

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This should be carried out during the development stage of a new project, strategy, policy or service or when you are reviewing an existing project, strategy, policy or service.

By understanding and meeting people's differing needs we can provide more effective services.

Name and brief description of project, strategy, policy or service being assessed

Increasing the level of the charges that the Council makes, as Local Planning Authority, for the provision of advice on development proposals, in advance of the submission of a planning application (known as pre application advice). These charges can only be set on a cost recovery basis.

The charging regime was introduced in April 2010 and was expanded in April 2011(to include householder and Listed Building-related proposals). The current proposal is to increase the charge that is made for all the various categories of advice. The charges have not been increased since first introduced and a review of officer time spent handling the requests indicated that the charges were not fully covering the costs of providing the service.

Information used to analyse the impact on people affected by the project, strategy, policy or service

State who will be affected, the relevant information you are using to assess how it will affect them, note any relevant consultation, surveys, etc.,

The service is aware of the number and nature of the requests for pre application advice that it receives. The bulk of the requests are from developers and/or their planning agents. About a fifth of requests are made by householders seeking advice on proposals to extend their homes.

The proposed increases in the charges would affect all the different categories of requests but are most significant in relation to advice on major development proposals. The increase to the charges for householder type request are small (e.g and increase of £7 (from £53 to £60) for the provision of written advice. This service is one which is available to customers but they are not obliged to use it. Moreover, the level of the charges is, legally, based on covering costs so is not intended to secure income to offset service costs elsewhere. The proposed charges are comparable with the charges levied by other Essex Districts and are not prohibitive given the cost of a householder planning application (around £190) and the totality of costs associated with the building of a house extension.

The service undertook a feedback survey of users at the end of 2012 but few responses were received. Planning agents have been consulted on the proposed increased charges in January (runs to January 31st). Only three responses have been received: 1 described the plans as unwelcome; 1 asked for an explanation for how the fees were set and 1 suggests a modification to the charges for a short meeting with an agent.

Use the information above to assess the impact of your project, policy, strategy or service on people from the following protected groups: (these are defined by the Equality Act 2010)

Protected Group		Positive Impact/ Benefit	Negative Impact/ Disadvantage	Explanation – State how
Age	Children 0-16			The proposed increases in charges are not considered to have a differential impact (either positive or negative) on any of the protected groups identified. In the main, the charges are for a service provided to businesses rather than individuals and the proposed changes do not affect the way in which the service is provided. There will be an impact on pre application enquires by individuals (e.g enquiry on house extensions) where increases in fees will apply. However the increase are not substantial and are not considered to result in a differential impact on any of the protected groups identified.
	Young People 17-25			
	Ages 26-59			
Disability Include disabled people and/or carers	Older People 60+			
	Blind/Partially Sighted			
	Deaf/Hearing Impaired			
	Wheelchair user/mobility difficulties			
	Learning Difficulties			
Gender	Mental Health Difficulties			
	Men			
	Women			
	Transgender			
	Pregnancy & Maternity impact			
Race	Marriage & Civil Partnership			
	White			
	Asian			
	Black			
Religion/Belief	Mixed Dual Heritage			
	Buddhist			
	Christian			
	Hindu			

	Jewish			
	Muslim			
	Sikh			
	Other – please specify			
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian Gay men Heterosexual Bi-sexual			
Other (optional)	Use to define Impact on any groups specific to this Strategy, Policy or Function not listed above.			

If you identified any negative impacts above then either:

(a) Your proposal, policy or service is treating people from a protected group above less favourably because of their age, disability, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation

or

(b) Your proposal, policy or service is intended to treat everyone equally but, unintentionally, people from a protected group above can be particularly disadvantaged or treated less favourably than other others

PLEASE TICK WHICHEVER APPLIES

If you ticked (a) this is direct discrimination, which is illegal and you cannot proceed

If you ticked (b):

1. Can any negative impacts be minimized or removed? If so state what changes you will make.
2. If you cannot minimize or remove negative impacts they must be justified and you must state your justification

If you identified any positive impacts is there anything further you can do to increase or extend the positive benefits? If so state what changes you will make

Completed By: Tessa Lambert

Approved By (Senior Manager)



Service: Development Management 29.01.14

Date :

3/2/14.

Each service should retain the signed copy of the Assessment.

An electronic copy should be sent to angve@braintree.gov.uk for publication on the Council's website – this is a requirement to ensure that we meet our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010.