



Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy – Equality Impact Assessment

June 2008

This Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is based on a basic set of questions developed by the Commission for Racial Equality (now the Equality & Human Rights Commission) and Race Equality West Midlands. It allows the Worcestershire Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to assess the extent to which equality issues are considered and incorporated into the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Area Agreement (LAA). Whilst this EqIA has developed from the legislative support for the race strand of equality, questions posed also embrace other equality strands, including age, disability, sexuality and gender.

This EqIA has been undertaken as part of the 2007/08 refresh of the Worcestershire SCS and the findings have been incorporated into the final version, with recommendations for delivery to be taken forward by the Partnership for future work.

This EqIA also addresses the consideration and incorporation of equalities issues in the delivery of the Worcestershire SCS through the Local Area Agreement (LAA) in particular, as well as other key delivery plans.

Recommendations contained in this EqIA are highlighted in blue and a summary is given at the end of the document.

For more information about the content of this document and about the Sustainable Community Strategy, please contact:

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	Yes	No	Comments
Does the SCS have a shared equality statement/vision/policy that gives due regard to all equality strands, to be achieved through the implementation of the SCS?	✓		<p>The Vision and Values of the SCS state that:</p> <p>“In all our work and planning we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide for the needs of all groups in society • Treat people with equality and value diversity • Build strong, cohesive communities and promote good community relations • Remove barriers that prevent individuals from reaching their full potential • Intervene early to prevent problems from becoming entrenched • Involve and listen to local people and local communities – these could be geographical communities or communities of interest” <p>(N.B. This is an extract and other values also apply.)</p> <p>The Worcestershire County Council Equality & Diversity Policy (September 2004) also refers to the Vision and Values contained in the SCS.</p>
Has this been agreed by all partners?	✓		<p>The refreshed SCS (including its Vision and Values) will be adopted by all partners in September 2008. The Vision and Values have not changed since the SCS was originally adopted by all partners in 2003.</p>
What processes are in place to assess and monitor progress of this and to whom will it be reported?		✓	<p>Proposals have been made to ensure that all Theme Group delivery takes into account the widest needs of all of Worcestershire’s communities through the regular reporting of performance to the Partnership Management Group.</p> <p>In future, it is recommended that processes are in place to ensure an independent / external ‘check’ can be undertaken of Theme Groups’ approach to equality and diversity to ensure that assessments are meaningful and robust.</p>

Has the development of the SCS considered:				
	Yes	No	Comments	Evidence
The current demographics of the area?	✓		<p>The SCS is underpinned by robust demographic evidence within the Story of Place. Key equalities / cohesion issues – based on current demographics – are identified within the SCS document in the section on cross cutting themes.</p> <p>In particular, the Story of Place identifies the small size of Worcestershire’s BME communities and acknowledges that this requires a proactive approach to ensure particular needs and concerns are listened to and addressed.</p> <p>Other important features of Worcestershire’s demographics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A long-standing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community • Relatively high levels of Incapacity Benefit claimants in parts of the county • An increasingly older population • A mixed urban and rural population • A more recent migrant worker population. 	<p>Worcestershire Story of Place, 2008</p> <p>Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2013</p>
Potential changes (over the next 5 years)?	✓		<p>Evidence within the Story of Place highlights a number of projected changes to the county’s demographic, such as an ageing population and increasing numbers of people with a Limiting Long-Term Illness (LLTI) as well as changes in the likely country of origin of future migrant workers due to changing economic conditions.</p>	<p>Worcestershire Story of Place, 2008</p>

Has the development of the SCS considered (cont'd):				
	Yes	No	Comments	Evidence
How evidence is collected, collated and analysed by partners on the communities they serve and the impact of their services?	✓	✓	<p>The Story of Place is based largely on statistical data and residents' views gathered through the Citizens Panel and Best Value General Satisfaction Survey.</p> <p>However, thorough engagement of all of Worcestershire's minority communities in order to collect data has been patchy across themes and partners and it is recommended that the Partnership develops processes to ensure that it engages with all communities so that they are able to influence and shape future delivery.</p> <p>At the very least, delivery should take into account the specific needs of all of the county's communities that are affected by a service. In future, this will be addressed – in part – by the SCS cross-cutting theme, <i>Promoting Community Cohesion in Worcestershire</i>.</p>	<p>Worcestershire Story of Place, 2008</p> <p>Results of the Citizens Panel, June 2006</p> <p>Results of the Best Value General Satisfaction Survey, 2006</p>
How is this evidence used to plan and manage services?	✓		<p>The Story of Place underpins the priorities for service delivery that have been identified throughout the SCS and the selection of LAA indicators (see below). It will also guide the development of delivery plans.</p>	<p>Worcestershire Story of Place, 2008</p>
How is this evidence used to develop targets / indicators and monitor progress?	✓		<p>See above.</p> <p>It is also recommended that the Partnership take note of the Government's progress to identify opportunities to disaggregate LAA data to assist further the monitoring of progress by community, area or group.</p>	<p>Worcestershire Story of Place, 2008</p> <p>Worcestershire Local Area Agreement 2008-2011</p>

