

Financial Decisions 2015- 2016

Budget Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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This is an Equality Impact Assessment of the Medium Term Financial Plan. Under equality legislation, the Council has a legal duty to pay 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
- foster good relations between different groups.

The duty to pay 'due regard' is required to be demonstrated in the decisionmaking process. Assessing the potential equality impact of proposed budget changes is the means by which we show 'due regard'.

Methodology

The assessment is in five stages.

Stage 1 A review of the Budget Changes to identify "significant and relevant changes", meaning:

- a) proposals with savings of £50,000 and over
- b) identifying those that have a potential impact on one or more protected groups

Those proposals left were then passed forward to stage 2.

Stage 2 Proposals that were similar were brought together to better facilitate assessment (*the number of decisions these represent)

Stage 3 EqIAs were conducted on all "significant changes" identified There is a choice of four different recommendations that can result from these assessments.

Green	Savings are made as there is potential to improve the advancement equality of opportunity
Green-Amber	Adjustments have been identified (or will be made) to remove barriers or to better promote equality.
Amber	Carry on despite having identified some potential for an adverse impact or a possible missed opportunity to promote equality.
Red	Stop and rethink when an EqIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination

A draft assessment has accompanied the Medium Term Budget Cabinet Review in November 2014

Stage 4 This information will be fed into lines of enquiry in the consultation process throughout December 2014 and January 2015.

Stage 5 The final report was compiled including updates in the published assessments.

The following tables summarise the results of these stages:

Table 1: A Summary of Initial Assessments

Overall number of proposals	Number of proposals that are not significant (Stage 1a)	No. of proposals that are unlikely to have a relevant impact on one or more protected groups (Stage 1b)	No of EqIAs conducted (Stage 2)
143	55	60	22 (covering 28 proposals)

The summary below contains the outcome of those assessments at stage 2 and recommendations.

Table 2: Stage 2 Assessments

	EqIA Completed	Ref.	Recommendation
1	Information and Advice	S11	(please see transition arrangement below)
2	Infrastructure Support to Voluntary Sector	S12	Green
3	Floating Support Service.	S13	Amber
4	Mental Health	S14 & S149	Green
5	Learning Disability Review	S18	Green
6	Taxicard	S28	Amber
7	Preventative Services	S29	Amber
8	Handy Person Service	S147	Green-Amber
9	ASC Service Budgets	S150	Green
10	Supported Housing	S31	Amber
11	Eliminate the use of B&B	S32	Green
12	Connexions	S38 a & b	Green

13	C & YP commissioned contracts	S40 & S47	Green-Amber
14	Children's Centres	S45	Amber
15	Commissioned C & YP Community Engagement Activity	S46	Green-Amber
16	Denominational transport.	S49	Green
	EqIA Completed	Ref.	Recommendation
17	Ethnic Minority Achievement.	S54	Green-Amber
18	Library Service	S81 S82 S85, S154 S155 S156 S157 S158 S159 S160 S161	Amber
19	Community Transport & Fleet	S86	Green-Amber
20	Bus fares and subsidies	S87 S88 S89 S90	Amber
21	Rationalisation of Play Areas	S104	Green-Amber
22	Review of employee terms and conditions	S141	Green-Amber

Impact on Services

An Equality Impact Assessment was conducted on all 142 savings proposals of which 28 were considered as being 'significant' and 'relevant' to equality. Similar decisions have been brought together to produce 21 in depth assessments. Please note that to address adverse impact upon some services transitional arrangements were agreed and one assessment of the original 22 will not be reported.

These assessments recommend that:

- In eight (8 green) areas, it is recommended that savings continue as there is a potential to improve the advancement equality of opportunity or at least it is unlikely to have a significant impact.
- In twelve (12 green-amber) areas, adjustments have been/are being made to remove barriers identified by the EqIA or to better promote equality. Proposed adjustments will remove the barriers will be identified.
- In one (1 amber) area, it is recommended to continue despite having identified some potential for an adverse impact or a possible missed opportunity to promote equality. In this case, the justification is included in the EqIA and is in line with the duty to have 'due regard' and reasons are provided. Consideration has been made to whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact.

- There is no (0 red) areas where a recommendation is likely to be given to rethink the decision where the impact is critical for equality for one or more protected groups.

Impact Transitional Arrangements

An outline assessment of the impact on some services found that some people were likely to be adversely impacted. Although there was justification for the saving, the impact required further consideration. Having due regard to equality, it was agreed with the service provider that with transitional arrangements, the impact on service users would be substantially lessened. This would allow providers the opportunity to management the change and for alternative arrangements to be made. Where this has happened, it is noted below. This arrangement covers all of the savings S11, so this has been taken out of the recommendations.

The table below reflects the areas where savings may provide opportunities to advance equality with no significant adverse impact on people with protected characteristics.

