

# Equality Analysis Form / EqIA

By completing this form you will provide evidence of how your service is meeting Stroud District Council's General Equality duty:

The Equality Act 2010 states that:

*A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have **due regard** to the need to –*

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;*
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

The protected characteristics are listed in Question 9

Stroud District Equality data can be found at:

<https://inform.glos.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/>

Please see Appendix 1 for a good example of a completed EIA.

**Guidance available on the HUB**

## 1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

Name(s): Emma Smith	Telephone: 01453 766321
	E-Mail: emma.smith@stroud.gov.uk
Service: Policy & Governance	Date of Assessment: Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> September 2025

## 2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function:

Consultation and Engagement Framework and Toolkit

Is this new or an existing one?

## 3. Briefly describe its aims and objectives

The framework outlines three strategic aims that reflect the findings from the public consultation, and set out how we will deliver improved and effective engagement at the council:

1. We will provide more opportunities for our residents and communities to engage with us, both by increasing the number of things we engage about, and by increasing the variety of ways people can engage with us.

2. We will proactively identify opportunities to engage more collaboratively with our residents and communities.
3. We will build skills and capacity in consultation and engagement at the council.

Underpinning these aims are seven key principles which will be applied when undertaking consultations or engagement activities. The delivery of the framework will be monitored using performance indicators and measured annually from the point of implementation.

The council often has a legal responsibility to consult, and the Framework sets out how we will meet the requirements that are outlined in the below legislation, and also how we will go beyond the statutory requirements where possible:

- The revised Best Value Statutory Guidance (2015) sets out that before deciding how to fulfil their Best Value Duty, authorities are under a duty to consult representatives from a wide range of local persons. The guidance outlines the different types of individuals, groups, and organisations needed to consult with, ensuring that dialogue is continued throughout all stages of the commissioning cycle.
- The Local Government Act (1999) highlights who should be engaged with in consultations where there is consideration of the decommissioning of services.
- The Local Government Finance Act (1993) outlines the statutory duty to consult ratepayer representatives on annual spending proposals. Under our obligations in the Equality Act (2010), including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), we have a statutory duty to ensure that we consider how our policies, programmes, and services will affect people with different protected characteristics. This is a legal requirement whereby we must have due regard to the aim of eliminating conduct prohibited by the act, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. It also requires us to monitor the actual impact of the things we do.
- There are also statutory requirements to consult for specific services including planning, licensing and electoral services.

The framework outlines how the council will engage and consult with residents, communities, businesses and stakeholders. It identifies the different levels of engagement and how we can deliver improved and effective engagement at the council. The framework also includes a variety of performance indicators to ensure that we are measuring success and whether the implementation of the framework has had the desired impacts or not. The framework is supported by a Consultation and Engagement Toolkit which is a set of tools and resources available internally for council officers.

The purpose of the framework is to ensure meaningful consultation with diverse communities, focusing on accessibility, inclusivity and transparency. It will improve how we engage with individuals from underrepresented groups, the digitally excluded, and those with protected characteristics. The framework champions our aim to empower and develop inclusive communities as part of our Council Plan.

#### **4. Are there external considerations? (Legislation / government directive, etc)**

Revised Best Value Statutory Guidance (2015)

Local Government Act (1999)

Local Government Finance Act (1993)

Public Sector Equality Duty within the Equality Act (2010)

Doctrine of Legitimate Expectation (common law)

## 5. Who is intended to benefit from it and in what way?

The Consultation and Engagement Framework streamlines our approach to consultations and engagement exercises across the council and is designed to benefit a wide range of individuals and groups that live and work throughout the Stroud district, with a particular focus on ensuring that underrepresented groups, the digitally excluded, and those with accessibility requirements can have a meaningful impact on the development of council policy, service delivery, programmes and initiatives. The framework demonstrates our commitment to actively involve and encourage diverse communities by improving accessibility, inclusivity and transparency of consultations and engagement exercises.

As a local authority we must effectively consult and engage to identify what our communities' priorities are and understand how the work we do impacts different groups of people and individuals. Embedding this framework across the council ensures that officers are approaching consultations and engagement exercises in a way that enables our citizens and stakeholders to provide input into service delivery, and influence decisions that are made at the council. Actively involving our community when improving the services we deliver ensures that decisions reflect the needs of local residents, it builds trust with our community and gives them a sense of ownership which means they are more likely to participate in future consultations and engagement exercises.

The framework ensures council officers are considering the barriers to participation for different groups throughout the district when conducting consultations and engagement activities. It outlines how we should be using our online methods more strategically to gather meaningful feedback but also maintains the traditional methods of engagement including face-to-face, which are emphasised and included wherever possible, so different groups are still able to engage.

