

**Shropshire Council Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA)**  
**Part One Screening Record 2020**

**A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions**

|   |
|---|
| <b>Name of proposed service change</b>      |
| Community and Rural Strategy for Shropshire |

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| <b>Name of lead officer carrying out the screening</b> |
| Tom Dodds  |

|  |
|--|
| <b>Decision, review and monitoring</b> |
|--|

| Decision                         | Yes | No |
|----------------------------------|-----|----|
| Part One ESIIA Only?             | Yes |    |
| Proceed to Part Two Full Report? |     | No |

*If completion of a Part One assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes below and sign off as indicated. If a Part Two report is required, please move on to full report stage.*

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| <b>Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations</b>   |
| <p>Screening indicates that a medium positive impact is anticipated for all groupings within the community and thus for the whole community, as the Community and Rural Strategy sets out to help the Council make progress towards achieving the three national equality aims set out in the general equality duty placed upon local authorities under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). There is potential for this to move up to a high positive impact for Disability, Age, Sex, and Social Inclusion, with regard to access to services.</p> <p>Considerations around social inclusion and access to services are to the forefront of our minds as a large and sparsely populated rural county, as well as in the minds of national policymakers, not least as the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the evidence emerging about these impacts, have thrown inequalities into sharp relief.</p> <p>As with the related Local Plan Review, and Local Economic Growth Strategies for six of our key market towns, the Community and Rural Strategy is likely to have a positive effect on all groups in society and is intended to do so, given overall aims of driving Shropshire's sustainable development, economic growth and proactive responses to clean growth, climate change and other environmental considerations, consistent with the Council's strategic vision and objectives.</p> <p>The Community and Rural Strategy is likewise anticipated to generate a positive impact for the following groups in particular:</p> |

- Hard to reach in rural areas such as families, children and young people, older people, rural businesses and homeworkers, gypsies and travellers, and low income households;
- Vulnerable households in market towns, including families, older people and people on low incomes.

It is not possible at this stage to say with certainty what the likely impacts of the service change will be upon the community and upon groupings within the community.

Actions to maximise the positive impacts will include:

- encouraging Place Plan areas or clusters around market towns and key centres to fully consider opportunities to involve all elements of their communities in the identification and delivery of actions that will achieve the shared priorities and be involved in the decision making where this is possible;
- asking Town and Parish Councils and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector organisations to help reach into their communities during the consultation phase to encourage and enable all elements to take part if they want to;
- ongoing efforts to engage with people in the Protected Characteristic groupings, particularly where low levels of responses to public consultation have been received to date;
- officers continuing to work with the intended audiences for the service change, on the basis that this is all who live, work in and visit Shropshire.

The recent Public Health England (PHE) report, entitled: *“Beyond the data; understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups”*, has identified the additional challenges in Black, Asian and ethnic minority groupings around finding out about and accessing services, in terms of the information and support that we provide, and the ways in which we seek to provide such help. This also brings in joint efforts across our area and work with other neighbouring authorities, public sector organisations, and the voluntary and community sector across our borders, either in Wales or across to the West Midlands, or North to South.

### **Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations**

The Community and Rural Strategy will be underpinned by a SMART delivery plan at the Shropshire Council level, and it is proposed that plans to deliver the shared priorities will be in place at the Place Plan area or cluster level.

Progress with the Shropshire Council Plan will be monitored using the delivery milestones and appropriate measures related to the actions and outcomes to be achieved. Feedback from stakeholders will also provide an indication of progress and impact, and progress updates will also be sought from the Place Plan areas or clusters.

We will continue to target efforts at identifying any gaps in equality and diversity data, and in finding out where there may be barriers to accessing particular services, and how this might be addressed, for people with one or more of the Protected Characteristics and for people at risk of social exclusion. This will also be reported upon in the annual Service User and Workforce Diversity Reports published online. Baseline work with town and parish councils, the VCSE and Shropshire Council councillors on development of the Community and Rural Strategy was reported upon in the Service User Diversity Report for 2019.

The Council is developing actions to enhance any positive impacts for groupings arising from the pandemic, due to realising the potential of online services to increase social inclusion, eg for faith communities eg for younger people, older people, and people at risk of social isolation, subject to acquisition of digital skills and to assured digital connectivity.

