

Title: Council Plan 2020/21	Date: February 2020
	Stage: Final
	Service Area: Corporate and Support Services
	Lead Officer: Holly Rae

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 2020/21 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 EIAs produced in relation to the 2020/21 suite of savings proposals and 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 of the savings proposals identified within our Medium Term Strategy have been included in papers considered in detail by Cabinet and Scrutiny.

The scope of this EIA includes;

- Links to the MTFP proposals and wider Transformation 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.

Cabinet are committed to assessing the impact any of its proposals may have on those who identify with the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Individual Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) have been carried out where appropriate, to identify potential impacts on these protected characteristics. These assessments were published for Cabinet on 6th January 2020 with the relevant proposals.

Although not a protected characteristic as defined by the Act, socio-economic status has also been considered when assessing the potential impacts on different groups, to ensure that the impact on vulnerable groups in Stockport is minimised as far as possible and council spending is prioritised where it is most needed.

Proportionate measures have been taken to mitigate against any negative impact wherever possible whilst still seeking to redesign services to ensure we are best able to manage medium and future demand. The outcomes and impacts of implemented proposals will be monitored on an ongoing basis through our performance and resources framework so that we can capture any unintended consequences that arise from the decisions we make.

The Council Plan and MTFP set out the context for the necessary tough decisions to ensure self-financing over the medium term and a balanced annual budget setting process in the immediacy. We continue to lobby against the Government's response to continuing Local Government funding pressures and continued reductions in Government support which has seen an increasing shift of the burden of funding services on to Council Tax payers. This is a regressive form of tax and does not address the underlying cost pressures facing the Council over the medium term period.

Development of the Council Plan

The Council Plan continues to be based around the shared outcomes framework agreed within the Borough Plan. It 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 of the shared outcomes, a number of specific priorities are referenced, alongside key delivery plans, strategies and programmes. As part of the project / programme management governance for each of these, individual EIAs are carried out ahead of any significant changes which may impact on residents, for example in relation to our plans to address climate change.

Listening to and understanding the experiences of our communities, partners and workforce is integral to shaping our future services and we know that this is something we want to develop further. Over the coming months and into 2020 we will be further developing and building our approach to engagement and capturing feedback and insight, in particular looking ahead to shaping a collective vision for the future.

More imminently, in the development of our proposals we have continued to commit to robust and proportionate consultation and engagement exercises across our proposals for 2020/21. We have involved a range of stakeholders in these exercises in order to mitigate against any negative impacts where possible and to use the feedback we have heard to shape our final proposals. Engagement and consultation exercises have taken place with our partners, residents, trade unions and service users.

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
- Crime Needs Assessment
- Diversity data (ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexuality and religion)
- 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 the proportion of people in Stockport aged 65+ will continue to grow significantly. 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.

This Council Plan puts people at the heart of everything we do and maintains a focus on inclusion. Given this, it is anticipated that the impact of this Plan on the Borough's equality groups will be largely positive, particularly through joining up services in local areas and improving inclusion in schools and other settings for children and young people with Special Educational Needs. There may be an impact on some groups with low or moderate needs as services change but the intention is that inclusive early intervention and prevention approaches will mitigate this.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment of health and wellbeing in Stockport is due to be refreshed in 2020, and will have an increased focus on Learning Disability, frailty and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The key findings from this will inform our future approach and delivery of the priorities set out within the Council Plan.

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)?

Cabinet is committed to robust, inclusive and proportionate consultation and engagement with partners, residents and service users on proposed changes to services in order to inform the way we work in the future and to assess both the impact on stakeholders. Feedback will be used to shape our approaches including mitigating against any negative impacts as far as possible.

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 MTFP and Transformation 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.

Analysis carried out to provide a greater understanding and insight into the factors behind and impact of poverty in Stockport identified those in work and in poverty as a group in need. This is informing our approach to achieving our ambition to increase employment and skills, with work to support people in low paid employment to move into better-paid jobs, paying real living wage being a priority for us.

In addition to any arrangements which will be determined in light of further analysis and consultation, there are a number of overarching monitoring and mitigation arrangements in place which are designed to ensure no equality group is unfairly affected by the cumulative impact of our plans:

As the Council continues to progress the delivery of key digital priorities across the organisation, we are continuing to support and drive for Stockport's Digital Inclusion Alliance to assist those residents who would otherwise be at risk of being left behind as a result of increasing digital channels, helping them to build confidence in using the basic digital skills required to access services.

The Council's Corporate and Portfolio Performance and Resource Reporting Framework (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 regularly, 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.

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 2020/21 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 – 21 Jan 2020
- Cabinet – 4 Feb 2020
- Budget Council Meeting (with MTFP Budget Proposals) – 27 Feb 2020