

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Equality Act 2010 challenges the Council to understand the individual and collective nature of our community and our workforce as described by the 'protected characteristics' of:

- age,
- disability,
- gender reassignment,
- marriage and civil partnership,
- pregnancy and maternity,
- race,
- religion and belief, and
- sexual orientation.

The Council is expected to use this understanding in taking financial decisions to demonstrate “due regard” to Public Sector Equality Duty and the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups.¹ Demonstrating “due regard” involves:

- assessing the potential impacts of proposed decisions at an appropriate stage in the decision-making process - so that it informs the development of policy and is considered before a decision is taken;
- ensuring that decision makers are aware of their responsibilities and any issues of inequality when making decisions.

Assessing the potential equality impact of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which public authorities can show ‘due regard’. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), therefore, provide a structured framework which enables the Council to ensure that it considers the equality impact of decisions, and to demonstrate to others that it has done so.

Having “due regard” does not mean the Council cannot make decisions which impact disproportionately. It does mean that the Council must be clear where this is the case, and must be able to demonstrate that we have undertaken consultation and both understood and mitigated the impact.

To ensure that the process of impact assessment is robust, it needs to:

- be specific to each individual proposal;
- be clear about the purpose of the proposal;
- consider available evidence;
- include consultation and involvement with those affected by the decision, where appropriate;
- consider proposals for mitigating any negative impact on particular groups;
- set out arrangements for monitoring the actual impact of the proposal.

In proposing the savings outlined in Appendix C(ii), Departments have therefore considered the potential equality impact. The majority involve no change in policy

¹ The Duty applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

and/or service and will be achieved through efficiencies. Those involving staff changes have been the subject of proper consultations under the Managing Organisational Change Policy including proper equalities considerations. Equality impact assessments have been undertaken for major changes and have previously been reported to the Executive, such as the procurement and service delivery exercise for the Public Realm Contract (reported to the Executive in October 2013). In this respect the budget sets out the financial consequence of decisions already taken.