

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC REPORT

Report to:	CABINET	<i>Exempt information paragraph number – if private report:</i>
Report of:	THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE	
Date of Decision:	22nd SEPTEMBER 2015	
SUBJECT:	2015/16 COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN MEASURES – APRIL TO JUNE 2015 PERFORMANCE MONITORING	
Key Decision: Yes / No	No	
If not in the Forward Plan: (please "X" box)	Chief Executive approved	<input type="checkbox"/>
	O&S Chairman approved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant Cabinet Member(s):	Deputy Leader /ALL	
Relevant O&S Chairman:	ALL	
Wards affected:	ALL	

1. Purpose of report:
To:
1.1 Provide a summary of progress against our Council Business Plan (CBP) targets, and the Birmingham Promise measures, for the period April to June 2015 (unless otherwise stated).
1.2 Seek Cabinet approval to amend the targets/forecast for the following Council Business Plan measures, as described in Sections 5.4 and 5.5 of this report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing the number of casualties killed/seriously injured in road traffic accidents; Increasing the number of jobs created as a result of public sector interventions, and Reducing the percentage of children who become the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time.
1.3 Notify Cabinet of the final 2014/15 outturn result for the Council Business Plan measure 'The number of new homes built' (Section 5.5).

2. Decision(s) recommended:
That Cabinet:
2.1 Note the progress to date and the issues requiring attention.
2.2 Approve the changes to the targets/clarification of forecast as described in 1.2 above and Sections 5.4, and, 5.5 of this report.

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3. Consultation

3.1 Internal

Cabinet Members, Strategic Directors and directorate staff have been involved in discussions around the performance against the targets of the Council Business Plan and Birmingham Promise measures contained in this report. Otherwise this paper is a factual report on progress and therefore, no other consultation has been required.

3.2 External

No external consultation required.

4. Compliance Issues:

4.1 Are the recommended decisions consistent with the Council's policies, plans and strategies?

This report shows whether strategic and operational outcomes and policy priorities are on track, and it shows our targets for 2015/16 for tracking our further progress against our strategic outcomes and policy priorities.

4.2 Financial Implications.

The Council Business Plan forms a key part of the budgeting and service planning process for the City Council that takes account of existing finances and resources and sets out the key strategic and operational outcomes that the City Council wish to achieve. Any decisions highlighted will be carried out within existing finances and resources unless otherwise stated.

4.3 Legal Implications

Not applicable.

4.4 Public Sector Equality Duty. (see separate guidance note)

The Council Business Plan (CBP) Measures, and Birmingham Promise, are designed to ensure significant improvement in service quality and outcomes for the people of Birmingham – some have a particular focus on disadvantaged groups. Non-achievement may have a negative impact on external assessments of the City Council and could put relevant funding opportunities at risk.

5. Relevant background/chronology of key events:

5.1 Birmingham Promise Measures

At the start of this year, we introduced **The Birmingham Promise**; a set of specific standards that our citizens could expect in relation to the seven most frequently requested services in the council. We agreed to monitor and measure how well we perform against these promises, and that we would report on progress against achieving them every three months.

For this first quarter of the year, 88% (14) of our Birmingham Promise measures have performed well. Of these, 64% (9) were fully upheld and another 5 (36%) promises achieved over 97%.

2 other promises are improving, with a focus on closing the gap as follows:

- **Completing routine housing repairs within 30 days:** 91.6% of routine repairs were completed within the required timescale (29,234 out of a total of 31,919). Performance is improving and to build on this, the service continues to work closely with the repairs contractors to identify those routine repairs where they are typically failing to meet the 30 day target and to implement resolutions. This is also being addressed in the performance measures and penalties, in the forthcoming re-procurement commencing April 2016.
- **Collection of missed bins:** 84.91% of reported missed collections were collected within three days. This equated to around 7.34m collections made on time. Performance has steadily improved during the first quarter from 72.27% in April to 91.62% in June. The functionality of the customer relationship management system has been recently updated, and now reflects reported missed collections in accordance with the Birmingham Promise definition.

5.2 Customer Services

Channel shift, in July, was 18% against a target of 16%, maintaining the same level of performance seen in June. Benefits, Fleet and Waste Management and Housing Repairs were all on target whilst Council Tax achieved 30% against a target of 26%. The increase in the number of online transactions completed for Council Tax is primarily as a result of changes made to the Change in Circumstances page on the website which has improved the customer experience.

