

BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2 STAGE MODEL

Housing Strategy 2009 to 2014

WHY DO I NEED TO DO AN ASSESSMENT?

Various legislation imposes duties on local authorities to promote equality and tackle discrimination related to Disability, Race (colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality) Religion or Belief, Sex (marital status, gender reassignment), Sexual orientation, Age. This Assessment Template will help you to test the impact on people of new and existing policies, strategies and functions to find out if there is any adverse impact or illegal discrimination or any unmet need or requirements. We have included discretionary but important additional categories in this assessment: People Living in Rural Areas, People on Low Incomes and People for whom English is not their first Language.

Completing this assessment will help you to improve the way that your services are delivered.

WHAT HAS TO BE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSED?

You only need to do an Assessment on new and existing policies, strategies and functions that are relevant to equality. This can be determined as follows:

RELEVANT – Equality Impact Assessment must be done

- The policy, strategy or function will impact on people (residents, staff or people living, visiting or working in Braintree District)
- The policy, strategy or function may benefit some people or communities and not others

NOT RELEVANT – Equality Impact Assessment not needed

- No intended impact on people
- The policy, strategy or function is administrative only

HOW DO I DO THIS ASSESSMENT?

You will be asked to consider any possible positive or negative impacts that a new or existing policy, strategy or function may have on defined groups by using data as evidence. Follow the steps in the Assessment Form and use the attached guidance notes. This isn't trying to 'catch you out' but to help you to improve the way you deliver your services by ensuring that they are as inclusive as possible.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – INITIAL SCREENING

Name of Policy, Strategy or Function being assessed	Housing Strategy for the Braintree District 2009-2014
Is this a new or existing Policy, Strategy or Function?	A new housing strategy for the Braintree district
Person responsible for the assessment	Emma Holbrow
Service Area	Housing
Head of Service	Joanne Albini
Date	10/09/09

1. What is the main purpose of the Policy, Strategy or Function?

- The Housing Strategy for the Braintree District considers how we intend to meet the housing need of local people and has the following main aims:
 - 1) increase supply of affordable housing
 - 2) Improve housing choices and mobility
 - 3) Prevent and reduce homelessness and reduce the use of temporary accommodation
 - 4) Improve the condition of housing, especially for vulnerable people
 - 5) Address the health, wellbeing and support needs of vulnerable people
 - 6) Improve the physical and social environment of our neighbourhoods
 - 7) Make sure that housing investment support local economic wellbeing
 - 8) Improve the use of existing housing
 - 9) Plan for the future, clarifying the location and type of housing needed

2. Are other services or partners involved in the delivery of the Policy, Strategy or Function?

If so, state who they are. They will need to be involved in producing this Equality Impact Assessment

- Housing Associations
- Other LA's in the sub-region
- Social services
- Parish Council
- Developers

- Planners
- Environmental services

3. Who are the audience, users, customers who will be affected by the Policy, Strategy or Function?

- **Audience:**
 - Councils
 - Parish councils
- **Users:**
 - Local authority staff: planning, housing and environment services
 - Housing associations
 - Private developers
- **Customers:**
 - Neighbourhoods and communities across the district
 - Households on the housing register

4. How do you monitor, or how do you intend to monitor the impact of the Policy, Strategy or Function

on people within the following equality groups: Disability, Race (colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality) Religion or Belief, Sex (marital status, gender reassignment), Sexual orientation, Age, People living in rural areas, People on low incomes, People for whom English is not their first language.

Performance Indicators/Targets	There are a number of performance indicators in place to monitor different areas within the housing service. These PI's are monitored monthly and reported quarterly and annually.
User Satisfaction Surveys	Tenancy surveys are carried out with residents of new homes provided through the work of the organisations of the Braintree Housing Partnership. The surveys are carried out 6 months after the household has moved into their home and seeks their feedback and comments on quality of the building and satisfaction with the services they receive etc.
Consultation results (new and existing)	Consultation of the draft Housing Strategy 2009-2014 took place between July 2009 and September 2009. A number of workshops (rural housing, the physical and social environment and older people) were carried out with stakeholders. The draft