Any changes to service configurations towards greater use of online resources will need to ensure that the importance of physical access to such facilities and amenities, not least in minimising social isolation for groupings such as people with disabilities, remains to the forefront of our minds.

From an outcomes angle for communities, engagement with all Members as community leaders, and through Cabinet and Portfolio Holder, will help service areas and therefore the Council to ensure that information, feedback and concerns are raised through a variety of channels and that actions may then be identified as necessary to seek to mitigate any negative impacts and enhance positive impacts that are envisaged.

### **Associated ESIIAs**

- Local Plan Partial Review Stage One: Issues and Strategic Options; January 2017;
- Local Plan Partial Review Stage Two: Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development; October 2017;
- Shropshire Local Plan Partial Review: Third Stage: Preferred Sites, November 2018
- Shropshire Local Plan Partial Review: Fourth Stage: Strategic Sites, July 2019
- Shropshire Local plan partial Review: Fifth Stage. Regulation 18 Pre Submission Draft, August 2020

These screening assessments accompanied or are accompanying reports to Cabinet, published on the website at [www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)

The ESIIA accompanying the Local Economic Growth Strategies report was completed as part of documentation to Cabinet in March 2020.

### **Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of any other considerations. This includes climate change and health and well being considerations**

Cabinet gave recent approval to the use of health impact assessments. This proposal provides an early opportunity for utilising the guidance that has been developed for use in this regard, in order to more fully capture the health and well being benefits anticipated. It is timely that such approval was sought and given, as the decision was made just before the Covid-19 pandemic reached Shropshire, and as the Council will be able to focus and shape local outcomes to improve health and well being across groupings through joint efforts across sectors, utilising emerging national evidence and national learning points. This is particularly so for people in BAME groupings, for men, for people who are obese, and for older people.


Maximising the positive equality impacts in terms of economic benefits is focussed upon joint efforts to influence national policy around social inclusion, including through the Rural Services Network, and joint work through the Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector

Assembly and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This has involved collating and submitting evidence to parliamentary select committee inquiries around digital and social inclusion issues, the rural economy, and regional disparities. We also engage directly with Government Departments on such issues, for example with the Department of Health on the Industrial Strategy Grand Challenge of an Ageing Society. We will continue to do so.

The groupings likely to benefit in economic terms are younger people, people who do not have digital skills to enable them to make the most of online opportunities to access services and support, and people at risk of physical and digital isolation, whether they live in one of our more rural areas or within one of our market towns and villages.

Environmental impacts of activities through schools and maximisation of use of outdoor amenities and green spaces, to further promote mental and physical well being and opportunities for people to access such amenities regardless of their location within Shropshire, could for example include community transport arrangements.



### **Scrutiny at Part One screening stage**

| <b>People involved</b>  | <b>Signatures</b>   | <b>Date</b>                 |
|---|---|-----------------------------|
| Lead officer carrying out the screening<br><b>Tom Dodds, Intelligence and Insight Manager</b> |   | 3 <sup>rd</sup> August 2020 |
| Any internal support*<br><b>Mrs Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist</b>             |  | 4 <sup>th</sup> August 2020 |
| Any external support**  |   |                             |

*\*This refers to other officers within the service area*

*\*\*This refers either to support external to the service but within the Council, eg from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, or support external to the Council, eg from a peer authority*

### **Sign off at Part One screening stage**

| <b>Name</b>                | <b>Signatures</b>   | <b>Date</b>                 |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Lead officer's name        |  | 4 <sup>th</sup> August 2020 |
| Accountable officer's name |  | 4 <sup>th</sup> August 2020 |

*\*This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer*

## **B. Detailed Screening Assessment**

### **Aims of the service change and description**

The Community and Rural Strategy has been developed following the recognition that an holistic view of the needs of Shropshire communities would provide a solid starting point to help promote sustainability and resilience, and to ensure that value and the challenges and benefits of living in rural areas.

The strategy has two elements. The first is based around developing evidence based shared priorities for Shropshire as a whole, that are also relevant and recognisable to local communities.

The second looks at how these can be implemented across the County and also to provide the framework for their delivery at a Shropshire Council area level and through action and delivery within and by local areas.

It is expected that the strategy should help to identify and address inequalities, For example access to services, and improve outcomes for communities and individuals.