Call volumes in July 2015 were 21% lower than July 2014 - a trend that has been consistent all year. At the same time, average call handling times have increased. This indicates that Advisors are spending more time on each call to improve the first time contact resolution rate. A team of Resolution Champions are now in place, and their role is to intervene and troubleshoot issues so as to avoid citizens having to call back multiple times. This new role will also have had a positive impact on the volume of calls received.

Overall, customer satisfaction with the Contact Centre, all be it from a low base, has improved from 50% in April to 53%. It is particularly encouraging to note increased satisfaction with Advisors' willingness to help, and, fewer customers having to make repeat calls. Advisor willingness to help has seen a steady increase to 65% from a starting point of

54% in July 2014. Soft skills training for Advisors continues to be rolled out across the Contact Centre and this will help to further improve willingness to help scores. However, it is recognised that there is still some way to go and Customer Services is focused on substantially increasing this result.

5.3 Council Business Plan Measures (CBP) Summary

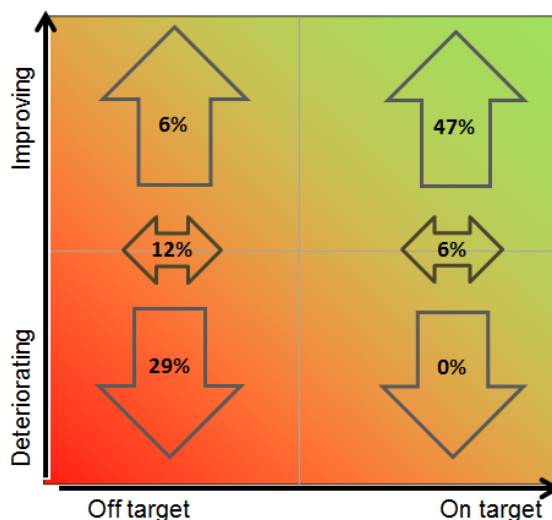
The CBP measures, for 2015/16, reflect the key performance measures for the City Council for this financial year (unless otherwise stated), and include our key targets/forecasts for measuring success against our strategic priorities.

Overall, strategic performance analysis is made up of 30 key performance indicators, of which, results were **available for 27 (90%) measures**. **Of these, 52% (14) have either met, exceeded, or, are within acceptable tolerance levels of their target.** This is 12% lower than that achieved at the same point last year.

Paragraph 5.3.6 details the status of those measures where results were not available at the time of reporting.

For 17 of the 27 available measures, we are able to provide a direction of travel against the previous quarter. Of these, for 12 (71%), performance has either improved, or stayed the same, compared to last quarter:

Direction of travel against the previous Quarter



Direction of travel breakdown:		
On track and improving:	8	47%
On track and deteriorating:	0	0%
On track no change:	1	6%
Off track no change:	2	12%
Off track and improving:	1	6%
Off track and deteriorating:	5	29%
Not comparable/available to report:	13	n/a
TOTAL with comparable result	17	100%

Note: The above row, shaded in yellow, is not included within the graph due to insufficient information to report the direction of travel against the previous quarter.

The table, on the next page, provides our performance position against our primary goals and outcomes:

Primary Goals and Outcomes	Number of Results Available	% Targets Available on Track/ Better
A Fair City - Safety, Health and Wellbeing; Children, Young People and Families; Tackling Poverty.	14	43% (6)
A Prosperous City - Learning Skills and Local Employment; Enterprise; Infrastructure, Development and Smart; Green and Sustainable; Regional Capital and Reputation.	10	60% (6)
A Democratic City - Engagement, Influence and Contribution; a New Model of City Government; Modern Services that Service our Citizens.	3	67% (2)

5.3.1 Our most significant areas of concern, in relation to our Council Business Plan targets, are presented below, in the wider context for each directorate alongside other significant successes in the year.

5.3.2 Council-wide Performance

Council-wide – where we need to do better against our CBP measures

- **Reducing the number of average sick days per full-time equivalent employee**, at 10.37 days, is a slight improvement on the 10.46 days achieved last quarter. The year-to-date figure is 1.23 days worse than the year-to-date figure for this time last year. Absence rates for the first two months of 2013/14 were particularly good which would account for some of this difference, but, the year-to-date figures for this year do show that overall, absence rates have increased.

The People Directorate continue to have the highest absence rates at 11.57 days (year-to-date), but all directorates have experienced increases. Further analysis is being undertaken to identify any particular trends and performance hotspots.

