

Title: Council Plan 2019/20	Date: January 2019
	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 2019/20 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 Business Cases and EIAs produced for the 2019/20 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 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.

Cabinet have always been mindful of the impact of proposals on people who are disadvantaged both economically and socially. Comprehensive Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken where appropriate, including engagement with a range of stakeholders to assess the varying degrees of impact on each of them. Part of included considering the cumulative impact of all proposals on those protected characteristics. Proportionate measures will be 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.

As well as these individual exercises, we understand that individuals, or groups of people with similar circumstances, may be affected by more than one proposal. Or that there may be cross-cutting implications that we hadn't originally anticipated. Throughout this development phase we have sought to understand this through being transparent about our proposals so that there are opportunities for this to be identified.

However, we know that there are groups of our population who for various reasons may be likely to be in touch with more than one of our services and as such we may expect to see trends in changes for those groups. This also a reflection of changes and reductions to universal services in the past within the Council and that we are increasingly needing to review more targeted and

specialist services. Impacts of specific proposals on groups identified as 'Protected Characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010 are outlined in individual EIAs.

Whilst not a protected characteristic, we understand that socio-economic status can be a common factor across all equality groups. Given a number of our proposals affect services that are likely to be accessed by low income households we are therefore particularly mindful of the impact our decisions may have on some of our most vulnerable residents.

We have sought to introduce proportionate measures to mitigate against any negative impact from specific proposals, as well as cumulative implications, wherever possible whilst still seeking to redesign services to ensure we are best able to meet the needs of local residents particularly those who are vulnerable. These measures have been built into our updated proposals.

We are also prioritising our inclusive growth ambitions, digital inclusivity initiatives, greater cross-organisational working and community investment as a way to more broadly and sustainably mitigate against the impact of reducing council services across our communities.

Within the Council Plan and MTFP, Cabinet 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, Cabinet 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. It is also explicit in the principles set out by Cabinet that this vision 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 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 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 on specific proposals have 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. Results from these consultations have informed our understanding of local priorities as well as the implication of particular changes or new ways of working.

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.

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.

As acknowledged both in previous iterations of the Council's medium term programme and with the current medium term strategy, this level of redesign will have a significant impact on the current workforce. There will be a continued requirement for Council employees to adjust to new ways of working, potentially within new teams and in redesigned services.

At present we estimate that our year one proposals represent an overall staffing reduction in the region of 55-80 FTE staff, which represents approximately 2-3.5% of our current workforce.

Further staffing implications across the programme may be identified as other proposals are developed and a further update on this will be provided as part of the Cabinet's next medium term strategy update in February. The Council has a well-established Restructuring and Organisational Change Policy which governs the way in which redesign exercises with staffing implications are managed.

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)?

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 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.

Analysis is currently underway which will provide a greater understanding and insight into the factors behind and impact of poverty in Stockport. This will inform our approach going forward, in particular around tackling inequalities between different areas and identified groups across the borough.

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.

Digital by Design will build on the user-centred design practices that have already been established and proved successful during earlier project phases. This involves gathering data and discussing with residents and representative groups to understand the current customer journeys and any impact to the citizen experience from any changes brought about by this piece of work. The intention of this engagement is to understand the needs of our users and to simplify and improve customer journeys for them wherever possible. The work already underway as part of the Digital Inclusion Alliance (DigiKnow) should assist by reaching out to those residents who would otherwise be at risk of being left behind as a result of increasing digital channels and helping them to build confidence in using the basic digital skills required to access services.

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 quarterly **Corporate and Portfolio Performance and Resource Reporting Framework** (CPRR and PPRRs). These reports 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 is currently reviewing its **Equality Objectives**, as directed by the Equality Act 2010, and this includes public consultation (closed on 30 November). 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 2019/20 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 – 22 Jan 2019
- Cabinet – 5 Feb 2019
- Budget Council Meeting (with MTFP Budget Proposals) – 21 Feb 2019