### **Shared priorities**

A substantial evidence base has been developed which has been used to inform workshops with Town and Parish Councils and the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector, and with Shropshire Councillors and Senior Managers. Engagement has also taken place with the VCSA Board, the Business Board, and discussions have also taken place with the SALC Working Group. The evidence base and the outcome of the engagement activity have been used to shape the shared priorities:

- Keeping everyone happy and healthy, whatever their age (Mental Health)
- Helping people who are lonely to connect with others and enjoy themselves (Loneliness)
- Finding effective and sustainable ways to move people around (
- Embracing the skills and experience of our older generation
- Making sure we have the right homes in the right places
- Attracting and keeping young people in the county and developing a skilled workforce
- Sorting out physical and digital connectivity
- Reducing our impact on the climate and wider environment

### **Local Governance Proposals - the framework for delivery**

The proposed approach for local governance is based around effect collaborative working, involving the local Shropshire Council Members, representatives from the Town and Parish Councils in the area, the voluntary community and social enterprise sector, schools, local GPs, police, fire, the business community.

Shropshire Council will provide direction and operate as an enabler.

Place Plan areas, possibly grouped, would identify the shared priorities relevant to them, the actions that they would need to take, and how they would use their collective resources to do this. They may also have 'asks' of Shropshire Council to help them achieve their outcomes.

National evidence to date has identified a disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic for groupings including Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) communities, faith communities, younger people, older people, people with disabilities, and those for whom there is a gendered economic impact. These groupings all fall within what are termed Protected Characteristic groupings under the Equality Act 2010.

Alongside the local actions already scoped, the Community and Rural Strategy will therefore also need to include proposed actions for joint work to identify and seek to address the inequalities emerging to date across a range of groupings and communities affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. This should then facilitate tie in with national actions in response to a range of groupings affected, as well as to the recommendations made in the Public Health England report "*Beyond the data; understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups*"; PHE, June 2020, and any further national evidence arising.

#### **Intended audiences and target groups for the service change**

All those who live in, work in and visit Shropshire.

All those who seek to serve and support communities and groupings within them across Shropshire, including, in alphabetical order:

- Defra and other Government Departments, and Government agencies
- Health providers including primary care (GPs, dentists, pharmacists), NHS Foundation trusts, and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)
- Inter faith forums and faith communities
- Local authorities and collectives thereof, including the County Councils Network (CCN), the Local Government Association (LGA), the Rural Services Network (RSN), and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)
- Local Members of Parliament
- Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- Other public sector and business sector organisations
- Parish and town councils
- Schools, colleges and universities
- Shropshire Business Board
- Shropshire Council councillors
- Shropshire Council workforce
- Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly
- Voluntary and community organisations, alliances and movements

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but it is intended to demonstrate inclusive approaches alongside the need to engage with specific target groupings according to specific circumstances eg approaches to achieve digital connectivity across the county involve a range of sectors and organisations.

### **Evidence used for screening of the service change**

The Community and Rural Strategy has been developed using a significant evidence base that has been analysed to identify trends, correlations and specific issues. These were presented in workshops in October and November 2019, to inform the engagement discussions.

The evidence and the workshop notes will be published on the Information, Intelligence and Insight pages of the Council's website.

Contextual information about Shropshire is already published on the website through the Performance Feedback and Insight team, with analyses of demographical information, area profiles, Shropshire Snapshots of population, etc. This is in the section on Facts and Figures at [www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)

The evidence being used It draws upon the following:

- Local authority and rural authority comparator data
- ONS Statistics
- Public Health England statistics and analyses with regard to the Covid-19 pandemic
- Rural Services Network resources on rural issues and needs
- Shropshire Council county level and area profiles, statistical analyses and reports
- Shropshire Council service area data

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but it is intended to demonstrate the breadth of evidence not only collated to date but also required to be kept up to date, in order to facilitate timely and evidence based decision making processes.

Use has also been made of: evidence collected for annual service user and workforce diversity reports; feedback from communities, stakeholders and staff in development of approaches including place based approaches towards working with communities; Council and other contributions to national consultations and opportunities to submit evidence about needs, such as through the RSN for tis Revitalising Rural campaign; and good practice examples of strategic approaches towards supporting rural communities and businesses.

### **Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change**

The shared priorities have emerged from engagement with Town and Parish Councils and VSCE organisations, and Shropshire Councillors and Senior Officers. Engagement has also taken place with the VCSA Board, Shropshire Business Board and with the SALC Working Group.

