

Equality Analysis (EA)

Section 1 – General Information (Aims and Objectives)

Name of the proposal including aims, objectives and purpose:

The Mayor For Tower Hamlets' Community Faith Buildings Support Scheme proposes to offer assistance to faith communities in maintaining and improving buildings in which faith based activities occur with the aim of to promote good relations between faith groups/no faith groups.

Who is expected to benefit from the proposal?

Faith Communities are the main beneficiaries of the proposal.

Service area:

Strategic Planning

Team name:

Plan Delivery Team

Team manager:

Mark Hutton

Name and role of the officer completing the EA:

Andrew Hargreaves, Borough Conservation Officer

Section 2 – Evidence (Consideration of Data and Information)

What initial evidence do we have which may help us think about the impacts or likely impacts on service users or staff?

The Borough has a large number of faith buildings which includes a significant percentage of the total number of buildings which the borough seeks to improve.

The Places of Worship 2009 survey undertaken by The Building Exploratory provides evidence of the need for this type of grant.

The Religion and Place pamphlet produced by the Building Exploratory illustrates the wide variety of places of worship within the borough and helps to illustrate the importance placed on the buildings.

As noted in Paragraph 9.2 of the report: 'The Council's new Religion/Belief Equality Scheme notes that many faith communities, predominantly Jewish and Anglican and Catholic Christian, have historic listed buildings which are expensive to maintain and therefore at risk of falling into disrepair and are vulnerable to vandalism. Conversely a number of new faith communities in the borough make use of historic buildings and need to adapt them for use by congregations.'

Section 3 – Assessing the Impacts on the 9 Groups

How will what you're proposal impact upon the nine Protected Characteristics?

For the nine protected characteristics detailed in the table below please consider:-

- **What is the equality profile of service users or beneficiaries that will or are likely to be affected?**

Direct beneficiaries will be members of faith communities who manage historic places of worship. There will be a direct benefit for those people who attend these places of worship. The 2011 Census indicated that 80% of the population of the Borough's population stated they have a claimed a religious belief.

Improvements in the preservation and accessibility of historic places of worship will have wider benefits, preserving the unique heritage of the borough for the wider community.

Buildings are also used by non faith groups and many have wider community accommodation for example the Churches of Christ Church Spitalfields and St John on Bethnal Green.

- **What qualitative or quantitative data do we have?**

The 2011 Census and Council Paper 'Population – key facts: A demographic profile of the Tower Hamlets population (Research Briefing 2011-06) August 2011.'

The Council's Religion/Belief Equality Scheme 2009-12

The Places of Worship 2009 survey undertaken by The Building Exploratory

- **What barriers may some individuals or groups experience in maintaining their buildings?**

Some faith communities are located in older buildings which are costly to maintain and may well be in disrepair, a number of these are listed in the Heritage at Risk Register.

In some cases the ability to fund raise is limited due to declining congregation size in relation to the expanding population of the Borough.

Newer communities may not have easy access relevant networks, infrastructure or expertise.

Inadequate buildings of some groups drain significant resources from the groups and prevent new small communities from being able to engage with wider community.

Disabled access problems make access to many properties including some listed properties difficult for those with mobility problems.

- **Recent consultation exercises carried out?**

Survey work undertaken by Hackney Buildings Exploratory which included an assessment of the condition, use and significance of thirty two listed places of worship in the borough.

Work undertaken through the Interfaith Forum in relation to production of 'Little Book of Faith' in 2008 which mapped the borough's places of worship.

Work undertaken with the Interfaith Forum in relation to the development of the Faith Buildings Support Officer project which identified the need for increased specialist support for communities who occupy historic buildings which are not listed (2009).

- **Proposed procedure for the allocation of grants**

Paragraph 6.2 of the report states that 'The Community Faith Buildings Grant Programme will increase the flow of funding to community faith groups who own or lease premises for:

- the repair and maintenance of buildings inclusive of the site and boundary walls. This will include addressing Health and Safety issues;
- improvements to buildings inclusive of the site and boundary walls. This will include adaptations to improve accessibility, improvements to deliver energy efficiency and security;
- It is also proposed to assist faith groups to plan and develop projects to improve buildings with grant assistance for professional fees.

