

Equality Impact Assessment Statement

It is our duty to make sure our engagement activity is effectively serving the population of Barnsley. The Community Engagement Strategy will allow us to make sure the council is carrying out engagement activity effectively, listening to feedback and learning from this to help shape future services.

Engagement and consultation on the Barnsley Deal, a part of the Community Engagement Strategy, will need to be inclusive and give everybody an opportunity to get involved. We will make sure this is done robustly by taking the Deal to Barnsley Reach for scheduling into equality forums for discussion. We will also make sure the engagement process is accessible for the diverse communities and will seek the advice of the equality forums as to how best to do this.

In terms of the delivery of the wider Engagement Strategy, we need to be clear about what equality and diversity outcomes we want to achieve.

Equality Objective:

The diversity of respondents or participants in community engagement initiatives reflect the diversity of the local community.

We will achieve this by:

- Proactively targeting groups which are traditionally under-represented / hard to reach in community engagement projects.
- Working closely with the network of equality forums to jointly coordinate, plan and deliver community engagement initiatives.
- We will have a better idea of how good our engagement has been with diverse groups.(A “good” engagement exercise will be one that not only involves a diverse representation of respondents but also one that delivers meaningful findings that help us to deliver better services to diverse communities.)
- Our engagement will be more understandable, accessible and inclusive by being more concise and co-ordinated.

We will measure our success by:

- The percentage of respondents / participants in each community engagement activity that are from diverse communities (in all cases gender, age, disability, ethnicity and where appropriate, also sexual orientation, religion or belief, and transgender status).

The Community Engagement Strategy will help us to deliver these outcomes by ensuring a co-ordinated approach to the development, delivery and measurement of engagement activity carried out across the organisation.

We will measure the level of engagement with diverse groups by putting procedures in place to consistently log equality data. This can easily be done when consulting using online surveys, but is more difficult to manage in face to face conversations. We will introduce an equality monitoring form to standardise the recording of this data.

When employees have received the necessary community engagement training and toolkits, business units will be accountable for effective and inclusive engagement activity, and will be expected to follow new engagement policies and procedures.

When carrying out engagement activity on social media, where it has been traditionally difficult to capture equality data, we will always direct people towards online polls where personal information can be collected. We will seek to make these polls as accessible as possible, in particular for those whose disability may make completing on-line surveys difficult.

There will always be some engagement activity that will be difficult to capture equality data for, but the delivery of the Community Engagement Strategy allows us to be much more robust and consistent in our approach to make sure we are effectively targeting these harder to reach groups.

We will review the effectiveness of the community engagement strategy every six months to make sure our new approach is working and to make any changes if needed.