The shared priorities and the options for local governance arranges will be consulted on. The outcomes of this consultation will inform the final shape of the shared priorities and inform the local governance arrangements.

The results of the consultation will be used to review this ESIIA and identify whether updates

will be required.

The length of the consultation will be determined following discussion with Legal and Democratic Services. It will be likely to involve surveys, as well as potentially attending meetings within place plan areas to collect views and feedback

Consultation and engagement will therefore be adapted according to the actions to be carried out, and it may be that specific screening ESIIAs will need to be undertaken, particularly if there is public consultation planned.

### **Initial assessment for each group**

***Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through inserting a tick in the relevant column. Please add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.***

| <b>Protected Characteristic groups and other groups in Shropshire</b>  | <b>High negative impact<br/>Part Two<br/>ESIIA<br/>required</b> | <b>High positive impact<br/>Part One<br/>ESIIA<br/>required</b> | <b>Medium positive or negative impact<br/>Part One ESIIA<br/>required</b> | <b>Low positive or negative impact<br/>Part One<br/>ESIIA<br/>required</b> |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Age</b> (please include children, young people, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group eg child for whom there are safeguarding concerns eg older person with disability) |   | ✓potential  | Medium positive impact  |  |
| <b>Disability</b> (please include: mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)                                |   | ✓potential  | Medium positive impact  |  |
| <b>Gender re-assignment</b> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)  |   |   | Medium positive impact  |  |
| <b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b> (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)  |   |   | Medium positive impact  |  |
| <b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)   |   |   | Medium positive impact  |  |
| <b>Race</b> (please include: ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, gypsy, traveller)  |   |   | Medium positive impact  |  |
| <b>Religion and belief</b> (please include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Non conformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)                                  |   |   | Medium positive impact  |  |
| <b>Sex</b> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)   |   |   | Medium positive impact  |  |

|  |  |            |                        |  |
|--|--|------------|------------------------|--|
| <b>Sexual Orientation</b> (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)  |  |            | Medium positive impact |  |
| <b>Other: Social Inclusion</b> (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable) |  | ✓potential | Medium positive impact |  |

### **Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations including climate change and health and well being**

It is expected that the delivery of the shared priorities will develop a wide range of dependences and interdependences on the strategies of the Council.

Cabinet gave recent approval to the use of health impact assessments. This proposal provides an early opportunity for utilising the guidance that has been developed by Public Health colleagues with regard to impact upon health and well being, in order to more fully optimise evidence alongside it and capture health and well being benefits across groupings.

The Community and Rural Strategy as proposed is intended to have positive impacts in terms of the human rights of individuals and groups.

There are intended to be positive equality impacts in terms of economic benefits, which are focussed upon joint efforts to influence national policy around social inclusion, including through the Rural Services Network, and joint work through the Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This has involved collating and submitting evidence to parliamentary select committee inquiries around digital and social inclusion issues, the rural economy, and regional disparities. We have also engaged directly with Government Departments on such issues. We will continue to do so.

The groupings likely to benefit in economic terms are younger people, people who do not have digital skills to enable them to make the most of online opportunities to access services and support, and people at risk of physical and digital isolation, whether they live in one of our more rural areas or within one of our market towns and villages.

Looking at environmental impacts, there is anticipated to continue to be a neutral to low positive outcome in relation to the following aspects of climate change mitigation, with efforts to introduce and maximise online resources matched by efforts to improve digital connectivity and reduce social isolation across the county. Any energy efficiency changes to the fabric of community assets and buildings that improves their energy and fuel outputs will be of benefit to the communities that make use of them, as well as to the wider environment, just as better use of local buildings that reduces or obviates the need to travel other than on foot or by bicycle will also be of benefit to the wider environment.

There is a clear link with the Regulation 18 Pre-Submission Draft of the Local Plan, which includes a draft policy specifically about health and wellbeing and the ways in which development can positively contribute to the health and well-being of individuals, communities and places. There are also draft policies relating to such issues as high-quality design,

residential mix, affordable housing, the natural and built environment which provide opportunity to manage the contribution of new development to the health and wellbeing of communities.

