

Impact Needs/Requirement Assessment Completion Form

Department: Brent Housing Partnership	Person Responsible: Linda Footer
Service Area: Regeneration and Major Projects	Timescale for Equality Impact Assessment :
Date: 19 th August 2011	Completion date: 24th August 2011
Name of service/policy/procedure/project etc: Proposed Changes to Area Housing Boards	Is the service/policy/procedure/project etc: New <input type="checkbox"/> Old <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Predictive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retrospective <input type="checkbox"/>	Adverse impact <input type="checkbox"/> Not found <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Found <input type="checkbox"/> Service/policy/procedure/project etc, amended to stop or reduce adverse impact Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is there likely to be a differential impact on any group? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Please state below:
1. Grounds of race: Ethnicity, nationality or national origin e.g. people of different ethnic backgrounds including Gypsies and Travellers and Refugees/ Asylum Seekers Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2. Grounds of gender: Sex, marital status, transgendered people and people with caring responsibilities Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Grounds of disability: Physical or sensory impairment, mental disability or learning disability Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4. Grounds of faith or belief: Religion/faith including people who do not have a religion Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Grounds of sexual orientation: Lesbian, Gay and bisexual Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6. Grounds of age: Older people, children and young People Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation conducted Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Consultation carried out with Chairs of AHB May 10 and members of all Area Housing Boards verbally June 10 via a report dated December 2010.
Person responsible for arranging the review: Andrew Donald	Person responsible for publishing results of Equality Impact Assessment: Linda Footer
Person responsible for monitoring: Linda Footer	Date results due to be published and where: 12 th September, Council website and BHP website and BHP Newsletter to residents in October 2011.
Signed:	Date:

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Please note that you must complete this form if you are undertaking a formal Impact Needs/Requirement Assessment. You may also wish to use this form for guidance to undertake an initial assessment, please indicate.

1. What is the service/policy/procedure/project etc to be assessed?

Area Housing Boards

2. Briefly describe the aim of the service/policy etc? What needs or duties is it designed to meet? How does it differ from any existing services/ policies etc in this area

The aims above relate to the old and proposed new structure of Area Housing Boards. There has been no change to the overall aims.

The aim in changing the current structure is to attempt to increase the number of council tenants and leaseholders who participate in Area Housing Boards. The new structure will be called 'Talkback' instead of 'Area Housing Board'. Currently only two nominated resident representatives from each residents association (37 associations) are eligible to attend Area Housing Boards. The proposed change removes this restriction on those able to attend and participate. In future it is proposed that any Brent council tenant will be able to attend and will be actively encouraged to attend through personal letters of invitation, publicity via posters in communal areas of blocks of flats and advertising in 'Partnership News' the quarterly newsletter sent to all council tenants and leaseholders.

The geographical location of the proposed 'Talkback' forums will be in the same areas as the current AHBs although new venues will need to be found to accommodate anticipated increased numbers attending. The venues to be found will have accessibility for disabled residents as they have now.

- a. To involve customers in provision of housing services
- b. To monitor performance of housing management services and contractors and other parts of housing services
- c. To develop new ideas and methods of solving council housing problems
- d. To influence the practices and policies that determine the provision of housing services
- e. To consider the wider community problems and find solutions to them
- f. To advise the housing management service on local priorities for the provision of housing services and the allocation of resources
- g. To advise the housing management service in the development of an area strategy
- h. To liaise with other groups and organisations

3. Are the aims consistent with the council's Comprehensive Equality Policy?

Brent Housing Partnership and Brent Council is committed to ensuring that the services we provide are relevant to the needs of all sections of the community and that our workforce represents the people we serve.

We aim to ensure that our services meet the varied individual needs and expectations of local people and that everyone has equal access to services, regardless of their race, heritage, gender, religious or non-religious belief, nationality, family background, age, disability or sexuality. We recognise that services must be relevant, responsive and sensitive, and that the Council must be perceived as fair and equitable in its provision of services by our service users, by our partners and the wider community. We aim to ensure that our contractors and others who deliver our services also share our vision and values.

4. Is there any evidence to suggest that this could affect some groups of people? Is there an adverse impact around race/gender/disability/faith/sexual orientation/health etc? What are the reasons for this adverse impact?

There is no evidence to suggest the proposed change from AHB to new Talkback Forums will adversely affect any group of people. On the contrary, the fact that we are opening up the consultation process to all residents should have a positive effect, allowing all council tenants and leaseholders the opportunity to participate. BHP intend to monitor the take up of residents with protected characteristics by handing out a questionnaire during each 'Talkback Forum'. This will enable us to ensure that the attendance in terms of residents with protected characteristics at Talkback forums is representative of council residents as a whole.

5. Please describe the evidence you have used to make your judgement. What existing data for example (qualitative or quantitative) have you used to form your judgement? Please supply us with the evidence you used to make your judgement separately (by race, gender and disability etc).

Visits to the Barnet Homes Hub Scheme where they have done exactly what we are proposing to do for the same reasons. It works exceptionally well and the numbers of residents participating has increased from a handful at their previous area housing meetings to between 60-100 residents now.

