its offices and at local libraries.

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options) in the light of the responses you received.	
• A statement of what you plan to do next	

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5. Assessment of Impact:

Provide details of the assessment of the policy on the six primary equality strands. There may have been other groups or individuals that you considered. Please also consider whether the policy, strategy or spending decisions could have an impact on safeguarding and / or the welfare of children and vulnerable adults

	Race Neutral	Disability Positive	Age Positive
	Gender reassignment Neutral	Religion or Belief Neutral	Sexual Orientation Neutral
	Sex Neutral	Pregnancy and Maternity Neutral	Marriage & Civil Partnership Neutral

Race:

No equalities impact identified.

Disability:

Those with long term health conditions and certain disabilities may be at high or moderate risk of catching coronavirus. This may mean they are unable to leave the house due to self-isolating, or leave the house very infrequently for only essential trips. Therefore, by ensuring all relevant documentation is accessible on our website, and the public are kept informed of key planning matters and documents through the measures set out in the SCI addendum, those self-isolating and not leaving the house are still able to engage in planning.

Age:

Data from Age UK collected in 2016 stated that '4.2 million people aged 65+ have never used the internet'. The SCI addendum explains that the City Council will make any relevant planning documents available online. This will be difficult for those who do not have access to the internet, of

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	<p>which those over 65 are more likely to fall into that category.</p> <p>The public will still be advised of relevant planning applications and key planning matters by site notices, public notices, and press notices. The press notices are particularly helpful for those 70+ as they are classed as people who are at moderate risk (clinically vulnerable) from coronavirus, and thus less likely to leave the house to read a library noticeboard, but could access a newspaper. Where necessary a phone number of an officer will be provided, so that those who have difficulty having access to key documents can seek advice.</p> <p>These measures will allow those who do not have access to the internet at home will have a method of being informed of key planning matters and documentation. Therefore, although there is potentially an impact on those who cannot access the internet (who statistically are more likely to be over 65), the measures are considered to adequately address this issue and help to ensure no person is prejudiced by physical copies of planning documents not being available.</p> <p>Gender reassignment:</p> <p>No equalities impact identified.</p> <p>Religion or Belief:</p> <p>No equalities impact identified.</p> <p>Sexual orientation:</p> <p>No equalities impacts identified.</p> <p>Sex:</p> <p>No equalities impacts identified.</p> <p>Pregnancy and Maternity:</p>
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50	<p>Those who are pregnant have been classed as having a moderate risk of catching coronavirus. This may mean they are unable to leave the house due to self-isolating, or leave the house very infrequently for only essential trips. Therefore, by ensuring all relevant documentation is accessible on our website, and the public are kept informed of key planning matters and documents through the measures set out in the SCI addendum, those self-isolating and not leaving the house are still able to engage in planning</p> <p>Marriage and Civil Partnership:</p> <p>No equalities impacts identified.</p>
6. Consideration of Measures:	The measures set out in the SCI are deemed to be the most appropriate, as confirmed through legal advice. Alternative options in these circumstances are very limited due to government restrictions,

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This section should explain in detail all the consideration of alternative approaches/mitigation of adverse impact of the policy	meaning it is not possible to provide physical copies of planning documentation at the locations set out in the SCI. The health and safety of officers and the public was the most important consideration when deciding which measures to implement, and thus the measures set out in the SCI addendum are considered to be the most appropriate to adopt, whilst still allowing the public to engage successfully in planning matters.				
6a. Monitoring Arrangements: Outline systems which will be put in place to monitor for adverse impact in the future and this should include all relevant timetables. In addition it could include a summary and assessment of your monitoring, making clear whether you found any evidence of discrimination.	Government advice regarding COVID-19 restrictions will be closely followed in order to ensure that if advice changes to allow the suspension any of the measures set out in the addendum and the reinstatement of the adopted SCI this will take place at the earliest convenience. This will ensure that the addendum is only adopted for as long as it is required, and no longer.				
7. Date reported and signed off by City Executive Board:					
8. Conclusions: What are your conclusions drawn from the results in terms of the policy impact	The SCI addendum should not have an adverse impact on the six primary equality strands. The addendum to the SCI sets out how the planning service will ensure that communities can still successfully engage in planning matters during the COVID-19 restrictions enforced by government.				
9. Are there implications for the Service Plans?	NO	10. Date the Service Plans will be updated		11. Date copy sent to Equalities Lead Officer	

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.13. Date reported to Scrutiny and Executive Board:		14. Date reported to City Executive Board:		12. The date the report on EqIA will be published	
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Signed (completing officer)

Signed (Lead Officer)

Please list the team members and service areas that were involved in this process:

Equalities Lead Officer
Service Manager
Lindsey Cane, Legal Services Manager