

Title: Council Plan 2017/18	Date: February 2017
	Stage: Final
	Service Area: Corporate and Support Services
	Lead Officer: Steve Skelton

Stage 1: Do you need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)?

Not all policies will require an EIA: these key questions will help you to decide whether you need to conduct an EIA.

Yes. The updated Council Plan for 2017/18 continues to set the strategic direction for the Council to support the delivery of its key priorities and outcomes and as such requires an EIA.

The Council Plan is reviewed and refreshed on an annual basis, therefore this assessment builds upon previous Council Plan EIAs. It should also be considered in conjunction with the EIA being produced for the 2017/18 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) being submitted to the Budget Council Meeting.

It is not within the scope of this EIA to evaluate the potential equality implications that specific proposals within the savings programme and elsewhere may have on residents and the Council's workforce. Individual EIAs for each proposal were included in Business Cases published with the Executive MTFP reports for the meetings on 20th December and 18th January 2017, whilst further proposals and activity will be assessed on a case by case basis.

The scope of this EIA includes;

- Links to the MTFP proposals and wider Reform programme;
- The process undertaken to develop the Council Plan; and
- The impact of the strategic direction and priorities of the Council Plan (including resource allocation) on residents, service users and the Council's workforce

Stage 2: What do you know?

An EIA should be based upon robust evidence. This stage will guide you through potential sources of information and how to interpret it. Understanding the current context is a key stage in all policy making and planning.

In relation to the wider MTFP, an EIA has been prepared for the Council Tax Discount Scheme proposals and was included within the business case considered by Executive on 18 Jan. The EIA identified no impacts affecting people with protected characteristics in relation to the proposed changes. Mitigation is in place through mandatory national discounts and the provision of the discretionary support fund for cases of exceptional hardship to ensure that there is adequate provision in place to support people where the unoccupied property is unavoidable whilst retaining an incentive for the property to be brought back into occupation.

An EIA has not been carried out in relation to the Low Emissions Permit proposals as whilst there will be an increased charge for the service, the service will not change. Permit eligibility is based on the vehicle and not the permit holder, and no equalities issues were identified via the consultation.

Within the Council Plan and MTFP, the Executive has made clear that one of the key

principles informing its decision making is a focus on inclusion. Therefore, in engaging with residents and businesses on the proposed changes set out in business cases, the Executive has been particularly mindful of the impact of proposals on people disadvantaged both economically and socially.

This is in line with the inclusive vision for all communities across the Borough set out in the 2015-2020 Borough Plan and is explicit in the initiatives explained in the series of working papers set out at the October Executive that will shape a future reform programme in terms of the on-going focus on maximising the economic potential of the Borough in a way which benefits all its residents.

Development of the Council Plan

The Council Plan reflects a wider policy review undertaken by the new Council Leader and Executive, but continues to be based around the shared outcomes framework agreed within the Borough Plan. The Council Plan identifies the local priorities which will need to be delivered by the Council in order to achieve these longer-term outcomes for the borough.

Within each priority, a number of key delivery projects and programmes are referenced, for example Stockport Together and Stockport Family. As part of the project / programme management governance for each of these, individual EIAs are carried out.

The Council Plan outlines the Council's commitment to meaningful consultation and engagement, and this has been central to shaping the local priorities set out in the plan, most notably around the focus on inclusion.

Those consulted included scrutiny committees, residents, service users, partners, employees and trade unions; and focus groups have been held with the general public, partners and service users. Targeted consultation with people identified as being affected by specific service changes has also been carried out.

Potential impact on residents / service users

The Council has a range of data which it uses to understand the demographics and needs of the population, including: -

- Census demographic data
- Index of Multiple Deprivation
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Ethnic diversity service data
- Performance data
- Service user profile data (including data collected by providers of commissioned services)
- Financial data
- Pilot projects
- Feedback from complaints

This data shows the following key demographic trends: -

- Stockport has a predominantly white population, accounting for 92% of the Borough's population. However the Borough is becoming more ethnically diverse with increasing numbers of people identifying with minority ethnic groups in the 2011

Census. The most ethnically diverse age group in the Borough is the 0-15 age group where just over 15% are from BME groups.