Paragraph 6.3 of the report states that:

'The scheme is designed to deliver sustainable, appropriate assistance for these works to existing faith buildings where the costs of maintenance, repair and improvement are the responsibility of a local faith organisation. The scheme is for assistance to existing faith-based buildings only and is not for funding the establishment of new premises by faith groups. The scheme will cover only formally constituted faith groups who meet other detailed eligibility criteria.'

Paragraph 6.4 of the report states that:

The Grants Programme will have a total of £2 million pounds from Council funds and will be spread over three years. This will breakdown to be approximately:

£1,800,000 for capital grants across categories below;
£200,000 (10%) for Programme Management '

Paragraph 6.5 of the report details the various grant categories and states that:

The Programme is aimed at meeting a broad selection of buildings/groups with differing needs and across all faiths and will consider applications in the following categories:

- **Type A grants.** This will be aimed at delivering more modest financial assistance to community faith buildings and congregations for works of repair, alteration, modification or improvement where they are in poor condition, or where there are other specific barriers to use, such as costs of repair and maintenance. It is proposed that these grants should be capped at £75,000.
- **Type B grants.** This will be for substantial grant assistance to community faith buildings identified through the process as being significant to the community and/or part of existing regeneration plans within the Local Development

Framework and associated documents, which could receive major capital assistance. It is proposed that these grants should be capped at £300,000 at a rate of 100% of the costs where there is no match-funding available. These buildings will need to be owned or leased on long leases by the community faith group applying as the sum is potentially so significant.

- **Type C grants.** This is for professional support for organisations in pursuit of developing valid bids for Type A and B Grants to assist groups in achieve their overall aims of building improvement or development. This would include support for example in commissioning architects, quantity surveyors or engineers services where required. It is proposed that these grants should be capped at £10,000.'

- **The Process of Service Delivery?**

Paragraph 6.6 of the report states that::

'The Support Scheme will be led from Development and Renewal. Alongside the appointed Programme Manager, it will include a lead officer from the Directorate Resources teams for financial monitoring auditing and compliance, risk management and programme and project control. Specific advice on the grant process operation will be obtained from other sections in Development & Renewal as appropriate, specifically advising on building selection, surveying and repairs.'

Paragraph 6.10 of the report states that:

'Beyond the key principle a more detailed eligibility and operational criteria is being developed for each Type of Grant. All grant applications will be assessed against an agreed criteria and the decision made strictly in accordance with that criteria. It is anticipated that the grant programme will be very popular and to manage expectations it will need to operate consistently.'

Please Note -

Reports/stats/data can be added as Appendix

Target Groups	Impact – Positive or Adverse	Reason(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and,• Please describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform decision making <p>Please also how the proposal with promote the three One Tower Hamlets objectives?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Reducing inequalities-Ensuring strong community cohesion-Strengthening community leadership
Race	Positive	The borough has a fast growing, hyper diverse population and new groups may struggle to maintain, improve or adapt buildings. Efforts to maintain/improve places of worship can drain significant resources from groups and prevent new small communities from being able to engage with the wider community.
Disability	Positive	Help to facilitate access improvements and adaptations to existing buildings - many of which were built for a different use or are historic assets requiring sensitive change – should have a positive impact on people who have mobility problems.
Gender	Neutral	
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	
Religion or Belief	Adverse / Positive	<p>The proposed scheme excludes those with no religious belief but enables improvements to buildings which may well be used by the wider community including people with no religious belief and conserve the unique heritage of the borough.</p> <p>The Council's new Religion/Belief Equality Scheme notes that many faith communities, predominantly Jewish and Anglican and Catholic Christian, have historic listed buildings which are expensive to maintain and therefore are at risk of falling into disrepair and are vulnerable to vandalism. Conversely a number of newer faith communities in the borough make use of historic buildings and need to adapt them for use by congregations</p>

Age	Positive	The scheme includes funding for access improvements. Also it helps to sustain valuable community infrastructure for some groups where the congregation size is declining in proportion to the overall population size. A number of these congregations have a significant proportion of older residents.
Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	Neutral	
Pregnancy and Maternity	Neutral	
Other Socio-economic Carers		

Section 4 – Mitigating Impacts and Alternative Options

From the analysis and interpretation of evidence in section 2 and 3 - Is there any evidence of or view that suggests that different equality or other protected groups (inc' staff) could have a disproportionately high/low take up of the new proposal?

