

Inclusive design

Accessibility and ease of use should now be seen as an integral part of the commissioning, planning, design, delivery and management of any proposed building project. Architects responsible for large projects often employ access consultants, but for the majority of projects the use of **Access Statements** provides the means to bring a project through all stages to a successful conclusion.

Importantly, the access statement should reduce the time spent on considering applications for planning and building regulations approval. The flowchart (overleaf) shows how the access statement fits into the council's statutory controls. At the planning application stage, an access statement is required for all but the smallest projects, and failure to submit one will delay the application procedure. The statement will include information on how the project intends to meet relevant planning policies relating to accessibility.

For example, applications for residential development will explain how the design principles of Lifetime Homes (adaptable housing) will be incorporated, and provide proposals for any specific provisions for disabled people. The statement will also anticipate provisions required under Building Regulations for access and means of escape which may have a bearing on layout and construction.

Further guidance on access statements and inclusive design are on the council's website page 'Access and Inclusive Design' www.islington.gov.uk and the Disability Rights Commission site www.drc-gb.org

