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Member Briefing Note for County Council on 17 February 2016

Council Strategy and MTFS – implications of the Public Sector Equality Duty

Under the Equality Act 2010, decision makers must show 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and others who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between these groups.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership.

Having "due regard" is a legal term that requires Members to consider what is proportionate and relevant in terms of the decisions they take. The policy and budget framework is a decision for all Members of the County Council.

Members have been provided with, and should read, the Due Regard Statement attached to this report. It notes the potential impact of the proposals for each major service area.

To meet the legal obligation Members should first be content that they have sufficient information to enable them to consider the equality impacts and that they can consciously and actively consider the relevant matters. The detailed Due Regard Statement sets out the key issues in relation to the MTFS and the budget. The Statement sets out the evidence base across the protected groups. This has recently been updated from both the service user and workforce perspectives.

As decision makers, Members must weigh up all the factors and reach a balanced view, ensuring that there are mitigating factors wherever possible. Again, these are set out in the Due Regard Statement.

The Due Regard Statement will continue to be monitored and updated as our plans are implemented.