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6. Are there any unmet needs/requirements that can be identified that affect specific groups? (Please refer to provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act and the regulations on sexual orientation and faith, Age regulations/legislation if applicable)

All current venues for AHB's are suitable in terms of access for disabled residents. BHP will ensure that the venues (yet to be sourced) for the new Forums have disabled access and are suitable to cope with an expected turnout of around 100 residents at each meeting. We are basing the expected turnout on our many years of experience of organising resident meetings where the turnout is very much driven by the number of people invited as well as the subject matters for discussion and publicity advertising the event.

7. Have you consulted externally as part of your assessment? Who have you consulted with? What methods did you use? What have you done with the results i.e. how do you intend to use the information gathered as part of the consultation?

Yes via Chairs of Area Housing Boards at a special meeting to initially discuss the proposal – all were in favour of the proposed change. Then via reports from the Head of Corporate Services in BHP to Area Housing Boards in June 2010, and March 11. The majority were in favour of the proposed changes.

8. Have you published the results of the consultation, if so where?

Through minutes of AHB meetings which are available on the council's website and BHP's website. Hard copies of the minutes of AHB meetings available on request to BHP's Resident Involvement Officer on 020 8937 2943.

9. Is there a public concern (in the media etc) that this function or policy is being operated in a discriminatory manner?

There is no known public concern.

10. If in your judgement, the proposed service/policy etc does have an adverse impact, can that impact be justified? You need to think about whether the proposed service/policy etc will have a positive or negative effect on the promotion of equality of opportunity, if it will help eliminate discrimination in any way, or encourage or hinder community relations.

This proposed change will enable BHP and the Council to gain meaningful engagement with tenants and leaseholders from different protected characteristics, by implementing a forum which will empower them to highlight any issues they may have with the services which are provided by this council and will also encourage people from hard to reach groups such as travellers to become involved in shaping their future housing. It will have a positive effect on the promotion of equality of opportunity and encourage community relations due to the fact that all council tenants and leaseholders will have the opportunity to attend rather than a just a handful who are not representative of the community as a whole.

11. If the impact cannot be justified, how do you intend to deal with it?

N/A

12. What can be done to improve access to/take up of services?

The current AHB system restricts participation by residents to a handful who have been nominated by their Residents Associations. However, residents associations only represent a third of all council tenants and leaseholders. We are proposing to change the structure of AHBs to the new Talkback Forums to improve access and participation in service delivery in housing to all council tenants and leaseholders. BHP are committed to philosophy that residents should be at the heart of influencing and decision making within their organisation. All council residents will be informed of the Talkback Forums through advertisements in 'Partnership News' which is BHP's residents' newsletter delivered each quarter to all council tenants and leaseholders. In addition posters advertising the Talkback Forums will be placed on Notice Boards in communal areas of blocks of flats.

13. What is the justification for taking these measures?

To increase the number of residents actively engaging and participating in decision making about services which directly affect them as described in sections. It will positively benefit all council tenants and leaseholders who will, if the proposed change is agreed by the Council, have the opportunity for greater participation in housing related service delivery.

14. Please provide us with separate evidence of how you intend to monitor in the future. Please give the name of the person who will be responsible for this on the front page.

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- a) Those attending the Forums will be asked to sign in as they enter to keep a record of the number attending.
- b) Satisfaction surveys about the meetings will be distributed to all attending including the quality and content of the Forums, and the ease of accessibility.
- c) Information will be collected via diversity monitoring forms handed out at the Talkback Forums which will include all protected characteristics: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnerships, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.

The results from a-c above will be collated into reports to be discussed at BHP's Senior Management team meetings each quarter who will oversee the effectiveness of the new system.

15. What are your recommendations based on the conclusions and comments of this assessment?

This proposed change will enable the Area Housing Board to better meet the needs of the tenants and leaseholders by encouraging participation from people of different protected characteristics.

By opening up the membership all tenants and leaseholders the council will be fostering good relations between people from different groups because they will be attending the meetings to discuss common themes and experiences.

This in turn will inevitably bring about a more cohesive community by breaking down barriers which can bring about discrimination.

From the point of view of equality of opportunity and to encourage community relations, it is recommended that the proposed change to Area Housing Boards should be approved.

Should you:

1. Take any immediate action?
2. Develop equality objectives and targets based on the conclusions? ✓
3. Carry out further research?

16. If equality objectives and targets need to be developed, please list them here.

- A. Profile of those attending to include protected characteristics as part of the satisfaction survey process
- B. Publicity regarding the theme for every forum to be promoted in each edition of quarterly residents magazine
- C. Themes for Forums to include issues on Equalities

17. What will your resource allocation for action comprise of?

- A. To be met from existing AHB budget since number of AHB meetings now 16 per annum and will reduce to 4 per annum under the proposed Talkback scheme.

If you need more space for any of your answers please continue on a separate sheet

Signed by the manager undertaking the assessment:

Full name (in capitals please): **Linda Footer**

Date: **24th August 2011**

Service Area and position in the council: **Head of Corporate Services – Brent Housing Partnership**

Details of others involved in the assessment - auditing team/peer review:

Once you have completed this form, please take a copy and send it to: **The Corporate Diversity Team, Room 5 Brent Town Hall, Forty Lane, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 9HD**

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