

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	A reduction in the targets relating to the handling of planning applications.
Is this a new or existing Policy, Strategy or Function?	The DM service has sought, historically, to achieve upper quartile performance against National Performance Indicators (NI 157a, b and c)
Person responsible for the assessment	Tessa Lambert
Service Area	Development Management
Head of Service	Jon Hayden
Date	27.01.11

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

The 3 National Indicators (NI 157a, 157b and 157c) concern the efficiency in handling the different categories of planning applications – “majors”, “minors” and “others”. Last year (2009/10) Braintree’s DM performance was 157a – 88.64%, 157b – 87.94%; 157c – 94.12%. This level of performance sets Braintree at top quartile level in relation to 157b and 157c and second quartile level in relation to 157a. The proposed reduction in the performance targets for the service (a drop of ten percentage points for each PI) is a consequence of a reduction in the capacity of the service.

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

Indirectly, other BDC services that are consulted on planning applications and external consultees (e.g ECC as Highway Authority, Environment Agency etc).

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

The handling of planning applications is, principally, a service provided to applicants. Nevertheless, there are statutory consultation and notification requirements for applications which mean that those who may be affected by a proposed development (i.e neighbouring residents, businesses etc) are also customers of the service.

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	National Indicators 157a,b,c
User Satisfaction Surveys	Satisfaction with Planning Services was previously covered by the 3-yearly Place Survey
Consultation results (new and existing)	None available
Staff monitoring data	Individual officer performance monitoring
Complaints information	Corporate monitoring of complaints about the handling of applications is ongoing. Rarely do these concern the time taken to handle applications.
Demographic profiles (census, etc)	No date available
Local Needs Analysis (internal or external sources)	No data available
Staff Survey results	None available
Research reports	None of direct relevance
Best Practice Information	Planning Advisory Service guidance on efficient application handling processes

Benchmarking data	Data from benchmarking with other Essex LPAs and from performance against National Indicators
Expert views of people representing the equality groups	None available
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

No differential impacts are anticipated as a consequence of the proposed reduction in performance targets.

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			
	Deaf/Hearing Impaired			
	Wheelchair user/mobility difficulties			
	Learning Difficulties			
	Mental Health Difficulties			
	Learning 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.			
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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	No	

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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, 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.**

N/a

**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.**

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	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:	27/01/11

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