

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting8th September 2011

1. Title of Item/Report

Equality Impact Assessment

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet considered a report relating to arrangements for undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) and provided a revised framework to improve the way in which the Council evaluated the impact of policy, strategy and service development on the various communities it served.

Members noted the Local and National contexts of EIAs and the importance of ensuring that the Council had in place effective arrangements for assessing the impact of its activity on the local communities, particularly in respect of those groups with 'protected characteristics' within equality legislation.

In the light of the national and local contexts it was considered that a revised framework was required for assessing the impact of policy, strategy and service development on the various communities the Council served. The key elements of such a framework were provided:

- Consideration of equality impact assessment should be part of a broader assessment of impact on local communities, so that key decisions were informed by an understanding of how they were likely to impact on the communities the Council was serving, including those with specific needs within the scope of equalities legislation. There would be key linkages between this approach and the Council's revised Consultation and Community Engagement Strategies, to ensure that impact assessments were informed by appropriate consultation with relevant groups likely to be affected by any proposals.
- There should be more effective targeting of decisions on policies, strategies and service developments for which an assessment of impact was required. This could be done through review of items on the Forward Plan; consideration of all Value for Money Reviews through the EIT Sub-Board; monitoring of items through relevant management teams (e.g. for those decisions that were taken under delegated powers); and changes to the Delegated Decision Record Form and the template for

Cabinet Reports.

- For items targeted in this way, impact assessments were likely to require a staged approach, for example:
 - an outline indication of equality implications when included in the Forward Plan; or at the 'baselining' stage of VfM / EIT reviews;
 - assessment of impact for all options considered prior to the final recommendation / decision making stage;
 - clear arrangements for subsequent monitoring of the outcomes and impact of the new strategy, policy, service or initiative.
- The current EIA pro-forma should be replaced with a set of guidance and best practice exemplars.
- There should be a requirement that Cabinet reports, for those items identified as requiring an impact assessment, include a section on 'Assessment of Impact on Communities', in the main body of the report, to replace the current EIA section.
- Appropriate training, guidance and awareness raising sessions need to be in place to promote an 'equality awareness' culture throughout the organisation and to support implementation of the revised framework.
- There should be a more robust, and consistent, approach to monitoring the subsequent impact of new policy, strategy, and service developments on the communities the Council served. This approach could be linked into the arrangements for developing and monitoring Service Improvement Plans and Business Unit Plans.

Should the framework above be endorsed by Cabinet, a small task and finish group of officers would be established to develop an action plan for implementing the revised approach and for monitoring the subsequent impact of the revised arrangements.

RESOLVED that the revised framework for undertaking EIAs, as set out above and in paragraphs 15 to 21 of the report, be approved.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The revised framework for equality impact assessments is required to ensure that the Council has effective processes in place for evaluating the impact of its policies, strategies and service development on the communities it serves, in a way which respects the diversity of our communities and promotes equality in line with the requirements of the

Equalities Act 2010.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday 16 September 2011

Proper Officer
12 September 2011