The framework and supporting toolkit outline how different feedback mechanisms should be used to accommodate the needs of our communities. It has also been identified that we key stakeholders can be utilised to support with disseminating information about consultations and engagement exercises to improve our reach to residents and communities throughout the district. These stakeholders include Parish and Town Councils, Stroud Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), Community Hubs, Youth Council, schools and colleges, Active Lifestyles Stroud and Dursley, and Museum in the Park.

## 6. What outcomes are expected?

The framework clearly defines three strategic aims which are supported by the seven core principles and a variety of performance measures that ensure effective, inclusive, and transparent consultation. The expected outcomes include:

- Increase in the number and variety of consultations and engagement activities across the council, applying a multi-channel communication approach to consultations and engagement.
- Raise awareness of consultations and engagement opportunities through online platforms, expanding the council's reach by providing tools and resources to officers to enable them to identify and target diverse audiences effectively where appropriate.
- Proactively continue to remove barriers for consultations and engagement exercises for underrepresented and digitally excluded groups, promoting the use of face-to-face engagement and encouraging officers to seek out audiences rather than relying on them coming to us.
- Identify opportunities where a more collaborative method of engagement is appropriate between the council and its communities, ensuring those that are directly impacted have

more of a say in shaping policy, programmes, and initiatives, and are actively involved in decision-making.

- Explore new ways to engage with our residents and communities to encourage co-production in the development of work at the council.
- Promote the use of the consultation and engagement toolkit throughout the council, keeping it under regular review to ensure it reflects current best practice, changes to legislation, and effective tools and methods for carrying out consultations and engagement exercises.
- Ensure teams are supported by providing the relevant resources they need, including an updated list of stakeholders and potential consultees, and provide tailored support and guidance to officers when planning, delivering, analysing and reporting consultations and engagement activities.
- Monitor and coordinate consultation and engagement activities across the council to avoid duplication, maximise impact, and ensure findings are effectively shared and utilised across the council.

The framework sets out a series of performance indicators to measure success and to understand whether the framework has had its intended impact or not, and this will be reported on annually.

Individual Equality Impact Assessments will continue to be completed for specific projects, policies, and service changes, and these will highlight how the specific consultation or engagement for that piece of work should be tailored depending on the audience/s.

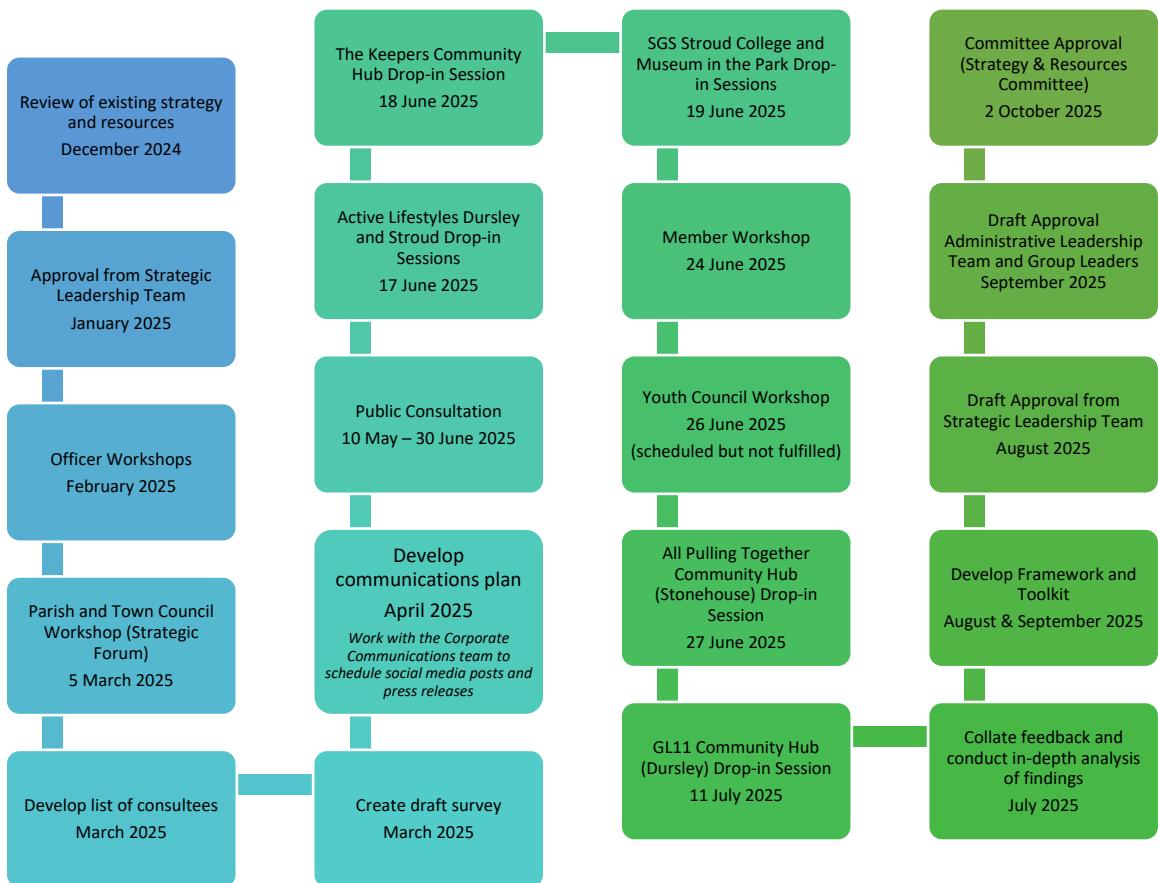
## **7. What evidence has been used for this assessment? (e.g. Research, previous consultations, Inform (MAIDEN); Google assessments carried out by other Authorities)**