Has the development of the SCS considered (cont'd):				
	Yes	No	Comments	Evidence
Which groups (ethnic minorities, disabled, elderly, women, etc.) experience the highest levels of deprivation and/or differential outcomes?	✓		<p>The Story of Place and section of the SCS entitled <i>Promoting Community Cohesion in Worcestershire</i> identify several key groups for attention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A relatively small BME population • A long-standing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community • Relatively high levels of Incapacity Benefit claimants in parts of the county • An increasingly older population • A mixed urban and rural population • A more recent migrant worker population. <p>Members of the Citizens Panel have informed us that the group they feel faces most disadvantage in the county is the Gypsy Roma and Traveller community.</p>	<p>Worcestershire Story of Place, 2008</p> <p>Results of the Citizens Panel, June 2007</p>
The potential reasons for higher levels of deprivation and differential outcomes?	✓		<p>The Story of Place and SCS recognise the complex and interlinked nature of deprivation and acknowledge that a holistic approach needs to be taken so that individual causes are not dealt with in isolation of others. The rural proofing exercise undertaken during the SCS process specifically recognises the causes of differential outcomes in rural areas.</p>	<p>Worcestershire Story of Place 2008</p> <p>SCS Rural Proofing Report 2008</p>
What action could / is to be taken to tackle these by the various partners and who will be responsible for tracking / monitoring trends and changes?		✓	<p>This should be addressed within the Theme Groups' delivery plans. Proposals have also been made to ensure that all Theme Group delivery takes into account the widest needs of all of Worcestershire's communities through the reporting of performance to the Partnership Management Group.</p>	<p>Theme Group Delivery Plans (when complete)</p> <p>Theme Group reports to Management Group (when complete)</p>

Has the development of the SCS considered (cont'd):				
	Yes	No	Comments	Evidence
What is the level of risk of discriminatory / detrimental impact of the policies / strategies / actions to be undertaken through the SCS?	✓		<p>Specifically, the rural proofing exercise undertaken as part of the SCS process highlights the level of risk of detrimental impact of the priorities outlined in the strategy on Worcestershire's rural communities.</p> <p>More generally, Theme Group delivery plan templates require delivery partners to describe how they have considered equalities and diversity and how their work will address the needs of the most vulnerable members of the community. <i>In future, it is recommended that processes are in place to ensure an independent / external 'check' can be undertaken of Theme Groups' approach to equality and diversity to ensure that assessments are meaningful and robust.</i></p>	<p>SCS Rural Proofing Report 2008</p> <p>Theme Group Delivery Plans (when complete)</p>
What action is being taken to resolve this or minimise the risk and by whom?	✓		<p>The findings of both the rural proofing exercise and this EqIA were fed into the redrafting of the SCS and changes were made to ensure that risks were minimised.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of all delivery partners to ensure that the risk of discriminatory or detrimental impact of their actions is minimised. <i>It is recommended that the Partnership explore the provision of training and/or support for non-specialist delivery partners on equalities issues.</i></p>	<p>SCS Rural Proofing Report 2008</p> <p>Theme Group Delivery Plans (when complete)</p>
How will the impact be monitored reviewed and reported?	✓		<p>As described above, proposals have been made to ensure that all Theme Group delivery consider equalities and diversity through the monitoring of LAA delivery plans and the reporting of performance to the Partnership Management Group.</p>	<p>Theme Group Delivery Plans (when complete)</p> <p>Theme Group reports to Management Group (when complete)</p>