	<p>strategy was also presented at various stakeholder meetings including the Braintree Local Action Group.</p> <p>Additionally, emails were circulated to stakeholders across different groups advising them of the draft strategy and inviting them to offer their feedback. Eforms were made available on the BDC website to facilitate feedback and comments.</p> <p>Letters and copies of the strategy document were sent to stakeholders with no email facility or when requested.</p>
Staff monitoring data	n/a
Complaints information	The number of complaints received by the housing service and how quickly they are dealt with are monitored as part of the monthly performance monitoring.
Demographic profiles (census, etc)	<p>We use the following data to help us develop a profile of the district and to inform our strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration of households into and out of the district available from ONS (Office of National Statistics); • Details of mean and median local salaries by place of residence and by place of work available from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings; • Number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance available from Nomisweb; • Details of current population and population projections from the Projecting Older People Population Information (POPPI) website
Local Needs Analysis (internal or external sources)	<p>We commissioned Fordham Research to carry out a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) of the district which was undertaken during 2007. Since publication of the report in 2008 we have produced annual updates covering the following broad areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing needs; • Market activity;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability; and • Migration <p>We are looking into commissioning a new SHMA for publication 2012-2013.</p>
Staff Survey results	n/a
Research reports	<p>As outlined above we carry out an annual research report on the local housing market each year through the SHMA Update.</p> <p>We are also able to obtain specific information about housing needs in the social sector from the Abrisas system which supports the Gateway to Homechoice scheme.</p>
Best Practice Information	<p>We are involved in a number of sub-regional working groups which provide ideal opportunities to exchange ideas of best practice.</p> <p>Where we are involved in joint working such as the Gateway to Homechoice system where we operate a single allocations policy across 6 other local authorities, regular reviews are carried out to help ensure best practice.</p> <p>We also take note of the reports following Audit Commission Inspections of Strategic Housing Services in other local authorities.</p>
Benchmarking data	<p>We carried out a benchmarking exercise during the summer 2010 and exchanged information with the following comparator local authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mendip; • Forest of Dean; • South Somerset; • West Somerset; and • Newark and Sherwood
Expert views of people representing the equality	<p>As part of the consultation of the draft Housing Strategy we sought the views from:</p>

groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Braintree Local Action Group (LAG) which represent the views of people with learning disabilities and carers; • Care and Repair England, a charity that aim to improve the housing and living conditions of older people and disable people; • Parish councils and district councillors which represent communities in both rural and urban areas.
Other – please state	n/a

5. Based on the information indicated in question 4. above complete the following table to assess the impact that the Policy, Strategy or Function could have on the groups below. The impact could be positive ie it could help to promote equality, equal opportunities, or improve relations within equality target groups. The impact could be negative i.e. it could disadvantage them. You need to explain the reasons for the impact assessment you have made

Equality Group	Category	Positive Impact could promote equality and/or benefit this group	Negative Impact or Risk that this group could be disadvantaged	Explanation
Age	Children 0-16	✓		The strategy aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create ideal social and physical environments with provision for green areas and play areas integrated into new schemes. • Improve space standards of affordable homes by asking for all new affordable homes to be built to the lifetime homes standard which will better accommodate families.

	Young People 17-25	✓		<p>The strategy aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve housing choices and mobility; • Provide guidance on other forms of housing and employment opportunities as part of the Trailblazer scheme. • Make better use of the existing housing stock by using incentives to encourage residents who are under-occupying properties (typically older people) to free them up for larger households.
	Older People 60+	✓		<p>The strategy aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure all new affordable homes are built to Lifetime Home Standard and can therefore be more easily adapted as the needs of the household change for example downstairs bathroom facilitates etc. • For older people to be able to access support in their own homes when they need it and for sheltered housing to provide high quality living environments.
Disability	Blind/Partially Sighted	✓		<p>The strategy aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that advice about the range of supported housing available is easily accessible to the public and to agencies giving advice. • Improve the condition of housing,
	Deaf/Hearing Impaired	✓		
	Learning Difficulties	✓		