- Local Government Association's [New Conversations 2.0 Guide to Engagement](#), including the five pillars of trust in democracy:
  - Pillar A: Clarifying the choices on offer
  - Pillar B: The role of the councillor in engagement
  - Pillar C: Embedding engagement in the organisation
  - Pillar D: Co-production and partnerships
  - Pillar E: Structured decision-making about budgets and planning
- [Gunning Principles](#)
- [The TCI Charter](#)
- [Office of National Statistics Census Data](#)
- [Gloucestershire Inform data on digital exclusion](#)
- Interactive workshops with over 40 officers at Stroud District Council.
- Responses to the public consultation held between May and June 2025. A Public Consultation Response Analysis can be found at Appendix B, Full Consultation Results can be found at Appendix C, Thematic Analysis and List of Consultees at Appendix D.

## **8. Has any consultation been carried out? See list of possible consultees**

To begin the process of developing a Consultation and Engagement Framework, a series of internal workshops took place throughout February 2025 with the purpose of finding out how we are currently carrying out consultations and engagement exercises at the council, how officers would prefer to carry out consultations and engagement exercises, and what support our officers would need to achieve this. These were well attended with over 40 officers from services across the council contributing valuable and insightful feedback to shape the framework, toolkit, and the questions asked in the public consultation.

The public consultation took place for 6 weeks from 10 May – 30 June 2025 and received 209 responses. All feedback from this consultation can be found at Appendix C. The timeline for the consultation can be seen below.



The core question set for the public consultation was developed by the Policy and Governance team following a series of officer workshops, and was reviewed and approved by the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Belonging (EDIEB) working group. This question set formed the digital survey which was uploaded on SmartSurvey for consultees to complete.

To ensure that all the relevant stakeholders were included in the consultation, suggestions for other community groups and organisations were requested from the EDIEB working group and teams across the council. Any new suggestions were cross-checked with the existing list of consultees and then included in the consultation. By inviting others to suggest key stakeholders for us to involve in this consultation, we were able to enhance participation and utilise the network of partners and organisations that the whole council works with.

A communications plan was developed with the Corporate Communications team to ensure the consultation was promoted and shared widely. A social media campaign and press releases were published to encourage our residents, businesses, and communities to provide feedback using the online survey.

The survey was published on the [Have your say](#) webpage on the Stroud District Council website.

- The webpage included a summary about the public consultation, how long it took to complete the survey, our privacy policy, and outlined that all questions were optional, respondents could skip questions or select prefer not to say where relevant.
- A PDF version of the question set was uploaded for respondents to view the questionnaire.

- Respondents could also email their feedback to the Policy and Governance team using [policy@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:policy@stroud.gov.uk).
- The PDF survey was print-friendly for respondents to write their feedback in manually, which could be scanned in and emailed, or posted or dropped off at Ebley Mill.
- The survey was circulated via email to a variety of key stakeholders throughout the district, including members of the Museum in the Park members' newsletter.
- A paper format of the survey was circulated to our Independent Living Sites with an information sheet and promotional poster.
- Paper copies were also distributed via post upon request and made available at Reception in Ebley Mill.

To ensure the consultation was accessible to all, drop-in sessions were held at locations throughout the district with the aim of targeting our hard-to-reach audiences, including the digitally excluded or those don't ordinarily engage with the council.

The drop-in sessions were located at:

- Active Lifestyle Stroud
- Active Lifestyles Dursley
- South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
- Museum in the Park
- The Keepers Community Hub, Wotton-under-Edge
- All Pulling Together Community Hub, Stonehouse
- GL11 Community Hub, Dursley

We worked collaboratively with Members and Parish and Town Councils through interactive workshops to seek their views on the current approach to consultations and engagement exercises, how this can be improved, and what support they would need to effectively engage with our communities and share the results of consultations and engagement exercises. This workshop was scheduled with Youth Council, but the session was cancelled and unfortunately was unable to be rearranged.