The Regulation 18 Pre-Submission Draft of the Local Plan also includes draft policies relating to infrastructure provision, to ensure that the infrastructure necessary to support new development (physical, social, environmental and digital) and the associated communities is provided. This also specifically includes Green Infrastructure and Open Space which could improve opportunities for exercise, safe cycling and walking routes

These environmental considerations around enhancing quality of life, combined with concerns around safer and well maintained roads as well as safe cycling and walking routes, and safe drop offs for schools, were also high up on the community priorities identified for joint action.

## **Guidance Notes**

### **1. Corporate and Service Area Policy and Practice on Equality and Social inclusion**

This involves taking an equality and social inclusion approach in planning changes to services, policies or procedures, including those that may be required by Government.

The decisions that you make when you are planning a service change need to be recorded, to demonstrate that you have thought about the possible equality impacts on communities and to show openness and transparency in your decision making processes.

This is where Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessments (ESIAs) come in. Where you carry out an ESIA in your service area, this provides an opportunity to show:

- What evidence you have drawn upon to help you to recommend a strategy or policy or a course of action to Cabinet;
- What target groups and audiences you have worked with to date;
- What actions you will take in order to mitigate any likely negative impact upon a group or groupings, and enhance any positive effects for a group or groupings; and
- What actions you are planning to review the impact of your planned service change.

The formal template is there not only to help the service area but also to act as a stand alone for a member of the public to read.

The approach helps to identify whether or not any new or significant changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions or projects, may have an adverse impact on a particular group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected.

This assessment encompasses consideration of social inclusion. This is so that we are thinking as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities, including people in rural areas and people we may describe as vulnerable, for example due to low income or to safeguarding concerns, as well as people in what are described as the nine 'protected characteristics' of groups of people in our population, eg Age.

We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging or delivering services.

When you are not carrying out an ESIIA, you still need to demonstrate that you have considered equality in your decision-making processes. It is up to you what format you choose.-You could use a checklist, an explanatory note, or a document setting out our expectations of standards of behaviour, for contractors to read and sign. It may well not be something that is in the public domain like an ESIIA, but you should still be ready for it to be made available.

**Both the approaches sit with a manager, and the manager has to make the call, and record the decision made on behalf of the Council. Help and guidance is also available via the Commissioning Support Team, either for data, or for policy advice from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist. Here are some examples to get you thinking.**

*Carry out an ESIIA:*

- If you are building or reconfiguring a building;
- If you are planning to reduce or remove a service;
- If you are consulting on a policy or a strategy;
- If you are bringing in a change to a process or procedure that involves other stakeholders and the wider community as well as particular groupings

For example, there may be a planned change to a leisure facility. This gives you the chance to look at things like flexible changing room provision, which will maximise positive impacts for everyone. A specific grouping that would benefit would be people undergoing gender reassignment

*Carry out an equality and social inclusion approach:*

- If you are setting out how you expect a contractor to behave with regard to equality, where you are commissioning a service or product from them;
- If you are setting out the standards of behaviour we expect from people who work with vulnerable groupings, such as taxi drivers that we license;
- If you are planning consultation and engagement activity, where we need to collect equality data in ways that will be proportionate and non-intrusive as well as meaningful for the purposes of the consultation itself;
- If you are looking at services provided by others that help the community, where we need to demonstrate a community leadership approach

For example, you may be involved in commissioning a production to tour schools or appear at a local venue, whether a community hall or somewhere like Theatre Severn. The production company should be made aware of our equality policies and our expectation that they will seek to avoid promotion of potentially negative stereotypes.

Specific groupings that could be affected include: Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, and Sexual Orientation. There is positive impact to be gained from positive portrayals and use of appropriate and respectful language in regard to these groupings in particular.

## **2. Legal Context**

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take. Carrying out ESIIAs helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three equality aims are integral to our decision making processes. These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

Service areas would ordinarily carry out a screening assessment, or Part One equality impact assessment. This enables energies to be focussed on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection about the positive or negative impacts of a service change upon groupings in the community, and for any adjustments to be considered and made accordingly.

If the screening indicates that there are likely to be significant negative impacts for groupings within the community, the service area would need to carry out a full report, or Part Two assessment. This will enable more evidence to be collected that will help the service area to reach an informed opinion. Please contact the equality policy lead within the Council for more advice and guidance in this regard, as per details below.

***For further information on the use of ESIIAs: please contact your head of service or contact Mrs Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist and Council policy support on equality, via telephone 01743 258528, or email [lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk).***