Well supported, effective, line management continues to be the most important factor in successfully managing absence. This was demonstrated by the significant reduction in sickness absence during 2013/14, which resulted from a concerted line management focus on improving attendance. Since, the focus on increasing performance and changing culture, has shifted some of the attention away from the proactive management of sickness suggesting that the change in behaviour has not been embedded. There is now a revived focus on holding Managing Absence Panels and conducting long-term absence case reviews.

The cultural change within the Future Council programme includes redefining our managers' responsibilities and increasing accountability. The proactive management of attendance, as well as performance, is a critical part of the management role. Managers must manage diligently but with an understanding of how to appropriately

use discretion. The impact of uncertainty around jobs and restructuring also has an impact on absence levels. Increased communication and staff engagement with change is essential to reduce anxiety and stress across the workforce.

Leadership focus across the organisation on managing sickness is a priority. Analysis of underlying trends is underway as well as continued staff communication around the impact of absence on colleagues, and service performance. Monthly scrutiny at corporate leadership level and directorate team level will continue until sickness levels drop.

Council-wide - significant successes

- **Complaints that received a full response in 15 working days** – city-wide performance at 97%, continues to improve. It is up by 5% when compared to March 2015 and is 14% better than that achieved in June 2014. Officers continue to focus on underperforming hotspots and escalate these for remedial action where identified.

5.3.3 Directorate for People Performance

People - where we need to do better against our CBP measures

- **Moving younger adults from residential care into community settings.** The focus remains on ensuring better support is given to frontline social work staff in this service area in order to help increase the appropriate movement of people from residential care settings. 7 service users have moved into community packages (target = 18) and 94 service users (70 residential and 24 community), following reassessments had the cost of their care packages reduced. Combined, these give a projected annual saving of £2,634,359. The original medium term performance and financial targets set were over ambitious. Officers are now working to revise these, and make proposals to address the consequences of this..
- **Delayed transfers of care (DTC) from hospital per 100,000 population.** The result of 20.7 delays (per 100,000 population) is 2.3 days over target and 0.5 days more than at March this year. However, the average weekly delays for Adults and Communities reduced from 97.0 in May to 73.8 in June. We have been working with the senior managers at University Hospital to implement the new customer journey and set up the multidisciplinary discharge hub to fast track standard assessments ensuring patients are discharged as soon as they become fit for discharge. This has reduced the number of delays, especially assessment delays. Social work staff are moving into open planned accommodation within the discharge hub to further improve communication.

An enhanced assessment hub and bed bureau has been developed and placed Enhanced Assessment Bed (EAB) discharge coordinators in each acute trust, resulting in a reduction of delays across the acute hospitals as people are not waiting for EAB placements.

We have been working with the mental health trust to validate delayed transfers of care data, and, have put a system in place to reduce the number of mental health delays. Two social work staff are in the process of being recruited to support this system.

Most of the full assessments for patients are now completed outside of the hospital setting, reducing the length of stay for patients and improving the quality of the patient's journey out of hospital.

Work continues with 'seven day' working so the discharge planning processes are operational across the seven days to improve discharges and reduce the length of stay in hospital. We will continue with these actions and as a result, have confidence that this will help to substantially reduce delayed transfers of care down to target levels by the end of the year.

- A new Council Business Plan measure for this year. **44 unallocated single assessments were open for more than 7 days**. Assessment and short term intervention teams have improved the quality and timeliness of assessments and support for children and their families.
- At 35 weeks, performance has stayed the same as last quarter for **the time taken to approve adopters, from the initial enquiry to adopter approval at panel**, but is 9 weeks over target. Aided by Government funding to allow the purchase of adoptive placements from other authorities, increased focus is being placed on recruiting adopters and on finding families. It may take some time before we start to see this reflecting positively on overall performance levels.

As reported last quarter, there are a series of measures which relate to the child's journey through our system. The implementation of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, which includes focusing on correcting historic levels of unidentified need and risk, has seen a substantial increased level of demand that affects all aspects of the system. The following indicators were affected by increased demand levels. Safely managing service demands in a more sustainable system remains a high priority for our partnership.

