



FINANCE REVIEW GROUP	AGENDA ITEM 6
<p>DATE OF MEETING: 1st November 2012</p> <p>REPORT OF: Head of Policy and Performance</p> <p>REPORT AUTHOR: Sandra Legate</p> <p>SUBJECT: Integrated Impact Assessments</p>	

PURPOSE:

1. Following its meeting on the 24th January 2012, Finance Review Group requested a further report to ensure that Integrated Impact Assessments impacts from April 2012 and resulting decisions would stand any potential external challenge.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

2. For Finance Review Group to receive the report and to give comments in relation to the findings.

BACKGROUND

3. Finance Review Group received a previous report on the outcomes of, at the time, Equality Impact Assessments. Since then the new Integrated Impact Assessment is being used across the Council. The IIA looks at Equalities, Cohesion, Social Inclusion, Poverty, Health, and Environmental impacts. Members at the time were pleased that impacts of decisions were being considered and advised of the continuing need to ensure that they were of the highest standard and, as importantly, the results were taken account of by officers when making recommendations and by Executive Members when making decisions.
4. FRG requested that the following be considered in this report;
 - (v) To ensure that Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)/ Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs) from April 2012, and the resulting decisions having regard to them, would stand any potential external challenge, the FRG requests that the Executive has regards to the following advice/ recommendations:

(a) To ensure for relevant transformation proposals, that EIAs/ IIAs were of the highest quality, and the results taken account of by officers in making their recommendations for change and by Executive Members when making decisions on those changes;

(b) To instruct the Chief Executive, through the Commercial and Transformation Director and Head of Citizen Engagement and Strategic Policy, to ensure that any potential weaknesses in change proposals identified by EIAs/ IIAs were highlighted to Members for review prior to decision-making;

(c) To instruct the Chief Executive, through the Commercial and Transformation Director and the new Head of Citizen Engagement and Strategic Policy, to ensure that, where there were clear links between savings proposals identified by EIAs/ IIAs, that these were cross-referenced, so as to recognise the links and the potential knock-on effects of the proposals, to help with decision-making.

REPORT

5. Since April 2012 a new process for ensuring that officers and Members have due regard in relation to any change to a service, policy or strategy has been implemented. Having *due regard* is a requirement for the Council as is analysing the impact, this can be done by any process but LBC have decided to continue with a robust process that also ensures a clear audit trail if ever needed. A copy of the new process can be found at Appendix One, plus a copy of a most recent IIA which give a flavour of the robustness of what is expected in relation to IIAs presented to Councillors for consideration.
6. The clear aim of any impact assessment is both to ensure that the full needs of citizens are considered when Council and officers have to consider difficult decisions during this time of austerity and that the Council cannot face legal challenge based on equality/consultation.
7. The process for an IIA is:
 - Report undertakes an initial draft of the IIA
 - Report Author sends the IIA to the Social Justice Unit (SJU) Inbox – where it is considered by SJU Officer and guidance offered – signed as seen by SJU Officer
 - Report Author continues with the IIA and consultation process
 - Report Author may continue to ask SJU for support and advice during whole process
 - Finalised IIA is signed off by Bundle Lead and attached to Executive Report
 - Executive Report goes to SJU Inbox for sign off – any continuing concerns at this stage will be raised with report author/Portfolio lead or Leader of the Council
 - Executive Report will clearly state if there are concerns emanating from the IIA
8. This new process includes a quality assurance element by the Social Justice Unit during the first draft, where clear advice and support is given to the officer to ensure that the Council is not discriminating, is having due regard and also reminding and ensuring that consultation is undertaken. SJU officers must also sign off Executive reports and this ensures at a later stage that due regard has been given, and that the wording reflects the outcome of the IIA. SJU members have intervened at Executive report stage where concerns have remained, these have been addressed and changes made or reports pulled. SJU officers also meet the Portfolio holder on a

regular basis, the Portfolio holder is made aware of all IIAs coming to Executive for discussion and raises any concerns or areas of potential contention. This also gives the Portfolio holder information if they need to ask further questions in either of the forums.

9. SJU officers have also undertaken training with officers across the Council as part of embedding the new process and this continues.

Moving forward;

10. Officers in the SJU have met with the head of the LEX team to consider how best to consider the overarching impact of the financial measures the Council is undertaking, by taking time to look at the measures in a wider context. . It has been agreed with colleagues from the LEX team that we will aim to present a report to FRG on the overarching impact of the cuts on the year April to March 2012 – 2013 in April 2013, this will also include a view of the way future financial decisions may impact on the citizens of Luton.
11. Officers are also considering how IIAs are done, so that where possible they will be grouped together more to show joined up thinking and outcomes. It is important that wherever possible a holistic understanding of the effects should be acknowledged. This holistic viewpoint is often covered in the IIA under the auspices of the social inclusion/poverty element, and we are seeking, in particular, to ensure that officers and Members are aware of the impact that the changes to welfare reform also have in conjunction with local financial decision making.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Blank IIA

Appendix B: Example IIA

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D

There are no background papers to this report.