

Service being assessed	Property Services
Who will be involved in completing this assessment?	Robin Neve, Service Manager Property Services Linda Hayes, Practice Manager Property Services
Date of Review	20 July 2011
Date of Next Review	20 July 2012
What is the purpose of the service?	To effectively manage and exploit the Council's land and property assets
Is this assessment being undertaken because of changes to the service? If so what are they?	Assessment being undertaken as part of Council's annual review of equalities information, not because of change to service/policy.
<p>The purpose of this review is to understand how services can help the Council to meet its duties under Equalities legislation. The duties can be summarised as</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eliminate discrimination 2. Advance equality of opportunity 3. Foster good relations between different parts of the community 	<p>Staff use the Council translation service, Intran, whenever required for letters, face-to-face meetings or telephone conversations with tenants or potential tenants.</p> <p>Staff work with potential tenants to provide a suitable premise for the type of business they wish to set up. The tenant is asked to provide financial references, name and address but no other personal information is collected as part of the contract / lease process.</p> <p>Housing tenants who wish to purchase their Council Houses are sent information about how Right to Buy works and staff are available to answer questions over the 'phone or face-to-face if required.</p>

<p>How does this service help the Council to do this, in particular in relation to the categories specifically mentioned in legislation - Race, Gender/Sex, Disability, Age, Religion/Belief, Gender Reassignment, Sexual Orientation, Pregnancy & Maternity and in respect of Duty 1 only – Marriage and Civil Partnerships?</p>	<p>Potential market traders are given an information pack on what being a trader involves and this can be made available in alternative formats / languages if required.</p> <p>If a tenant falls into rent arrears, the team will work with them to set up an individual payment plan to try and keep their tenancy going.</p> <p>There is currently a 97% occupancy rate of Council owned assets. Vacancies / opportunities are advertised on the property itself, in the local press, on noticeboards, on the website or sometimes people just telephone if they see an empty property to check whether it belongs to the Council. All calls are answered directly by the team so that the enquiries can be dealt with at first point of contact.</p> <p>Rent levels are determined by the team – they research comparables within the local market and use these to determine a suitable rent for the premise. Rent reviews are undertaken regularly.</p>
<p>How will you know that service is working as it should?</p>	
<p>What data have you used to help you make this assessment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation • Property holdings database • Historical information • Comparables on properties • Customer feedback / comments / complaints
<p>Is there any additional data that you need to collect to help in continuous improvement?</p>	<p>An electronic asset and land management database is currently being compiled to help the team manage the properties more efficiently. It will be possible to pull out information from the system on things such as occupancy rates, types of business, length of tenancies, etc</p>

	<p>which could provide valuable information about economic prosperity in certain areas of the town. There are not currently any plans to hold personal information about tenants such as age, nationality or gender.</p>
<p>How have you ensured that this service has been designed from a customer's perspective and how have you involved customers in that process?</p>	<p>There is an annual meeting with Market traders and their representatives to iron out any issues and discuss fees and charges.</p> <p>There is also an annual meeting of the Showmen's Guild and Members to discuss the annual Easter Fair.</p>
<p>Has any other consultation been carried out, including to ensure that we have taken into consideration the needs of those not currently using the service?</p>	<p>Surveys are undertaken with the Market Traders about the service they receive on an annual basis.</p> <p>Consultation on the property services part of the team has not been possible due to lack of staff and money.</p>
<p>What is, or what do you expect to be the impact of the way you work on different parts of the community, including those covered by equality legislation?</p>	<p>Who benefits?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Borough in the generation of income from rents • Businesses – they get premises to trade from • Visitors and residents who get a choice of businesses to access <p>Who should be expected to benefit but don't – Why not? N/A</p>
<p>On the basis of what you have found out, which of these options will you now follow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major changes • Adjust the policy • Continue the policy • Stop and remove the policy

	<p>This is a review – not a new policy or service. As and when it is proposed to change the service or policies, new assessments will be completed.</p>
<p>What now needs to be done and by who?</p>	<p>The land and property asset management database will go-live later this year which will allow the team to pull together reports on things such as tenancy types, rent levels, etc more readily than through the paper based system now. Any trends / gaps will be addressed as and when the team identify any issues.</p>
<p>Signed off by</p>	<p>Robin Neve, Service Manager Property Services</p>