

Equality Impact Assessment: Conversation Screening Tool

[Use this form to prompt an EIA conversation and capture the discussion. This completed form or if needed, a full EIA report (form 3) will be published as part of the decision-making process **Please delete prompts before publishing**

The Council is legally required by the Equality Act 2010 to evidence how it has considered its equality duties in its decision-making process.

The Council must have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to -

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

A link to the full text of [s149 of the Equality Act 2010](#) which must be considered when making decisions.

1	What is being reviewed?	Proposed new Highway Searches Charging Policy. This proposal is permitted by the Local Authorities (England) (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008. It is intended to bring BCP Council in line with other authorities who charge for highways searches.
2	What changes are being made?	Changes are proposed to the existing highways searches process to introduce a policy framework and schedule of fees to enable BCP Council to charge for highways searches and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure cost recovery for a specialist and resource intensive service. • Bring BCP Council in line with regional and national practice. • Improve consistency, transparency and fairness for all service users. • Strengthen the Council's ability to maintain accurate statutory records and deliver timely, high-quality responses.
3	Service Unit:	Transportation
4	Participants in the conversation:	Adam Fancy – Senior Service Manager, Transportation Business Support Jane Potter – Head of Business Support
5	Conversation date/s:	Ongoing for past 12 months
6	Do you know your current or potential client base? Who are the key stakeholders?	The service is open to any individual or business looking to obtain highways information relating to specific properties or

		<p>sites within the BCP Council area. The service is used mainly by professional search agents and solicitors.</p> <p>If a private individual needed a search, they could still access Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) personal searches for free and can interrogate the data and website themselves. This service is specifically for those who need the information formatted in a specific way, usually to facilitate property and land sales.</p>
7	<p>Do different groups have different needs or experiences? age (young/old), disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, members of the armed forces community, any other factors/groups e.g. socioeconomic status, carers, human rights.</p>	<p>Yes, it is recognised that groups with protected characteristics will have different experiences in terms of how charging for this service might affect them. However, those who use this service are mainly solicitors and search agents who request factual and formal highway information on behalf of their clients, and all responses will be provided in the same format as is currently being provided. There have been no issues raised by service users in this regard. There is an option for groups with protected characteristics to request the information in an accessible format. The way the information is conveyed to clients is the responsibility of the solicitor/agent to enable those with the protected characteristics to understand the information.</p>
8	<p>Will this change affect any service users?</p>	<p>Yes. Service users will, in future be charged a fee for this service, £75 for a standard search with additional fees for any additional questions or expedited searches. This is in line with other local authorities, and we have carefully looked at other authorities' fees to ensure our fees are fair and reflect the work involved in providing this information. The service users are aware these fees will be introduced, and they will already be paying fees for all requests at other local authorities for this service.</p> <p>The cost is proportionate and based on cost recovery, not profit. As such no socio-economic impacts are envisaged.</p>
9	<p>[If the answer to any of the questions above is 'don't know' then you need to gather more evidence. The best way to do this is to use forms 2 and 3. <i>*Please delete prompts before publishing*</i>]</p>	

Form Version 1.2

10	<p>What are the benefits or positive equality impacts of the change on current or potential users?</p>	<p>We will aim to provide service users with protected characteristics a helpful, positive and consistent service and to continue to meet their needs with timely, high-quality responses.</p>
11	<p>What are the negative impacts of the change on current or potential users?</p>	<p>In adopting this policy the BCP Council is satisfied that in doing so, it will not discriminate against any person or persons with protected characteristics, such as those living in deprivation or where socio-economic factors could be barriers to be able to access the service as a free service for basic information via EIR Personal Searches are still available to them.</p>

12	Will the change affect employees?	Yes, however sufficient training and support will be provided to all staff, having regard to the needs of those with protected characteristics. This is a relatively simple administrative task where staff will be required to send a link to the service user, requesting payment for each search.
13	Will the change affect the wider community?	No, individuals using the service through their search agent or solicitor will have no interaction with BCP Council as the information will be collated and passed to them by their agent.
14	What mitigating actions are planned or already in place for those negatively affected by this change?	<input type="checkbox"/> Provides free alternative routes for basic information (EIR personal searches) <input type="checkbox"/> Allows accessible formats on request
15	Summary of Equality Implications:	<p>The introduction of the Highway Searches Charging Policy is not expected to have any adverse equality implications. It does not change entitlement to information.</p> <p>The policy relates solely to the introduction of cost recovery charges for written highway search enquiries and does not alter access to services, road infrastructure, or the rights of any protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>Personal searches provided under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) will remain free of charge, ensuring that basic access to environmental information is unaffected and equally available to all.</p> <p>The service will also provide information in alternative accessible formats on request, ensuring compliance with the Council's equality duties. The Service is consistent with equality findings in similar BCP policy areas and no negative impacts have been identified.</p>