Has the development of the SCS considered (cont'd):				
	Yes	No	Comments	Evidence
Whether all partners have the skills and capacity to realise an evidence-based analysis of local communities, including current and future demographic change?		✓	<p>There is significant expertise available to the Partnership to develop a robust evidence base, as illustrated by the Story of Place. However, it is unlikely that this expertise – and particularly the skills and capacity to <i>analyse</i> such evidence about local communities and develop policy accordingly – is shared by all partners who lead on the delivery of SCS and LAA priorities.</p> <p><i>It is recommended that the Partnership explore the provision of training and/or support for non-specialist delivery partners on equalities issues to ensure that they are able to realise an evidence-based analysis.</i></p>	Worcestershire Story of Place 2008
Whether partners are aware of the limitations of current data or are developing proxy data to develop targets and indicators?		✓	<p>Further work needs to be undertaken to ensure that partners are aware of the limitations of current data, although it is clear from the LAA negotiation process that some partners do understand this.</p> <p><i>It is recommended that the Partnership explore the provision of training and/or support for non-specialist delivery partners on equalities issues to ensure that they consider data limitations, the development of proxy data and the potential for indicator disaggregation to specifically address equalities issues.</i></p>	Worcestershire LAA 2008-2011

What evidence is there that the SCS will contribute in any substantial or focused way in meeting the legal duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Act 1995 and the Sex Discrimination Act?				
	Yes	No	Comments	Evidence
What action are the partners taking to promote equality of opportunity?		✓	<p>It is assumed that all relevant partners are meeting those legal duties regarding equalities to some extent or other. However, the Partnership does not hold information on the specific actions of individual partners to promote equality of opportunity.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Partnership investigate the approach to legal duties across all partner organisations and work to share good practice and pursue joint initiatives.</p>	
What action are the partners taking to work towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination?		✓	<p>As described above, it is assumed that all relevant partners are meeting those legal duties regarding equalities to some extent or other. However, the Partnership does not hold information on the specific actions to work towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination.</p> <p>See recommendation above.</p>	
What actions are being taken to promote community cohesion (i.e. good relations between groups)?	✓		<p>"Promoting community cohesion" has been identified as a cross cutting theme in the refreshed SCS, which outlines our priority outcomes for cohesion: "To build more inclusive communities" and "To improve integration in our communities". Whilst there are defined actions against these outcomes, actions throughout the SCS and across all themes should take into account community cohesion. Theme Groups should be required to report on the ways in which their work impacts on the cross cutting themes in their reports to the Management Group.</p>	<p>Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2012</p> <p>Theme Group reports to Management Group (when complete)</p>

What evidence is there that the SCS will contribute in any substantial or focused way in meeting the legal duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Act 1995 and the Sex Discrimination Act?				
	Yes	No	Comments	Evidence
What actions are being taken by partners on other aspects of inequalities duties, e.g. gender or disability related harassment?		✓	<p>It is assumed that all relevant partners are meeting those legal duties regarding other aspects of inequalities to some extent or other. However, the Partnership does not hold information on the specific actions of individual.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Partnership investigate the approach to legal duties across all partner organisations and work to share good practice and pursue joint initiatives.</p>	
Has the requirement for changes to existing strategies which deal with equality / community cohesion been considered?	✓		<p>This EqIA assesses the equalities impacts of the newly refreshed SCS, which is the overarching strategy document in Worcestershire. The document should inform other strategies and policies in the county and changes may need to be made in order to meet relevant legal duties.</p>	Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2013
Have differentiated indicators or targets on all sections of the communities relating to the delivery of the SCS been considered?		✓	<p>The current LAA (the main SCS delivery plan) sets targets on a countywide basis only, as per the requirements of the national LAA process.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Partnership take note of the Government's progress to identify opportunities to disaggregate LAA data to assist further the monitoring of progress by community, area or group.</p>	

Involvement & Consultation				
	Yes	No	Comments	Evidence
What consultation mechanisms are in place to engage the view of communities and organisations with the SCS process?	✓		<p>The following mechanisms were used to engage the views of communities and organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens' Panel questionnaires • Best Value General Satisfaction Surveys • VCS annual conference workshop • A 12-week consultation period, with presentations to individual groups given on request. 	<p>Results of the Citizens Panel, June 2007 & BV General Satisfaction Survey</p> <p>SCS Consultation Record</p> <p>Papers from the 14th November VCS Conference</p>
Are the methods used for consultation, within the SCS, inclusive and accessible?		✓	<p>Efforts to reach communities not readily engaged in local government or public sector policy were lacking. Whilst presentations were given on request, this approach assumed an existing level of knowledge and understanding of the SCS process. More consideration to differing literacy levels, access to the internet, etc. should be given in future.</p> <p><i>It is recommended that the Partnership develops processes to ensure that it engages with all communities so that they are able to influence and shape future delivery.</i></p>	
Are minority or dissenting views actively sought out and considered?		✓	<p>Whilst minority or dissenting views may arise and will be considered appropriately and fairly, they are not currently actively sought out to any great extent.</p> <p><i>It is recommended that the Partnership seek mechanisms through which minority or dissenting views may be actively sought out.</i></p>	

