

BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL - IMPACT ASSESSMENT

WHY DO I NEED TO DO AN ASSESSMENT?

This Impact Assessment isn't designed to 'catch you out'. It is designed to help you think about and improve the way you deliver your services by ensuring that they are as inclusive as possible.

It will help you to test the impact on people when reviewing or developing new policies, strategies and functions to find out if there is any adverse impact or illegal discrimination or any unmet need or requirements.

Legislation imposes duties on local authorities to promote equality and tackle discrimination related to Age, Disability, Gender (includes marital status, gender reassignment), Race (colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality) Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, However, we have also included discretionary but important additional categories relevant to our District in this assessment process: People Living in Rural Areas, People living in Urban Areas, People on Low Incomes and People for whom English is not their first Language.

To comply with legislation the Council is required to publish its Impact Assessments and these will be made available on our website.

WHAT HAS TO BE IMPACT ASSESSED?

You need to do an Assessment when reviewing, making changes to or developing new and existing policies, strategies and functions that are relevant to equality. This can be determined as follows:

RELEVANT – 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 – Impact Assessment not needed

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

HOW DO I DO THIS ASSESSMENT?

By answering the questions in the following Assessment template you will be able to consider any possible positive or negative impacts that a new or existing policy, strategy or function may have on defined groups, using data as evidence, and take action accordingly.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT – INITIAL SCREENING

Name of Policy, Strategy or Function being assessed	<i>Other areas for increasing income/reducing costs within Development Management</i>
Is this a new or existing Policy, Strategy or Function?	This is not a policy or strategy. It relates to proposed changes to administration practice.
Person responsible for the assessment	Tessa Lambert
Service Area	Development Management
Head of Service	Jon Hayden
Date	26/01/11

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

The function is a range of administration activities that support the Development Management Function.

Specifically the functions are:

The administration of consultation on Planning applications

The keeping of planning application files

The main purpose of the proposed change is to move to electronic consultation (from paper-based) and to move to electronic storage (from paper-based).

2. Who else will be involved in the delivery of this Strategy, Policy or Function?

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

Internal and external consultees (e.g Environmental Health, ECC Highways, Environment Agency, parish Councils). The users of the service are not the general public although they may be groups which represent the public (e.g Parish Councils)

3. Who are you delivering your service to/who will be affected by the Strategy, Policy or Function?

See Q2

4. To ensure that you have all available information that could help you to undertake this Impact Assessment complete the following table to evidence which of the following sources of information you are using, or intend to use, to assess 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 living in urban areas, People on low incomes, People for whom English is not their first language. **The sources listed are for guidance so please add/substitute your own categories as appropriate.**

Source	Reference (date/ relevant publication, etc)
Performance Indicators/Targets	None relevant
User Satisfaction Surveys	None relevant
Consultation results (new and existing)	Responses to notification of proposals to Parish Councils
Staff monitoring data	Not relevant
Complaints information	Responses from Parish Councils may be considered to be complaints about the change in service
Demographic profiles (census, etc)	Not relevant
Local Needs Analysis (internal or external sources)	Not relevant
Staff Survey results	Not relevant
Research reports	None available
Best Practice Information	Best Practice is to promote electronic communication
Benchmarking data	Secured through Essex wide Forum
Expert views of people representing the equality	None sought

groups	
Other – please state	

5. Based on the data indicated in question 4, assess the impact that the Policy, Strategy or Function could have on the groups below. The impact could be positive ie it will benefit this group, it could help to promote equality, access, or improve relations within equality 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

Only those groups where a differential impact may arise have been highlighted

Equality Group	Category	Positive Impact	Negative Impact/ Risk	Explanation
Age	Children 0-16			
	Young People 17-25			
	Ages 26-59			
	Older People 60+			
Disability	Blind/Partially Sighted	Viewing of Plans online allows for the size of plans to be adjusted.		
	Deaf/Hearing Impaired			
	Wheelchair user/mobility difficulties			
	Learning Difficulties			
	Mental Health Difficulties			
Gender	Women			
	Men			
	Transgender			

Race	White including English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, Eastern European (Polish Slovak, etc) Other White background – please specify			
	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			
	Christian			
	Hindu			
	Jewish			
	Muslim			
	Sikh			
	Other – please specify			
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian Gay men Heterosexual Bi-sexual			
Social Inclusion	People living in rural areas			
	People living in urban areas			
	People on low incomes			
	English not first language			

Other (optional)	Use to define Impact on any groups specific to this Strategy, Policy or Function not listed above. Those who are not familiar with IT/internet/e-communication		This group may be less likely to use electronic communication	The consultation is with organisations rather than private individuals.
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6. Based on your answer to question 5, 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	
Sexual Orientation	No	No	
Social Inclusion	No	Yes	Risk that those less familiar with IT use will be more affected by a shift towards e-based communication.

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

The Service has been aware of some reservations about the proposals from Parish Councils. This has been due to their more limited access to and familiarity with electronic communication. The Parish Councils were given more than 10 months notice of the introduction of the proposed change to e-based consultation and their concerns have been addressed as far as possible. A number of Parish Councils have changed their arrangements for considering planning applications in response to the proposals.

8. If the negative impacts cannot be minimized or removed, they need to be justified. Please explain how and what the evidence for this is.

You may want to refer back to the monitoring data you listed in Question 4 to answer this question.

The change can be justified because the Local planning Authority is not statutorily required to send copies of planning applications to parish Councils, only to notify them that an application has been made. Officers have offered Parish Councils training to ease the change to e-consultation. The move

is also in line with national government objectives to promote e-communication in the provision of services. A full set of the paper plans and forms will continue to be available for public inspection at the Council's Offices.

9. If you have identified any impacts as positive in Question 5, are there any further ways in which you can adapt the policy, strategy or function to increase or extend its positive benefits for equality groups? Please explain your reasoning.

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	Go to Q11 and Sign Off
Negative impacts were identified but have been minimized or removed	Go to Q11 and Sign Off
There is insufficient evidence to reach a valid conclusion on the Impact	Go back and collect additional evidence/data and then complete a new Assessment
Negative impacts were identified but have not been minimized, removed or justified	Complete the Action Plan below and then sign off by completing Q11

11. Sign Off

Assessment Completed by (name & signature)	Tessa Lambert
Senior Manager (name & signature)	Jon Hayden
Date:	26th January 2011

A copy of the signed 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 an 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.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN

You now need to develop and implement an Action Plan to address the negative impacts identified that could not be minimized, removed or justified.

This should include more detailed research, further data collection or 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 (eg young people, blind/partially sighted, etc)	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