	Mental Health Difficulties	✓		<p>especially for vulnerable people, by ensuring there is an effective network of advice available throughout the district, meeting regularly with other agencies to plan services and identify gaps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help vulnerable people who want to move to smaller housing are helped to do so.
	Wheelchair user/mobility difficulties	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy requires for 5% of all new developments to be fully wheelchair accessible. • Properties built to the lifetime home standard will also allow for a visiting wheelchair user to visit the property with more ease.
Gender	Women			n/a
	Men			
	Transgender			
Race	White including English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, Eastern European (Polish Slovak, etc) Other White background – please specify			n/a
	Asian including Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Other Asian background – please specify			
	Black including Caribbean, Somali, Other African, Other Black background – please specify			
	Mixed Dual Heritage including White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Other mixed background – please specify			
	Gypsies/Travellers			

Religion/Belief	Buddhist			n/a
	Christian			
	Hindu			
	Jewish			
	Muslim			
	Sikh			
	Other – please specify			
Social Inclusion	People living in rural areas	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy refers to the forthcoming Village Agents pilot project that will help those in more rural isolated areas to access services and to be signposted to relevant organisations. • The strategy aims to make sure people are properly involved in discussions about development in villages.
	People on low incomes	✓		<p>The strategy aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the supply of affordable housing. • Ensure there is a sufficient range of affordable housing options to meet the needs of people with varied and changing financial circumstances.
	English not first language	✓		<p>The strategy aims for the Choice Based Lettings system to be accessible to everyone who needs housing and proposes to review who is using the system locally and compare across the sub-region.</p>

6. Based on your answer to question 5 above could the Policy, Strategy or Function discriminate against any of the groups below either directly or indirectly

NOTE: Direct Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation because of their racial or ethnic origin, gender, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when an apparently neutral provision or practice would disadvantage people on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, gender, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, unless the practice can be objectively justified by a legitimate aim

Group	Direct Yes/No	Indirect Yes/No	If Yes state how
Age	No	No	
Disability	No	No	
Gender	No	No	
Race	No	No	
Religion/Belief	No	No	
Social Inclusion	No	No	

7. Referring to your answers to questions 5 and 6, can you easily minimize or remove any negative impacts identified and if so how?

n/a

8. If the negative impacts cannot be minimized or removed, can they be justified? Please explain how. You may want to refer back to the monitoring data in Question 4 to evidence this

n/a

9. If you have not identified any positive impacts, can you adapt the policy, strategy or function in any way so that it does impact positively?

n/a

10. Based on the information you have now provided in this assessment please proceed as follows:

Equality Impact Assessment	Action
No negative impacts have been identified and this has been justified with evidence	Sign Off by completing 12. below
Negative impacts were identified but have been minimized or removed	Sign off by completing 12. below
There is insufficient evidence to reach a valid conclusion	Go back and collect additional evidence/data and then complete this Assessment
Negative impacts were identified but have not been minimized, removed or justified	Go to Full Equality Impact Assessment below

12.

Assessment Completed by (name & signature)	Alison Weaver
Head of Service (name & signature)	Joanne Albini
Date:	

A copy of the signed Equalities Impact Assessment and any Action Plan should be retained and appended to the relevant Policy/Strategy document or Business Plan. A signed hard copy and electronic copy should be sent to Charmaine Dean, Head of Community Services. It is a statutory requirement to publish the results of Equality Impact Assessments. We will make these available on our website.

FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

You now need to complete a Full Equality Impact Assessment because you identified a negative impact of the Policy, Strategy or Function in relation to equality groups that could not easily be minimized or removed. You will need to complete the Action Plan below to show what you will do to address this. This should include consultation with representatives from the equality group(s) who you have identified as being likely to suffer a negative impact/be disadvantaged by the Policy, Strategy or Function being assessed.

ACTION PLAN

Equality Group	Negative Impact Identified	Action	By Who	Start Date	End Date

ACTION PLAN MONITORING

How will you monitor progress of your Action Plan? And at what intervals?	
How frequently will this monitoring take place?	
Who will be responsible for this?	

Now go back to question 11 to complete and sign off this Assessment