- **Children's referrals that were referrals within 12 months**, at 26%, is 1% above the top end of the profile target range (18-25%), 2% above the national average and 3% above that achieved in March this year. Monthly audits, undertaken and reported to the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board, highlight the need for more work to be done, by all agencies, to support families before some cases are closed. Assessment teams are now in place to undertake short-term work with families. We would expect to start seeing a positive impact on reducing our re-referral rates, although this may take some time.
- **Care Leavers who are in education, employment or training (at age 19)** at 33% is 27% behind target (60%). The numbers for this measure as expected, are very small at this time of year. Nevertheless, our children's service is investigating to try to understand issues affecting performance levels. Improvements will be delivered through the Birmingham Youth Promise, which prioritises resources for looked after children. Whilst we expect to see significant improvement during the remainder of the year, the full target may not be met until 2016.
- **The average length of time taken, from admission to care, to be being placed for adoption** at 640 days is above our target of 547 days. This performance is historic going back three years and can only be gradually improved over the next three years. A new programme to speed up the matching of children on placement orders with adopters is in place. This includes increasing the number of family finding teams. This will allow for early consultation for social workers in respect of adoption and care

planning, earlier referral to the adoption service and sharing of intelligence to inform the recruitment process. However, if we look at a better indicator of performance, we can see that the adoption service is improving. There has been an increase in the number of children placed for adoption over the last three years. 95 in 2013/14, 120 in 2014/15 and 69 in the first 5 months of 2015/16 forecasting around 150 children by March 2016.

- 41% of **Education, Care and Health Plans were issued within 20 weeks** (excluding permitted exceptions), compared to the statutory target of 100%. Following changes to legislation last September, changes were made to our SENAR (Special Education Needs Assessment and Review service) structure. Although additional capacity was granted, it is still proving difficult to cope with the additional demands the new duties have brought with them. To mitigate, a recovery plan is in place which includes: agreed timeframes for completing activities, robust and frequent monitoring to allow for accurate reporting of performance for statutory assessments, and, technical support to help resolve other reporting issues relating to other SENAR activity (e.g. Education Health and Care (EHC) transfers).
- **Children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time**, at 20%, is the same as that achieved last quarter, and although over the top end of our revised target range (13-18%), is still 1% better than at this time last year. The number of children on a child protection plan increased by 60% last year. This led to an inevitable rise in the rate of those children subject to a child protection plan for the second time. However, most children do stay on a plan for at least a year. We are in the process of reviewing the effectiveness of the 'Strengthening Families' approach. An action plan will be developed and implemented to strengthen performance whilst continuing to ensure that the focus remains on safeguarding children. Changes in approach will take a while to be reflected in performance monitoring as this measure is affected by historical performance issues dating back a number of years.

People - our most significant Council Business Plan successes

- All (100%) **Family Common Assessment Frameworks (fCaAF's)**, where the needs identified and desired outcomes for child and family are achieved, scored 'achieved or above' during this quarter. A robust process has been developed to ensure interventions failing to be achieved are followed up early, and, appropriate actions are put in place to bring performance back on track quickly.

People – Quartet Measures (Appendix B)

The measures considered by the Quartet indicate positive improvement, but concerns about practice and workflow remain. The main areas of concern are: unallocated work (reducing); volume and timescales for Section 47 and Children in Need (CiN) assessments; children not listened to at Section 47/ CiN assessment; infrequent visit patterns to some children on child protection plans; social work and family support caseloads; ensuring our Quality Assurance system reflects voice of child and family. Ofsted will do an improvement visit to look at our assessment function in September which will help us confirm where we need to focus improvement activity. The Department for Education has appointed Essex as our improvement partner over the next nine months and we are progressing our three year improvement plan which includes implementing a process of long-term cultural change. Lord Warner has finalised his one year term as our commissioner, is satisfied with our progress and is keen to see momentum sustained

through year 2 of the 4 year plan.

5.3.4 Place performance

Place – where we need to do better against our CBP measures

- **Household waste which is reused, recycled and composted**, at 30.49%, is 8.57% under target. Performance continues to be affected by our change improvement programme and in particular, the transition to a chargeable green waste collection service. Issues within the waste wood industry, resulting in increased costs for recycling wood, also continue to have a negative impact. It is still expected, however, that performance will improve once the roll-out of the wheelie bin programme is complete and we have had a period of stabilisation.
- 17.12% of **municipal waste was sent to landfill** during April to June, over our June target by 5.82%. The target takes into account the scheduled closedown of the Energy from Waste Plant which occurs in the early part of the year. During this year's shutdown, extra scheduled checks were carried out resulting in a longer than usual shutdown. Further, unplanned shutdowns then occurred due to a number of other faults in the generator, the result of which led to a greater than expected amount of tonnage being sent to Landfill. An action plan has been agreed, and further actions are being considered to bring this measure back in line.
- **Reducing levels of litter on relevant land and highways**, which at 7.57%, is 2.57% over target. The service continues to deal with issues around more waste on our streets through education and enforcement.

