

Report to: Cabinet

Date: June 2013

Portfolio: Planning, Councillor Miles Parkinson

Report Author: Chief Planning and Transportation Officer

Title of Report: Building Control Shared Service
http://www.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/downloads/Cabinet_agenda_05-06-2013.pdf

Customer First Analysis

The Council's corporate values include putting the customer first, providing opportunities for bright futures and narrowing inequality across the Borough. From 1 April 2011, a new legal duty applies to all public authorities. It covers these protected characteristics:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- gender;
- sexual orientation; and, for some aspects,
- marriage and civil partnerships.

The duty means that – as previously - we should analyse the effect of existing and new policies and practices on equality. It does not specify how we should do this. However, legal cases on the meaning of the previous general equality duties make it clear that the Council must carry out the analysis before making the relevant policy decision, and include consideration as to whether it is possible to reduce any detrimental impact. The Council has developed a template for this to be assessed that requires four areas to be considered:

1. Purpose

The purpose of the report is to seek approval from cabinet to develop a shared Building Control Service across Hyndburn and Rossendale. The shared service is being developed as a means of delivering more efficient services in line with the Government's desire to see greater collaborative working between authorities. Whilst the report sets out ways in which the structure of the service will change, the role of the service will not change.

The report includes details of the potential structure of the service and details of consultation undertaken to date.

2. Evidence

The development of a new, shared, service will not change the role of the service or the functions that it performs. However, it will be necessary for the service to develop a new service plan that considers the service priorities and the means by which it will engage with its customers. Part of that work will involve identification of customer needs and the means by which these will be addressed in a cost effective way.

There are a number of the groups listed above where it will be necessary to give particular attention:

- Age. The Borough has a population that is aging and it is necessary to ensure that we plan for our elderly residents. There will be a need to ensure that the service addresses the changing needs of the population.
- Disability. The design of new development should ensure that it caters for disabled people in the manner envisaged by the Building Regulations.
- Race / religion or belief. The housing and development needs of those of different races, often who have different beliefs, needs to be taken into consideration. This also involves raising awareness of the importance of Building Regulations, particularly in relation to ensuring safe means of access/egress for loft conversions and extensions.

3. Impact

The impact of the changes to the service will be assessed as part of the development of a service plan. No significant impacts on the groups listed are considered likely. There will be a need to develop new ways of working and it is proposed that the use of IT, combined with more flexible patterns of working, should enable a high standard of service to be maintained.

4. Actions

The actions are described in the report. The changes proposed should not have a significant impact on any of the groups listed but the impacts associated with the development of a shared service will continue to be monitored and assessed and if this indicates the needs to change working practices then it may be necessary to make the necessary adjustments.

May 2013.