

Equality Impact Assessment

Title of the policy	Development Control Service
Date	December 2011
Lead Officer	Adrian Eastwood – Development Control Manager
Who else is involved in undertaking this assessment?	Mark Patterson – Principal Planning Officer Paul Taylor - Planning Officer

Step 1 – Overview of policy/function being assessed

<p>A. Outline: What is the purpose of this policy? (specify aims and objectives)</p> <p>The purpose of development control is to make decisions on planning applications in accordance with statutory regulations, government policy, the development plan and any other material factors.</p> <p>Its purpose is allowing sustainable development and preventing unacceptable proposals.</p> <p>It makes decisions between different and sometimes conflicting "customers" of the service in the interests of the whole community. A necessary feature is that there should be equal and unbiased access for all in a transparent decision process.</p>
<p>B. What specific groups is the policy designed to affect/impact?</p> <p>All Harborough residents, businesses and operative agencies are potentially affected subject to location and nature of planning applications received.</p> <p>Internally affected at HDC are staff directly and indirectly associated with Development Control and elected members.</p> <p>The specific group of service users, residents or staff affected is dependant on type of planning application being received. Most typically affected are residents, owners, architects/ agents and councillors. The impact of a development can be mitigated by necessary and related s106 contributions, for example to provide recreation opportunity / open space and community facilities arising from a development.</p>
<p>C. Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy?</p> <p>A satisfaction survey of service users is carried out on a continual basis and results monitored.</p> <p>Planning applications are advertised on a Weekly List which is available to the relevant parish council and ward member. A weekly list is also available from the Council's web-site. Development Control operates a comprehensive neighbour notification scheme on planning applications in accordance with DoE circular 15/92: consultations on planning applications. Consultations beyond the statutory requirements are also carried out where appropriate to obtain views from organisations including Primary Care Trust, local schools, Leicestershire Police, Health Visitor, Traveller Liaison Officer, HDC Open Space Manager etc...</p> <p>A record of response received is maintained on each application.</p>

Step 2 – What we already know and where there are gaps

<p>A. List any existing information/data you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? Such as in relation to ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation,</p>

disability, age, gender, transgender etc.

Data/information such as:

- Consultation
- Previous Equality Impact Assessments
- Demographic information
- Anecdotal and other evidence

Very little data – a survey of equality and diversity characteristics is proposed as a consequence of this EIA. This survey will run parallel to on-going user satisfaction survey.

There is evidence on need for gypsy and traveller accommodation Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA)

http://www.harborough.gov.uk/info/200074/planning/52/background_reports/3

Anecdotal data on traveller and gypsy groups identifies some difficulty with 'form filling' to which planning staff have responded by being available to assist when difficulties for users from this group, or others with literacy or visual impairments are identified, through the planning duty system available daily and publicised by customer Services staff.

The Service will think about equalities issues whilst fulfilling its statutory role and have regard to Government consultations and EIA's including, for example, its consultation on Planning for traveler sites

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/travellersitesconsultation> and draft government policy including to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that supports the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interest of the settled community.

B. What does this information / data tell you about diverse group? If you do not hold or have access to any data/information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating / monitoring? (please list)

To begin collating and monitoring data potentially to encompass:

- Race & ethnicity
- Disability
- Sex/Gender
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Religion and belief
- Gender Re-assignment (Transgender)
- Pregnancy & maternity
- Marital status & civil partnerships

Step 3 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?

A. In light of the answers you have given in step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not please explain why.

The existing satisfaction survey is expected to continue.

This survey should be broadened to gather information on user characteristics (see 2 B above). This should be initiated during 2012.

The results of the statutory consultation to planning applications are taken into account in the determination of these applications. A record is kept of responses received and if required the participants of statutory consultation can be extracted. The Traveller Liaison Officer, for example, is known to reply on relevant planning applications in response to the Council proactively seeking his/her input.

Step 4 – Assessing the impacts

	In light of any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge and awareness, please identify whether the policy has a positive or negative impact on the groups specified and provide an explanation for your decision. (please refer to the general duties on the front page)
A. Age	<p>Neutral</p> <p>The Development Control service makes no differentiation between age groups when carrying out its statutory functions. This is confirmed as there is no evidence from customer consultation feedback that there are any age barriers to using the service</p>
B. Disability (physical, visual, hearing, learning disabilities, mental health)	<p>Positive – a exemption from fees for disabled planning applicants applies.</p> <p>Applicants who are registered disabled do not incur charges when making Planning Submissions for improved facilities within their properties</p>
C. Gender / Sex	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that the service discriminates in respect of a person's gender.</p> <p>Planning staff will assist users with literacy and other impairments as necessary through the planning duty system available daily and publicised by Customer Services staff</p> <p>The planning service liaises with HDC Building Control where necessary to consider access to buildings, for example for parents/carers re: prams, which is usually subject to Building Regulation approval.</p>
D. Religious Belief	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that the service discriminates against persons with different religious beliefs.</p> <p>Section 38 (6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations could include, for example, the need to provide a place of worship.</p>
E. Racial Group	<p>Positive: Gypsy & Travellers. Planning Officers have arranged site visits and consultations accompanied by the Leicestershire Traveller Liaison Officer and PCT health visitor to improve accessibility to information.</p>
F. Sexual Orientation	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that the service discriminates in respect of a person's sexual orientation other than there being no complaint</p>

	<p>history.</p> <p>Current recruitment policies do not discriminate on grounds of sexual orientation</p>
G. Transgender	As above.
H. Other protected groups (pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership)	As above
I. Other socially excluded groups (low literacy, priority neighbourhoods, socio-economic, etc)	See step 2 : Section A above.
J. All	

Step 5 – Action Plan

Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan: <i>The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan</i>			
Question Number (Ref)	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date
Step 2 B	<p>To begin collating and monitoring data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race & ethnicity • Disability • Sex/Gender • Age • Sexual orientation • Religion and belief • Gender Re-assignment (Transgender) • Pregnancy & maternity • Marital status & civil partnerships 	Development Control Manager	Before 1 st April 2012

Step 6 – Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed

	Who needs to know (Please tick)	How they will be informed (we have a legal duty to publish EIA's)
Employees	Yes	Development Control staff through team meetings..
Service users	Yes	Through website and service user forum.
Partners and stakeholders	Yes	Through website and service user forum.
Others	Yes	Through website.
To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are there?	None	

Step 7 – Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the Service head)

Please delete as appropriate	
I agree / disagree with this assessment / action plan	
If disagree , state action/s required, reasons and details of who is to carry them out with timescales:	
Signed (Service Head):	
Date:	

Please send completed & signed assessment to the Equality and Diversity officer.