Involvement & Consultation				
	Yes	No	Comments	Evidence
Are there arrangements within the SCS for ongoing dialogue with the diverse communities, particularly in terms of involvement in setting target priorities and assessing progress for the LAA?		✓	<p>Efforts to reach communities not readily engaged in local government or public sector policy were lacking. Whilst presentations were given on request, this approach assumed an existing level of knowledge and understanding of the SCS and LAA processes. More consideration to differing literacy levels, access to the internet, etc. should be given in future to ensure that all of Worcestershire's communities can be involved in target setting and evaluation.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Partnership develops processes to ensure that it engages with all communities so that they are able to influence and shape future delivery.</p>	
How is local knowledge and expertise used in the SCS decision-making process?	✓	✓	<p>The role of the VCS in both shaping the SCS and delivering its priorities is essential if local knowledge about Worcestershire's communities is to be taken into account. VCS representatives are members of the WP Board and Management Group, who oversaw the development of the SCS and LAA. There is also representation across most of the Theme Groups of the Partnership, who were responsible for developing the thematic content of the SCS.</p> <p>However, more work could be done to use local knowledge and expertise within the evidence base and the Story of Place allows for this kind of "narrative" evidence. In particular, greater engagement of elected members in their community leadership role should be considered.</p>	<p>Worcestershire Story of Place 2008</p> <p>WP Board, Management Group and Theme Group meeting papers</p>

Involvement & Consultation				
	Yes	No	Comments	Evidence
Does the SCS contain any indication of how voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations have been consulted in drawing up and monitoring the document?	✓		<p>VCS representatives are members of the WP Board and Management Group, who oversaw the development of the SCS and LAA. There is also representation across most of the Theme Groups of the Partnership, who were responsible for developing the thematic content of the SCS.</p> <p>A specific consultation workshop on the SCS was held at the Worcestershire VCS conference on 14th November 2007 to raise awareness of the consultation period and to seek early feedback.</p> <p>The consultation period for the draft SCS was set at 12 weeks to ensure its compliance with the Compact, allowing VCS organisations sufficient time to consider and submit consultation responses.</p>	<p>WP Board, Management Group and Theme Group meeting papers</p> <p>Papers from the 14th November 2007 VCS conference</p> <p>Worcestershire Compact</p>
Does the SCS contain any indication of how equality organisations (Race, Disability, Age, LGB&T, Gender) have been consulted in drawing up and monitoring the document?		✓	<p>The Worcestershire Racial Equality Council is a member of the WP Board and certain equality organisations, e.g. Age Concern and DIAL, are members of some of the Theme Groups, who were responsible for developing the thematic content of the SCS.</p> <p>However, it is unclear whether or not a wide range of equality organisations were fully engaged in drawing up and monitoring the document or whether these organisations are representative of the many different communities in Worcestershire.</p>	<p>WP Board and Theme Group meeting papers</p>

Has the Partnership specifically considered the following in developing the SCS:				
	Yes	No	Comments	Evidence
Past and current community tensions in the local are?	✓		The Partnership monitors and assesses community tensions, reporting incidences to Government Office on a monthly basis. These tension monitoring returns – which give evidence of only very few isolated incidents – was taken into account in the development of the SCS. Where tensions have or could potentially exist, these are highlighted in the Community Cohesion cross cutting theme.	Worcestershire Tension Monitoring Returns Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2012
Neighbourhoods on which to focus cohesion-building initiatives?		✓	The countywide SCS does not identify individual neighbourhoods, as this is not its intended purpose. However, district SCS documents and the delivery plans of the countywide SCS (e.g. for the delivery of the LAA) should consider which neighbourhoods will be the focus for cohesion-building initiatives, based on robust evidence of need.	District Sustainable Community Strategies Theme Group Delivery Plans (when complete)
Development and capacity building of appropriate local organisations which could assist with developing and improving community cohesion?	✓		The SCS acknowledges the vital role that voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations have to play in developing and improving community cohesion through its Community Engagement cross cutting theme. The Partnership will work closely with the Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium to ensure that local organisations are developed appropriately to respond to the theme group delivery plans so that activity can be delivered through a variety of organisations, including those from the VCS.	Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2012 Theme Group Delivery Plans (when complete) Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium Strategy 2006-2016

