

APPENDIX B.7

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 2 FEBRUARY 2010

Title:

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE STAR CHAMBER PROPOSALS FOR
2010/11**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Mike Band]
[Wards Affected: All]**

Summary and purpose:

This paper sets out the key points identified in the Equality Impact Assessment of the Star Chamber Proposals.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The Corporate Equality Scheme set out Waverley's vision of providing equal life chances for all. This relates directly to our Corporate Priority of Improving Lives, particularly for the more vulnerable members of our society.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

These are contained within the report and EQIA.

Resource/Value for Money implications:

This EQIA covers the Star Chamber recommendations, which set out budget recommendations for 2010/11.

Legal Implications:

The EQIA provides evidence that we are meeting our statutory equalities duties.

Background

1. Each year we complete an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) of the Star Chamber proposals with a view to understanding the impact they might have on vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our society, and to help us consider what actions we might take to minimise negative impacts and magnify positive impacts.
2. The proposals themselves are presented in more detail elsewhere on the agenda.

Consideration

3. The Star Chamber process identified a significant amount of savings - £865,230 over the reduced Base Estimate. Most of the savings identified are efficiency savings and have no direct equalities impacts. However, the EqIA does note that although efficiency savings may not appear to have direct service-level impacts they can increase service-delivery risks, particularly during periods of increased workload.
4. There are two proposals that could bring about significant positive impacts:
 - The proposal to reorganise Haslemere and Cranleigh locality offices as Partnership Outlets would bring services closer to people in those areas. This would have a significant positive impact on the ability of some of our residents to access our services. For example, hosting regular planning surgeries in Cranleigh and Haslemere would reduce the need for older and disabled residents to travel to Godalming.
 - The proposal to introduce a Customer Service Relations system would improve our ability to meet the needs of the people that contact us. By sharing information between services we would, for example, be aware at the start of a call if a caller had hearing difficulties, and be able to adapt accordingly.
5. Some of the proposals do contain some minor negative impacts. These are set out in the EQIA itself, but we do not consider any of them to be significant:
 - For some, such as rolling out alternative weekly collections to the final few properties, we have already devised a plan to minimise the impact.
 - For others, such as the potential impact on existing staff of the change to Partnership Outlets, we will undertake a full EQIA to consider how best to minimise any negative impacts.
 - The reduced training budget for 2010/11 is not as significant a risk as it might have been given that we have undertaken extensive member and officer equalities training over the last two years.
 - The reduction in our capacity to communicate to residents through Making Waves (and Making Waves online) will have an impact, but this will be mitigated through better use of resources.

Additional positive impacts

6. In September 2009 we undertook a rigorous budget consultation with Waverley residents. This gave us a very clear indication that our residents wanted us to prioritise spending on services focused on caring for the most vulnerable members of our society. In particular, they were keen for us to maintain or increase spending on play area equipment, older people care and Hoppa community transport. Delivery of these services disproportionately benefits younger people, older people and those who are physically disabled.
7. We have prioritised safeguarding these services (and others identified in the budget consultation exercise) in our budget for 2010/11. In fact, despite the

significant savings identified elsewhere in the budget, we are proposing to *increase* grants to Age Concern, day centres and Disability Changers in 2010/11. Although this commitment to safeguard funding levels for services impacting on our most vulnerable residents is not explicitly identified in the Star Chamber proposals, it provides further evidence of the net positive impact of the Council's budget for 2010/11.

Conclusion

8. The Star Chamber proposals set out significant savings on Council expenditure during 2010:
 - There are two proposals which could potentially bring significant positive equality impacts.
 - There are several potential negative impacts, but these are all minor and can be relatively easily mitigated.
 - Services to (and grants for) the most vulnerable members of our society have been safeguarded or increased.
9. On balance, the proposals would provide a small positive impact on our ability to deliver equal life chances for all:

Recommendation

That the Executive notes the EqIA and welcomes the positive net impact of these proposals on our ability to deliver equal life chances for all, particularly the most vulnerable members of our society.

Background Papers

- Equality Impact Assessment of the Star Chamber proposals for 2010/11.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Robert Saunders

Telephone: 01483 523225

E-mail: robert.saunders@waverley.gov.uk

Comms/exec/2009-10/020210/013