

Equality Impact Assessment Record

Date of
EIA

March 2009

Directorate

Environment, Culture and Communities

Initial Screening Record	
Activity to be assessed	Operation of the common practices within the Building Control Service as required by statute and codes of practice made there under.
What is the activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy/strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Function/procedure <input type="checkbox"/> Procurement <input type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change
Is it a new or existing activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> New
Aim / objective / purpose of the activity – who is the activity designed to benefit/target?	<p>The purpose of the activity is to: discharge the Council's statutory duty to enforce Building Regulations throughout the Borough. This is done through a series of functional technical requirements set by Government to protect the health, safety, welfare and convenience of residents, workers, visitors and businesses in and about buildings.</p> <p>The activity is designed for: the two main customer types –</p> <p><u>Applicants</u> (paying customers) which include residents, developers, design professionals or anyone intending to carry out building work.</p> <p><u>Building End Users</u> who are the people who benefit from our efforts to ensure compliance with the regulations and who would suffer if this was not achieved to the reasonable standards required.</p>
Who is responsible for the activity?	The person/Team responsible for this is the Building Control and Land Charges Manager/Building Control Services.
Did Step 1: Initial Screening indicate that a full EIA was necessary?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes – full EIA completed and recorded below. <input type="checkbox"/> No – full EIA not completed therefore record ends here.
Full EIA Record	
Who are the members of the EIA team?	Building Control and Land Charges Manager and the Building Control Services Team.
What evidence has been found to indicate that the activity might need to be	Previous customer surveys have never reported any equality issues in the delivery of the Building Control Service. It is hoped that further consultation and questionnaires will take place next year in 2010. The last questionnaire was completed in 2005. The structure of the proposed questionnaire will be adapted to collect diversity data on the user group as this has never been collected before. Previous questionnaires were based on capturing customer service levels only.

<p>amended? (Include any consultation undertaken)</p>	<p>The majority of potential issues are often avoided due to the technical nature of the service and customers often employ 'agents' to act on their behalf. This means that we deal with the agent who is familiar with the service and how it operates. However, the service is fully accessible.</p>	
<p>With regard to the equalities themes, which groups might be impacted by the activity? Might any of these groups be impacted adversely?</p>	<p>Groups Impacted</p>	<p>Groups impacted adversely</p>
	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race and ethnicity <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race and ethnicity <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief</p>
<p>What evidence is there to suggest an impact/adverse impact?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Building Regulations application charge is waived for work carried out for disabled applicants. • The majority of our applications are submitted by 'agents' working on the applicants behalf. The agents provide a personal service on a more 1-2-1 basis which avoids many 'access issues' applicants may encounter. • All the evidence suggests that anyone who wishes to access the Building Control Service can do, equally. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Building Control Service is enforced in a fair and non-discriminatory manner. The service is delivered and enforced from an over-arching set of national Regulations produced by Government which are applicable to everyone undertaking building work coming under the umbrella of the Building Regulations. The aim is that the end product complies with the Building Regulations and so the impact of the building work is the same for everyone. HOWEVER, the service actively promotes equality in buildings through Part M of the Building Regulations which enforces certain design requirements in new building work which make buildings easily accessible for all users. In certain situations this may leave able bodied users feeling discriminated against if they do not necessarily want to comply with this requirement, but find they have to. For example, a person building their own house from new may wish to have a grand set of marble sets leading up to the front of 	

		<p>their house, but Part M will insist that any changes on ground level up to the front door are navigated with a ramp and a level access so that everyone visiting the property or who may own it in the future can actually get to the front door with no steps as an obstruction. This regulation applies to everyone carrying out work under the control of the Building Regulations so there is no discrimination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are sometimes communication issues between migrant worker builders and our surveyors. There is also a lack of understanding of construction methods used in the UK so additional time must be spent with these workers. Due to this it may sometimes appear that more enforcement action is taken against builders from migrant backgrounds but this is because they may not be as familiar with the requirements of UK Building Regulations and so more abortive work is carried out on site until they become familiar with the requirements.
<p>On what grounds can impact or adverse impact be justified?</p>		<p>We cannot determine the grounds as to why adverse impact could be justified under this policy.</p> <p>Fair and effective enforcement of Building Control is essential to protect the health, safety and economic interests of the public, businesses and the environment. Decision about Building Control actions and in particular the decision to prosecute, have serious implications for all involved. Regulatory services apply this Policy to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions about Building Control enforcement action are fair, proportionate and consistent • Officers apply current Government Guidance and relevant Codes of Practice • Everyone understands the principles that are applied when Building Control action is considered
<p>Is there any current action that addresses issues for any of the groups impacted/a dversely impacted?</p>		<p>The last questionnaire was sent out in 2005 and the next questionnaire for distribution is currently under review for distribution in 2009.</p>
<p>What changes will you</p>		<p>None at this stage but results of future customer questionnaires will be examined. A standard equalities group question will be added to future questionnaires.</p>

make to the activity reduce or remove any differential/ adverse impact?	
Into which action plan/s will these actions be incorporated?	They will be incorporated in the Building Control Service Business Plan.
Who is responsible for the action plan?	Building Control and Land Charges Manager.
Have any examples of good practise been identified as part of the EIA?	No.
Has the EIA been published on the Council website?	Yes
Who is the relevant Chief Officer and have they signed off the EIA?	Vincent Paliczka, Director, Environment, Culture & Communities Signature.....Vincent Paliczka.....
Which PMR will this EIA be reported in?	Q1 2009/10