Table 3: Summary of the areas where it is recommended to continue without adjustments

Area of Work	Assessment
Infrastructure Support to Voluntary Sector	The Diversity & Equality Partnership has independently supported the local equality groups for the last 2 years. Some transitional funding is available
Bed & Breakfast	Permanent housing is the best solution to tackling the problems of homelessness.
Connexions	The redesign of commissioned services is likely to lead to a better targeting of services to vulnerable young people.
Mental Health	This should ensure that the Council meets its duties with the possibility that more people will receive an assessment
Learning Disability Review	Shared Lives has a proven record of accomplishment of improved service and savings.
ASC Service Budgets	Services may be reshaped, however will be delivered in line with eligibility criteria.
Denominational Transport	This decision ensures that some people will not suffer indirect discrimination.
Children & Young People commissioned contracts	In partnership with other children & young people partners information about alternative services will be provided. A parenting support service will continue.

Table 4 contains Budget proposals where adjustments have been made or being considered to remove barriers identified by the EqIA or to better promote equality. The proposed adjustments will remove the barriers identified.

Table 4: Summary of adjustments being made

Area of Work	Adjustment Made/Being Made
Handy Person Service	A review of the alternatives will be conducted to ensure that reasonable services are in place after the contract ends.
Commissioned Children & Young People Community Engagement Activity	In partnership with other children & young people partners; engagement will be refocused.
Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA)	The loss of some resource in EMA is mitigated by creating a commissioning budget for use by the linked improvement partner from other resources
Community Transport & Fleet	With the service now in-house opportunities to rationalise and improve transport options are being taken. A consultation is planned regarding membership of Community Transport which will include safeguards for existing members
Rationalisation of Play Areas	Using the standard from the Local Plan the accessibility (both physical locality) and “play value” of play areas will improve, however the number of play equipment items will decrease.
Review of employee terms and conditions	The policy change attached to this savings will be consulted upon and agreed through the normal channels, care will be taken to make reasonable adjust in any policy or procedure for staff with a disability, age and/or issues arising from another protected characteristic. Further regard to our equality duty will accompany the decision at the appropriate time.
Floating Support Service	This service helps people keep their tenancies, such as people who have a mental illness. The new service will be recommissioned to minimise the impact on those at highest risk of adverse impact.
Preventative services	It is likely that this decision will adversely affect some people who use these services. Loneliness can lead to deterioration in the health and well-being in older people. Effective interventions can alleviate the risks. There are no easy routes to promoting equality of opportunity, but consideration should be given to the evidence that effective interventions have a number of common elements including, offering social activity and/or support within a group format. The transitional funding provided will allow time for effective interventions and services to continue.

Area of Work	Adjustment Made/Being Made
Supported Housing	Some young people who have supported housing through these projects may be adversely impacted. They may lose some of the support they have received. Some of these projects could continue using funds from elsewhere and/or reviewing their operations and income generation with a view to becoming more sustainable. This includes using the transitional funding provided by the Council. Funds are provided to ensure services reach a sustainable point and that effective cost reductions can occur.
Children's Centres	As part of the Community and Cultural Services Review, potential alternative ways to deliver Children's Centres are to be explored. Were a decision to be taken to reduce the breadth and depth of Children's Centre provision, it is likely there would be an adverse impact on some disadvantaged children and families. An equalities impact assessment will be completed to inform the specific recommendations developed as part of the review. Amendments have provided the ability for the review to reach sustainable options.
Library Service	As part of the Community and Cultural Services Review, potential alternative ways to deliver libraries are to be explored. Were a decision to be taken to reduce the breadth and depth of Library service provision, this may have an adverse impact on those who presently access this service in its traditional form. An equalities impact assessment will be completed to inform the specific recommendations developed as part of the review. Amendments have provided the ability for the review to reach sustainable options.
Bus Fares and Subsidies	This decision may adversely impact some younger people. However, those who require transport for such purposes as education should be eligible for support, which some may not be taking up, because of the low fare regime. There may be other impacts for people depending on which routes are changed, but the level of saving should ensure services continue to be provided, with some cost reductions.

Table 5 outlines those areas where the recommendation is to continue, despite having identified some potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality. In these cases, the justification is included in the EqIA and is in line with the duty to have 'due regard' and reasons are provided.

Table 5: Summary of the justification for accepting a potential adverse impact

Area of Work	Cabinet should have due regard to:
Taxicard	Elderly or disabled people, with mild mobility needs may be adversely impacted, by not being able to access preventative projects. However, alternatives means of transport (public and private) are increasing and access to these is broadening, therefore the potential impact may not be severe.

Impact on the Equality for the Workforce

To understand fairness in selection of staff who are at risk, the question we considered was: are the budgetary decisions free from discriminatory factors for every different major staff characteristic? In other words, can the council be confident that the decisions were random?

To answer this, the proportion of those that are at risk for all major characteristics was compared against the proportion within the establishment as a whole. A statistical test was applied to gather whether we could be 90% confident that the result was as a result of random facts.

This test showed that in terms of Age, Disability, Ethnic Origin, Sexual Orientation, Religion and Martial Status we can have a confidence that there is no significant difference in the proportions of staff who are “at risk” and those in the general workforce.

Only in one area was there evidence of some potential adverse impact male staff. However, this result can be reasonably attributed to the methodology of selection - the areas where there are people at risk are those that are male dominated. Also managerial posts have been re-organised with a protection of the “front-line” work, with the staff structure this is likely to proportionately affect men. Whilst this means the selection wasn’t fully random, it can be said not to be discriminatory.