

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

STAGE 1: WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED AND BY WHOM?

What is being assessed - including a brief description of aims and objectives?

This Equality Impact Assessment looks at whether there are any impacts on any protected characteristic groups arising from a proposed change to the Council's publicity code for planning applications, and if so what mitigation measures can be introduced to address the impact.

The code applies the statutory requirements for publicity as set out in Article 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 to all planning applications.

The proposal is to change the way in which planning applications are publicised within the statutory requirements of the relevant legislation. The existing Code as set out in the Planning Services Customer Charter states that each planning application is advertised as follows:

1. A site notice is displayed and/or nearby properties are written to
2. A weekly list of applications is published on our website
3. Certain planning applications are advertised in the local newspaper (The Herald) (this follows statutory guidelines).

The weekly list is published by email and on the Council's website every Tuesday. The weekly list is sent to all Councillors and all organisations and individuals on the circulation list. Any individual or organisation can request to be added to the circulation list.

The site notice sets out details of the application and is displayed in a prominent position which is accessible to the public. Normally, notices are securely attached to a lamppost or other structure close to the site. The notice now includes a QR Code that can be read by a smartphone to provide a direct link to the planning application online.

The site notice states how the public can view planning applications. All applications are published

STAGE I: WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED AND BY WHOM?

	<p>on the Council's website together with plans and letters of representation. Arrangements are offered for those without internet access, either to come to First Stop at the Civic Centre or to use the internet at public libraries. Paper copies can be provided on request, and a phone number is given for those people unable to use any of these options. The Council offers a service (Translate Plymouth) on request for non-English speakers to have help in understanding a planning application or making a comment.</p> <p>The proposal is to amend the Code by ending the practice of writing to nearby properties. Instead, it is proposed to advertise applications by site notice, ensuring at least two site notices are posted at each site. All publications will still be advertised on the weekly list and in the newspaper (for certain applications only).</p> <p>It is considered that this change will have an impact on people with the following disabilities: a mobility impairment, a visual impairment and a learning difficulty. At present, immediate neighbours are notified by letter of planning applications that are considered to have a direct impact on their property. If the proposed change is introduced, letters will no longer be sent out. It is considered that people with a mobility impairment will be less likely to see a site notice as will people with a visual impairment. People with a learning difficulty may be less likely to be made aware of an application if a site notice is posted compared with a letter. It is also considered that the proposed change may have an impact on non-English speakers as it may be harder to read a site notice than a letter. It is also considered that older people may be disadvantaged by the change as they are less likely to use new information technology to access applications.</p>
Responsible Officer	Peter Ford, Head of Development Management
Department and Service	Planning Services (Place)
Date of Assessment	July 6th 2012

STAGE 2: EQUALITIES – Assess the impact against our priorities to reduce inequalities and promote community cohesion		Is there an adverse impact? Yes/No
What impact will there be on our priority to reduce the inequality gap, particularly in health, between communities?	The Code will be applied to all planning applications, irrespective of where they are in the city. There will therefore be no impact.	No
What impact will there be on our priority of fostering good relations between different communities (community cohesion)?	The Code will be applied to all planning applications, irrespective of where they are in the city. There will therefore be no impact.	No

STAGE 3: LEGISLATION – Assess the impact against our legal duties: to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and promote human rights. Is there an impact for any of the below?			
	Yes/No		Yes/No
Age	Yes	Gender Reassignment	No
Disability	Yes	Race	Yes
Faith, Religion or Belief	No	Sexual Orientation – including Civil Partnership	No
Gender – including marriage, pregnancy and maternity	No	Human Rights	No

STAGE 4: IMPLICATIONS(S). Considering stages 2&3, state the actions to address any adverse impacts identified and measures to address any gaps in information or data		
Stage 2 Action(s) Required	Completion Date	Who is Responsible?

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Stage 2 Action(s) Required	Completion Date	Who is Responsible?

Stage 3 Action(s) Required	Completion Date	Who is Responsible?
1. Where there is no easily visible location where the site notice can be located, letters will be sent out to neighbours. Planning Officers will inform Tech Support where this is the case, following the site visit.	Before implementation of the revised Publicity Code, expected to be September 1 st 2012.	Nick King
2. Where it is known that neighbours will have difficulty in accessing the site notice letters will still be sent out. Generally, this will be where a resident has specifically requested that they be notified by letter of planning applications. They will be added to a database that can be mapped. Officers will check the database/map for each application in order to check whether a resident has requested a letter.	Before implementation of the revised Publicity Code, expected to be September 1 st 2012.	Nick King
3. Publicity campaign to raise public awareness of the measures to be taken and to explain how members of the public can find out about planning applications. This will take the form of features on the City Council website and The Herald and contact with the Plymouth Disability	Before implementation of the revised Publicity Code, expected to be September 1 st 2012.	Hannah Sloggett/ Jane Slavin

Stage 3 Action(s) Required	Completion Date	Who is Responsible?
Action Network and Housing Associations.		
4. The wording and design of site notices will be reviewed to make them as user-friendly as possible, for example by using symbols or mapping the location. This will help all members of the community to better understand the nature of the planning application.	Before implementation of the revised Publicity Code, expected to be September 1 st 2012.	Nick King
5. Where a member of the public requests a home visit because they are unable to travel to view the plans, the planning officer will visit them in their home to explain an application.	Already in place.	Peter Ford
6. Where a member of the public requests help in translating a planning application, they can request the Council's Translate Plymouth service.	Already in place.	Peter Ford

STAGE 5: PUBLICATION			
Director, Assistant Director/Head of Service approving EIA.		Date	