## 9. Could a particular group be affected differently in either a negative or positive way?

(Negative – it could disadvantage and therefore potentially not meet the General Equality duty;

Positive – it could benefit and help meet the General Equality duty;

Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact / Not sure)

Protected Group	Type of impact, reason and any evidence (from Q7 & 8)
Age	Overall, the framework will have a positive impact and will benefit and support the council to meet the general equality duty. The main ways in which it will positively impact groups with one or more protected characteristic are outlined below.
Disability	
Gender Re-assignment	
Pregnancy & Maternity	The framework will ensure that officers and teams provide accessible formats of consultations and engagement exercises for service users to be able to provide feedback. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using an appropriate combination of online tools, paper materials and face-to-face engagement to improve accessibility and meet different groups and individual's requirements and preferences.</li> <li>• Providing information and materials in different languages.</li> </ul>
Race	
Religion – Belief	

<b>Sex</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimising the use of jargon and using plain English in all consultation materials.</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<p>The framework will support officers in identifying the barriers to participation during consultations and engagement activities and taking proactive steps to address these barriers to ensure involvement from a diverse audience. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approaching communities where they are across the district rather than relying on them coming to us.</li> <li>Identifying where officers can gather feedback from groups that might not normally engage with the council.</li> <li>Ensuring consultation and engagement is targeted when appropriate, to encourage communities with lived experience to provide feedback on services that affect them.</li> <li>Targeting schools and colleges where appropriate so that this age group is represented.</li> <li>Officers will ensure inclusive scheduling (recognising that certain days of the week and times of the day are allocated to prayer and worship), and that face-to-face engagement activities are accessible for those people.</li> </ul>
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnerships (part (a) of duty only)</b>	<p>The resources within the toolkit ensure that demographic questions are inclusive and standardised across the council. The toolkit provides guidance on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that questions are only asked where necessary, and officers understand how to ask questions about protected characteristics appropriately.</li> <li>Making demographic questions optional to answer, with specific prefer not to say options, and the ability to skip anything respondents feel uncomfortable answering.</li> <li>Encouraging individuals to feel comfortable in submitting their feedback by giving the option to self-identify their protected characteristics where appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>The framework will encourage officers to consider potential biases when designing consultations and to understand their impact when analysing consultation results. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing guidance on why feedback received could be biased.</li> <li>Over-representation or under-representation of different groups of people if officers aren't providing accessible consultation and engagement or considering other barriers to engagement.</li> <li>Providing inaccessible venues for in-person engagement.</li> <li>The language used in consultation materials and surveys: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using gender-neutral language.</li> <li>Avoiding the use of jargon or complex language.</li> <li>Avoiding leading language, framing questions that avoid certain topics or discourage certain types of feedback.</li> <li>Omitting answer options that could be considered critical e.g. 'Somewhat disagree' or 'Strongly disagree'.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The framework and toolkit emphasise that for each consultation and engagement activity, officers will be encouraged to review data on their target audiences and tailor their consultation or engagement to reach and involve those audiences. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis and what might work well for one consultation won't be the same for another, however officers should consider using a mixed-engagement approach wherever necessary to ensure diverse audiences in the development of programmes, policies, and service delivery.</p>

<p><b>Rural considerations:</b> ie Access to services; transport; education; employment; broadband;</p>	<p>The Stroud district is geographically isolated in areas which can make it difficult for some to access services or to participate in consultation and engagement exercises, whether this is due to a lack of access to public transport, not having or using their own vehicle, or having poor or no broadband.</p> <p>Steps must be taken to accommodate these groups, and the toolkit sets out how this will be done, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers must consider approaching communities where they are rather than relying on them coming to us.</li> <li>• Officers must provide an appropriate mix of engagement methods to ensure people can engage with the council.</li> <li>• Officers should not rely on communities having access to online services and must provide feedback mechanisms that work for those that are digitally excluded.</li> <li>• If insight or feedback is required from specific groups, officers must tailor how they consult and engage to include those audiences.</li> <li>• Community Hubs, community organisations, and Parish and Town Councils can be utilised to reach and better understand residents in local areas.</li> </ul>
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**10. If you have identified a negative impact in question 9, what actions have you undertaken or do you plan to undertake to lessen or negate this impact?**

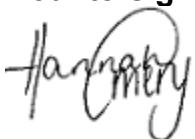
**Please transfer any actions to your Service Action plan on Excelsis.**

Action(s):	Lead officer	Resource	Timescale

### **Declaration**

I/We are satisfied that an Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function \* (delete those which do not apply) and where a negative impact has been identified, actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact.

We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the District Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment

Completed by: Emma Smith	Date: 12 September 2025
Role: Projects and Consultation Officer	
Countersigned by Head of Service: Hannah Emery 	Date: 24 September 2025

**Date for Review: Please forward an electronic copy to [policy@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:policy@stroud.gov.uk)**