Has the SCS process stimulated any specific areas for Partnership development or improvement?				
	Yes	No	Comments	WP Lead
Community involvement	✓		<p>The SCS refresh process has highlighted a need for improved community involvement in county LSP activity, which should be taken forward in order for all of Worcestershire's communities to influence and shape policy.</p> <p><i>It is recommended that the Partnership develops processes to ensure that it engages with all communities so that they are able to influence and shape future delivery. It is also recommended that the Partnership seek mechanisms through which minority or dissenting views may be actively sought out.</i></p>	Simon Adams, WCC Head of Community Leadership / Jennifer Springer WP Policy Officer
Measurement of community cohesion and equality	✓		<p>The SCS refresh process contributed towards the evidence base for the selection of LAA indicators, including NI 2 (% of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood). This will provide a formal method of measuring and improving performance around community cohesion and equality.</p>	Simon Adams, WCC Head of Community Leadership / Maggie Bryan, WCC Area Democracy Officer
Assessment and analysis of community needs	✓		<p>The SCS refresh process formed the basis of the development of the Story of Place, a "narrative" evidence base for the LAA. This should allow a more sophisticated analysis of community needs in future, although, as described above, the Partnership should consider improvements to its mechanisms for gathering information on community needs.</p>	David Onions, WCC Research Manager / Glyn West, WP Coordinator

Has the SCS process stimulated any specific areas for Partnership development or improvement?				
	Yes	No	Comments	WP Lead
Development / improvement of the evidence base – community profiles and data sets	✓		The SCS refresh process allowed the Partnership to review the evidence base for the selection of priorities and to shape the Story of Place, which takes a new approach to the presentation of data preferring a narrative drawing on a variety of sources, including anecdotal evidence and the views of residents and partners as well as empirical data, such as statistics and projections.	Glyn West, WP Coordinator / David Onions, WCC Research Manager
Monitoring and evaluation of the SCS and LAA	✓		As described above, there is a clear need to ensure that equalities impacts are considered throughout the delivery of the SCS through the LAA and that this is monitored. Theme Groups will now be required to consider equality and diversity as part of their LAA delivery plans, which will be monitored, by both the WP Management Group and GOWM. <i>In future, it is recommended that processes are in place to ensure an independent / external 'check' can be undertaken of Theme Groups' approach to equality and diversity to ensure that assessments are meaningful and robust.</i>	Theme Group Leads / Glyn West, WP Coordinator / Jennifer Springer, WP Policy Officer
Consultation mechanisms	✓		As described above, efforts to reach communities not readily engaged in local government or public sector policy were lacking during this process. The SCS refresh process highlights an opportunity to improve consultation mechanisms to ensure that all communities are able to influence and shape future delivery.	Simon Adams, WCC Head of Community Leadership / Jennifer Springer, WP Policy Officer

Has the SCS process stimulated any specific areas for Partnership development or improvement?				
	Yes	No	Comments	WP Lead
Impact assessments	✓		The SCS refresh process stimulated the first rural proofing exercise and EqIA of the strategy and the delivery of its priorities, as set out in the LAA. Recommendations have now been made to take these processes forward and ensure that they are considered throughout delivery and evaluation.	Jennifer Springer, WP Policy Officer
Priority setting	✓		The alignment of the SCS refresh and the negotiation of the new LAA has enabled a more inclusive approach to priority setting, which takes account of the views of partner organisations, communities and elected members. However, as described above, there is considerable room for improvement in terms of community engagement in priority setting.	Glyn West, WP Coordinator
Due regards to <u>all</u> equality legislation	✓		<p>Whilst individual partner organisations have their own arrangements for compliance with relevant equality legislation, the SCS refresh process has highlighted an opportunity to address requirements jointly and to share good practice in future.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Partnership investigate the approach to legal duties across all partner organisations and work to share good practice and pursue joint initiatives.</p>	Simon Adams, WCC Head of Community Leadership

Summary of Recommendations for the Worcestershire Partnership from the Equality Impact Assessment

1. In future, it is recommended that processes are in place to ensure an independent / external 'check' can be undertaken of Theme Groups' approach to equality and diversity to ensure that assessments are meaningful and robust.
2. It is recommended that the Partnership develop processes to ensure that it engages with all communities so that they are able to influence and shape future delivery.
3. It is recommended that the Partnership take note of the Government's progress to identify opportunities to disaggregate LAA data to assist further the monitoring of progress by group.
4. It is recommended that the Partnership explore the provision of training and/or support for non-specialist delivery partners on equalities issues.
5. It is recommended that the Partnership investigate the approach to legal duties across all partner organisations and work to share good practice and pursue joint initiatives.
6. It is recommended that the Partnership seek mechanisms through which minority or dissenting views may be actively sought out.