Place – our most significant Council Business Plan successes

- We continue to make good progress in bringing **private sector empty properties back into use**, and with 101 completed this quarter, we have achieved 26 more than planned, and are a third of the way to meeting our end of year target of 300.

5.3.5 Summary of other achievements

- A key recommendation from Lord Warner's report was to improve the way in which Agency Social Workers for Children's services are procured. A joint project team from Children's services, Procurement, Finance and Human Resources developed, and successfully delivered and implemented a full OJEU procurement process in 8 weeks – significantly faster than ever achieved before by the Council for a service of such importance.
- For the fourth year running, **Birmingham won 'Gold' at Chelsea**. This time for our '300 Years at the Heart' display of the five-metre-tall replica of Birmingham Cathedral's bell tower display. We were also presented with the Diamond Jubilee Award for the best exhibition in the Grand Pavilion.
- **Birmingham City Council Choir** opened up the Local Government Association Conference, in Harrogate in June, and was one of 15 other choirs selected from around the country to take part in the opening night of the Voices Now 2015 event in London.

- **A reported 90,000** people celebrated this year's Vaisakhi event via two parades through Smethwick and Handsworth in April.
- **Up to 70,000 people** attended the Birmingham Pride festival during the May Bank Holiday.
- Over **8,000** people attended the 70th anniversary of VE day.
- **Over 6,500** attended the Great Birmingham 10k run, with the junior and mini races attracting hundreds of young people aged 3 to 15 years.
- **Hundreds of women** marked International Women's Day during the 'This Brum Girl Can' campaign in March.
- Following Cabinet approval, to continue with the Service Birmingham (SB) contract for ICT, a series of **savings initiatives to deliver £140m were identified**, one of which was the relocation of SB staff from their current B1 location to Council property. SB will start to occupy space in Lancaster Circus and Woodcock Street from February 2016 onwards. To enable this, the majority of staff in those buildings will increase their workspace agility to around 25%. The initiative will deliver upwards of £4m savings to the Council.
- **£78,169** National Lottery grant funding towards the £330k scheme to build new changing facilities at Cofton Park.

5.3.6 Performance results were not available at the time of reporting for the following three measures:

- Drug users who are in full time employment for 10 working days following treatment – dependent on the availability of national data from external sources, results are not due until the end of September.
- School inspection outcomes – results for the percentage of Ofsted reports issued in the period rated good or better, lag a quarter in arrears and Ofsted have informed us that final data for March 2015 and provisional data for June 2015 will not be available until mid-September.
- The number of homes built that were affordable homes - the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) have confirmed that validated results will be made available on a half yearly basis.

Results for all of the above will be reported in future Performance Monitoring reports to Cabinet, as they become available.

The attached Performance Monitoring – April to June 2015 Exception Report (Appendix A) provides a more detailed breakdown on the position on targets, focusing on those where we were well 'ahead of', or had 'missed', our target. Commentary is also provided which summarises any remedial actions taken or planned, to bring performance on track. The four symbol style for monitoring progress reflects the 'as at position' against targets. A 'Star' means performance was significantly exceeding the target, the 'Tick' indicates performance was on, or above target (but not significantly above), the 'Circle' shows performance was below target, but, within an acceptable

tolerance level, and, the 'Triangle' tells us that performance is off target and worse than agreed tolerances. This style of reporting will enable services to better manage measures at lower risk and Members to focus on those areas that require particular attention.

5.4 Clarification of forecast

Cabinet is asked to note the clarification of the projected forecast for the Council Business Plan Measure 'Reducing the number of casualties killed/seriously injured in road traffic accidents'. In the absence of national road safety targets, we are using a measurement based on a reduction of 17.3%, between the baseline of 2005-2009 [476] average to the average of 2011-2015 (394). This means that the average number of casualties for 2011 – 2015 should be no more than **394** per year for 2015. The previously approved projection of 285 KSI relates to the new measuring criteria from 2016 onwards, as set out in the Council's Road Safety Strategy (currently out for consultation).