- Though not one of the statutory 'protected characteristics', socio-economic inequalities remain a key issue in the Borough. Analysis of deprivation and poverty within Stockport identifies that socio-economic status has links with other protected characteristics such as gender (particularly female), age (young and older people), and disability (across all spectrums).
- The Borough has an ageing population and projections suggest that by 2019 there will be an additional 9,200 people in Stockport aged 65+. However substantial residential developments due to be built over the next few years, including provision for affordable homes, are aimed at younger people and families and may consequently impact on demographic trends.
- Based on national estimates of prevalence, it is estimated that approximately 2.8% of the Borough's adult population have a learning disability and 8.6% of the adult population have a disability that 'limits their day-to-day activities a lot'; meanwhile around 1.2% of the Borough's children and young people have a disability.

With a clear focus on inclusion, it is expected that the impact of the Council Plan on the Borough's equality groups will be largely positive, particularly through more co-ordinated and localised delivery of services. There may be an impact on some groups with low or moderate needs as services change, but the intention is that a preventative approach - for example on provision of information, advice and guidance - will mitigate this.

The Council's commitment to protecting front-line services includes minimising the impact of budget reductions on its employees, and no workforce reductions are planned. The wider public service reforms being undertaken across the Council and its partners will inevitably impact on council employees, but effective engagement, workforce planning and development are in place to mitigate these impacts.

It is not expected that there will be any disproportionate impact on specific equality groups, and detailed analysis is conducted as a key element of any Business Cases. The Council monitors its workforce composition closely alongside the gender and disability 'pay gap' which are included in the Annual Pay Policy Statement.

Stage 3: Results and Measures

As a result of what you have learned in Stage 2 what will you do to ensure that no group is unfairly and unlawfully impacted upon as a result of the proposed change(s)?

As noted above, individual EIAs are being carried out for all specific proposals. These EIAs will include more detail regarding impacts and specific monitoring arrangements and mitigation approaches where potential disproportionate equality impacts emerge during the course of consultations or option appraisals. These arrangements will ensure that no group is unfairly impacted upon by the implementation of the proposed service changes.

Further work will be carried out, including engagement with service users, to inform the development of proposals for the Reform programme. Where relevant, monitoring and mitigation arrangements will be established as proposals are developed. In particular further consideration will be given in relation to the potential cumulative impact on some equality groups, around disability, age / older people, and socio-economic status.

In addition to any further arrangements which will be determined in light of further analysis and consultation, the following measures are outlined as overall monitoring and mitigation arrangements for the Council Plan and Reform programme. These overarching arrangements are designed to ensure no equality group is unfairly affected by the cumulative impact of these plans.

Robust monitoring arrangements are being developed to assess the equality impact of specific service changes (and where appropriate the impact of planned mitigating actions) as proposals are implemented. Any emerging or widening inequalities will be identified at an early stage and, where appropriate, further mitigating action will be developed. The Shared Outcomes Framework will also be used to monitor the overall impact on local residents and communities. This is aligned with the Council's Performance and Resource Reporting arrangements (see below).

The Council's quarterly **Corporate and Portfolio Performance and Resource Reports** (CPRR and PPRRs) provide an overview of performance against the priority outcomes set out in the Council Plan. The PPRRs are aligned with the shared outcomes to provide the information decision makers need to monitor the impact on local residents and communities. Where possible, performance indicators will be disaggregated by protected characteristics or cohorts to ensure any emerging inequalities are identified.

Delivery of the Council's Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and savings programme is also monitored quarterly, ensuring that these are on track. The Corporate Risk Register is also monitored to provide assurance that key risks are being identified and managed, avoiding negative impacts on specific groups.

The Council has developed its **Equality Objectives**, as directed by the Equality Act 2010, and is developing performance measures to support these objectives as part of the Council's wider P&R framework. Analysis of this data, alongside the other monitoring arrangements set out above, will further develop an understanding of any emerging equality issues.

Stage 4: Decision Stage

Once your plan/policy is fully developed it will need to go through the correct scrutiny and approval channels: the EIA should be included as part of this

This EIA will accompany the 2017/18 Council Plan through the approval stages listed below and will be placed on the Council's website alongside the Council Plan once a final decision has been made.

- CRMG Scrutiny Committee – 24 Jan 2017
- Executive Committee – 7 Feb 2017
- Budget Council Meeting (with MTFP Budget Proposals) – 23 Feb 2017