

Name of meeting: Cabinet

Date: 8th October 2019

Title of report: Proposed Changes to Impact Assessments: an Integrated Approach to Expanded Equalities Characteristics and Environment

Purpose of report

To outline proposed changes to the Council's Equality Impact Assessment process to move to an Integrated Impact Assessment, incorporate additional diversity characteristics, such as low income and an Environmental Impact Assessment, particularly in advance of this year's Budget round. Supporting these changes will be the application of our core principles of People, Partners and Place.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	Yes 9 th September 2019
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	23.09.19 Rachel Spencer-Henshall
Is it also signed off by the Service Director (Finance)?	23.09.19 Eamonn Croston
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	20.09.19 Julie Muscroft
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Shabir Pandor

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: N/A

Public or private: Public

(Have you considered GDPR?) Yes

1. Summary

1.1 Our current approach to impact assessment is focused on equalities using an Equalities Impact Assessment focused on the nine protected characteristics groups under the Equality Act 2010:

- Age;
- Gender reassignment;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Religion or belief;
- Sexual orientation.
- Disability;
- Marriage or civil partnership (in employment only);
- Race;
- Sex;

1.2 Some authorities now include additional groups to be considered, particularly people on low income/poverty and unpaid carers.

- 1.3 This paper outlines how we propose to incorporate this approach and go further by integrating an Environmental Impact Assessment within a holistic Integrated Impact Assessment approach.
- 1.4 By applying People, Partners and Place to the revised approach as a lens by which impacts will be assessed:
- For the People aspect place a greater emphasis on putting people at the heart of the decisions that might affect them, and supporting local democracy and councillors in their community leadership roles.
 - For the Partners aspect we will collaborate wherever possible to perform collective impact assessments to maximise knowledge and resources across anchor organisations, business, voluntary and community sectors.
 - For the Place aspect the new approach will enhance the understanding of diversity across the district in terms of geography and the experience of our different communities and citizens, helping to further address inequalities and improve outcomes.

2. Information required to take a decision

- 2.1 Integrated Impact Assessments are a tool to help you analyse and make more considered decisions about changes to service delivery, policy and practice by assessing the impact of changes across multiple themes.
- 2.2 An Equality Impact Assessment will help you to identify how specific communities of interest may be affected by decisions and to consider any potential discriminatory impact on people with protected characteristics.
- 2.3 Equality Impact Assessments can also help to improve or promote equality by encouraging you to identify ways to remove barriers and improve participation for people with a protected characteristic. They provide important evidence of how we have considered the implications of service and policy changes and demonstrate how we have met our legal Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).
- 2.4 Our developing approach to Inclusion & Diversity in Kirklees Council is to go beyond compliance. An aspect of this is to actively incorporate additional categories in to the Equality Impact Assessment process. We are seeking to expand the groups we include to cater for low income/poverty and unpaid carers.
- 2.5 The Climate Emergency Motion passed on 16th January 2019 committed the Council to consider Environmental Impact as part of any new policy. The proposed approach seeks to assess impact across the range of environmental and sustainability impacts and maintain a simple process aligned to the existing Equality Impact Assessment process.
- 2.6 The proposed Integrated Impact Assessment approach seeks to maintain the established processes and tools keeping adjustments to a minimum reducing the change experienced by officers.

3. Approach and cross-cutting issues

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Integrated Impact Assessment process maintains the current two stage Equality Impact Assessment process. Stage 1 is an initial screening while Stage 2 involves further assessment and action planning where an overall negative impact was identified through Stage 1.

3.2 In addition to the theme specific amendments it is proposed that the Integrated Impact Assessment incorporates identification of opportunities to work in partnership with other authorities on issues that require regional or national action.

4. **Expanded Equality Impact Assessment groups**

Low income/poverty

- 4.1 The inclusion of this group, which also cuts across all the protected characteristic groups, presents an opportunity for the organisation to embrace a more substantive understanding of diversity, capable of redressing material disadvantage by tackling systemic poverty and social exclusion, as well as combatting prejudice, stigma and stereotyping.
- 4.2 Although there is no single agreed definition, the generally accepted indicator of poverty is described as 'when a household has an income (after tax and benefits) of less than 60% of median income for their family type' (JRF UK Poverty Report 2018 – see <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2018>).
- 4.3 By including poverty as an additional category, we are effectively 'poverty proofing' our decisions by assessing policies and actions at the design or review stage to assess their impact.
- 4.4 This should include consideration of how well we are meeting the needs of the people and communities who are most likely to experience poverty and whether people who have experienced poverty have been involved in developing solutions. By doing this, the poverty impact of any service changes can be assessed and ensure that any potential policies are developed in a way that benefits people living in poverty or at risk of falling into poverty; ensuring our actions do not exacerbate the situation for those in poverty and that we put in place appropriate mitigation when needed.
- 4.5 Importantly, this approach supports our Inclusive Growth agenda part of which is to address disadvantage for people on low income.