5.5 Changed Targets

Cabinet is asked to approve the changes to the targets for the following Council Business Plan Measures:

- **Jobs created as a result of public sector interventions:** A revised target is proposed from 2,591 to **3,191**, as we are aiming to support an additional 600 young people into work through targeted employment activity.
- **Children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time:** A change to the target is proposed to reflect a target range in line with the recently revised national average for this measure of 15.8%. Subject to Cabinet's agreement, the target range which was set by Cabinet in June at 10-15% (the same as in the previous year), is now proposed to be set at **13-18%**. The revised target still represents an improvement on the 20% achieved in 2014/15, and during the first quarter, and will measure the outcome of our Strengthening Families approach.

5.6 Final results for 2014/15 that were not available for the 2014/15 year-end report

Below is the outturn result for the 2014/15 Council Business Plan Measure 'New Homes Built' which was not available when the end-of-year report was presented to Cabinet in June 2015 due to a data lag:

- A total of **5,963 new homes** were built during 2011-15, exceeding our Birmingham Development Plan cumulative 2011-15 target of 5,800. We surpassed our target for 2014/15 as a result of a more rapid than expected recovery in the private house-building sector within the city during the year. This was underpinned by the Council's success in ensuring that Birmingham maintained a healthy supply of sites suitable and available for new housing within the city. At April 2015, 2,610 dwellings were under construction and a further 11,570 had planning permission but had not yet been started.

5.7 General

Once approved by Cabinet, information of progress against all targets in this report will be published on the Council website: www.birmingham.gov.uk/performance in line with previous practice.

6. Evaluation of alternative option(s):
<p>This report provides progress against the council's strategic outcomes, and, the measures in place to achieve those strategic outcomes. If this report was not provided, Cabinet, in its entirety, would not have an overview of progress against the key Council Business Plan measures, or actions being taken to bring performance back on track. Nor would cabinet have an update on the Birmingham Promises made to our citizens.</p>

7. Reasons for Decision(s):
<p>To advise Members of progress against outcomes, including, any actions being taken, or planned, to bring performance on track.</p>

Signatures	<u>Date</u>
Cabinet Member:
Chief Officer:

List of Background Documents used to compile this Report:
<p>The CBP Measures 2015/16 Quarterly Performance Monitoring – April 2014 to March 2015</p>

List of Appendices accompanying this Report (if any):
1. Appendix A – Performance Monitoring – April to June 2015 Exception Report 2. Appendix B – Quartet Measures

Report Version		Dated	
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PROTOCOL PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

- 1 The public sector equality duty drives the need for equality assessments (Initial and Full). An initial assessment should, be prepared from the outset based upon available knowledge and information.
- 2 If there is no adverse impact then that fact should be stated within the Report at section 4.4 and the initial assessment document appended to the Report duly signed and dated. A summary of the statutory duty is annexed to this Protocol and should be referred to in the standard section (4.4) of executive reports for decision and then attached in an appendix; the term 'adverse impact' refers to any decision-making by the Council which can be judged as likely to be contrary in whole or in part to the equality duty.
- 3 A full assessment should be prepared where necessary and consultation should then take place.
- 4 Consultation should address any possible adverse impact upon service users, providers and those within the scope of the report; questions need to assist to identify adverse impact which might be contrary to the equality duty and engage all such persons in a dialogue which might identify ways in which any adverse impact might be avoided or, if avoidance is not possible, reduced.
- 5 Responses to the consultation should be analysed in order to identify:
 - (a) whether there is adverse impact upon persons within the protected categories
 - (b) what is the nature of this adverse impact
 - (c) whether the adverse impact can be avoided and at what cost – and if not –
 - (d) what mitigating actions can be taken and at what cost
- 6 The impact assessment carried out at the outset will need to be amended to have due regard to the matters in (4) above.
- 7 Where there is adverse impact the final Report should contain:
 - a summary of the adverse impact and any possible mitigating actions (in section 4.4 or an appendix if necessary)
 - the full equality impact assessment (as an appendix)
 - The equality duty – see page 9 (as an appendix).

Equality Act 2010

The Executive must have due regard to the public sector equality duty when considering Council reports for decision.

The public sector equality duty is as follows:

1	<p>The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
2	<p>Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; (c) Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
3	<p>The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.</p>
4	<p>Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) Promote understanding.
5	<p>The relevant protected characteristics are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) age (b) disability (c) gender reassignment (d) pregnancy and maternity (e) race (f) religion or belief (g) sex (h) sexual orientation