Yes

If yes, please detail below how evidence influenced and formed the proposal? For example, why parts of the proposals were added/removed?

(Please note – a key part of the EA process is to show that we have made reasonable and informed attempts to mitigate any negative impacts. AN EA is a service improvement tool and as such you may wish to consider a number of alternative options or mitigation in terms of the proposal.)

This equality analysis sets out evidence of a need for support among faith communities in the borough who occupy buildings to enable them to maintain them in a safe condition and promote accessibility.

The borough's places of worship are a visible sign of the rich diversity of the communities which have lived in and contributed to the area. Ensuring these buildings remain in good condition and are accessible to the wider community could have a beneficial impact on promoting understanding between different faith communities and people with no religious belief. The delivery mechanism will ensure that in administering the grants programme, the Council supports faith communities to make their buildings open and accessible to people from different faith and non-faith backgrounds.

The Interfaith Forum will be invited to be involved in establishing the grant criteria to ensure this objective of strengthening relations between people from different faith backgrounds is embedded in the scheme.

Section 5 – Quality Assurance and Monitoring

Have monitoring systems been put in place to check the implementation of the proposal and recommendations?

Yes

How will the monitoring systems further assess the impact on the equality target groups?

Grant criteria are not yet finalised but Paragraph 6.15 of the report notes that 'The Council's existing Grants Panel will be the mechanism which will be used to make and determine grant awards. The Panel will be advised in their decision making, by an officer body which will include officers from a building background, Finance and Legal Officers. It is proposed it would meet quarterly to consider grant applications and make recommendations for final decisions by the Mayor on grant awards. Following approval of grant applications, monitoring and review of works detailed in the grant applications would be reported back to the Panel by officers to ensure effective governance and value for money criteria are met. This would include an Annual Scheme Report.'

Paragraph 6.16 of the report for the project and bidding criteria will allow assessment of the success states that 'To ensure transparency of the grants process the Council will publish annually details of all successful applications, as well as report on numbers received and the amount of grant offers made together with the claims made. Clear outputs of bids post-implementation, and establish effective audit and adjustment mechanisms for the scheme within its three year life.'

Does the policy/function comply with equalities legislation?

(Please consider the OTH objectives and Public Sector Equality Duty criteria)

Yes

If there are gaps in information or areas for further improvement, please list them below:

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How will the results of this Equality Analysis feed into the performance planning process?

The scheme will be monitored.

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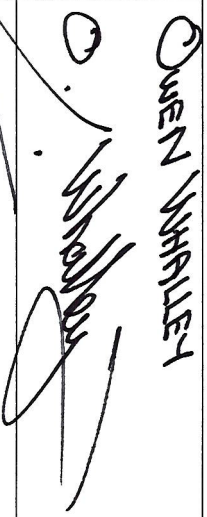
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Section 6 - Action Plan

As a result of these conclusions and recommendations what actions (if any) *will* be included in your business planning and wider review processes (team plan)? Please consider any gaps or areas needing further attention in the table below.

Recommendation	Key activity	Progress milestones including target dates for either completion or progress	Officer responsible	Progress
Carefully assess grant criteria.	Discuss grant criteria with Inter Faith Forum.	Anticipated completion is end of October 2012.	MH	
Monitor and conduct research with regard to grant take up.	Ongoing monitoring.	Conclusions to form part of annual report.		

Section 7 – Sign Off and Publication

Name: (signed off by)	 OWEN WHALLEY		
Position:	Service Head Planning & Building Control		
Date signed off: (approved)	20/09/12		

Section 8 Appendix – FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

This section to be completed by the One Tower Hamlets team

Policy Hyperlink :

Equality Strand	Evidence
Race	
Disability	
Gender	
Gender Reassignment	
Sexual Orientation	
Religion or Belief	
Age	
Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	
Pregnancy and Maternity	
Other	
Socio-economic	
Carers	
Link to original EQIA	Link to original EQIA
EQIAID	
(Team/Service/Year)	