Unpaid carers

- 4.6 Similarly, unpaid carers are themselves a disadvantaged and socially excluded group. Evidence shows that outcomes for carers are generally poorer than for society as a whole, as highlighted by the Government's Equalities Review undertaken as part of work to develop the National Carers Strategy and subsequent Carers Action Plan. Health and care services rely on carers to provide the lion's share of support, and as well as impacting on carers' own health, carers' ability to provide care directly affects the amount of health and care support the state needs to provide to people with disabilities.
- 4.7 We know from the Kirklees Joint Strategic Assessment (KJSA) and the Kirklees Carers Strategy that Carers providing high levels of care are twice as likely to suffer from ill health as non-carers, to live in poorer areas, and in households with fewer resources. They are less likely to have educational qualifications and more likely to be restricted to part time work which in turn restricts income and pension rights. Many of those with caring needs are older people and the age profile of carers in Kirklees shows much of this support is provided by people aged over 45, with a greater reliance on women. Young carers are more than twice as likely to be bullied.
- 4.8 It is essential that any changes in any support are seen holistically as locally carers have made it clear that multiple small changes in support across the council and our key public sector partners add up to a lot of change for carers who access the public sector at many different points.

5. **Environmental impact**

- 5.1 Environment is a broad ranging concept which changes in service delivery, policy and practice may impact in many different and overlapping ways often with positive and negative impacts simultaneously.
- 5.2 The proposed environmental element to be incorporated into the Integrated Impact Assessment uses a series of questions asking officers to indicate positive, neutral or negative impacts on key environmental aspects. These themes have been based on the goals identified within the government's 25 Year Environment Plan having confirmed that these cover the themes found in a review of assessment templates used by other local authorities. The areas included are:
- Clean air (including Climate Changing Gases);
 - Wildlife and habitats;
 - Exposure to chemicals.
 - Resilience to the effects of climate change;
 - Sustainability and efficiency of use of resources from nature;
 - Beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment
 - Clean and plentiful water;
 - Resilience to harm from environmental hazards;
 - Production, recycling or disposal of waste;
- 5.3 The Stage 2 assessment template will ask officers to respond separately on how stakeholder groups or specialists have been engaged on environmental issues, the impacts identified and the mitigations proposed.

6. **Implications for the Council**

6.1 **Working with People**

Integrated Impact Assessments are a tool to help you analyse and make more considered decisions about changes to service delivery, policy and practice considering impacts across multiple themes. By making the changes to the Equality Impact Assessment categories proposed in this paper we will go beyond compliance and address more needs within our communities while incorporation of the Environmental Impact Assessment will support improvement in environmental impacts including but not limited to Kirklees Council becoming carbon neutral and improving our recycling rate to reach 55% by 2025 in line with the Climate Emergency Motion.

6.2 **Working with Partners**

We can collaborate with partners, exploring how we can work with them on impact assessments helping to complement agendas such as 'poverty proofing' and climate emergency.

6.3 **Place Based Working**

The enhanced approach outlined would enable services to extend the nature of impact assessments, yet still focus on specific geographical areas and communities of interest as necessitated by the issue under consideration.

6.4 **Improving outcomes for children**

Age is an existing protected characteristic catered for in our existing approach which will be carried forwards to the new one.

Environmental issues such as air quality impact significantly on public health outcomes including for children.

Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

There are no legal implications in terms the organisation complying with Public Sector Equality Duty, in fact the additional categories and an integrated approach means we will go beyond compliance.

7. Consultees and their opinions

The approach outlined in this paper has been supported by the Climate Emergency Councillor Working Party and the next Kirklees Inclusive Growth Group.

8. Next steps and timelines

To develop and test the new integrated approach in time for Budget proposals to be assessed in October.

9. Officer recommendations and reasons

- Cabinet to approve the proposed changes for the organisation to take an integrated approach to the assessment process.
- Cabinet to request officers to raise awareness of the changes across services, prepare updated templates, guidance and toolkits for implementation in time for the pending budget process.

10. Contact officer(s)

David Bundy, **Corporate Policy Officer**, Strategy and Policy Team

Jonathan Nunn, **Strategy & Policy Officer (Sustainable Economy)**, Strategy and Policy Team

11. Service Director responsible

Naz Parkar, Housing Economy and Infrastructure