

Assessment of the County Council's Equalities Duty in relation to setting of the 2018/19 budget

Background

The Equality Act, 2010, requires the Council to have "Due Regard" to the three aims of the Equality Duty in designing policies and planning/delivering services. These aims are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between people who share any of the defined Protected Characteristics and those who do not.

The Act lists nine Protected Characteristics, but, clearly, it is highly unlikely that they will all be of relevance in all circumstances. Two Characteristics which are of particular relevance in our Transformational Change Programmes are age (both older people and those aged under 25) and people who have a disability.

The level of regard which is "due" in respect of the Duty aims should always be proportionate and is dependent on the potential of the proposed policy/action to contribute to or detract from the aims of the Duty. Those areas which merit the greatest regard are also the areas where there is the greatest potential for service users to experience disproportionate negative impact.

The purpose of the below matrix is to quantify the level of "Due Regard" required and the potential for disproportionate negative impact.

The overall score is derived by multiplying the potential level of impact which Protected Groups are likely to experience by a value representing the number of people with a relevant Protected Characteristic who could be affected. These figures are estimates only but do provide an indication of those areas of Council decision-making where minimal Equality consideration is required, where moderate regard should be exercised and those where particular diligence and understanding are essential.

Where efficiencies are approved as part of the overall budget, officers will continue to exercise a proportionate level of Due Regard as Transformational Change Programmes are implemented. While a high score does not indicate inevitable inequality of outcome it does highlight those areas where our decisions have the potential to make a profound difference in the lives of already disadvantaged groups and also those areas where there is most scope for potential legal challenge.

Allocating a single score to a varied programme does not recognise that some projects within that programme are more relevant in terms of equality than others. A comments box has therefore been included to explain and highlight key points.

Many of the programmes will already be part-way through implementation and will have been assessed for equality relevance as part of the 2018-2019 budget report. Equality scores and comments have been updated to reflect developments during the past year.

		2018/19 £m				
Directorate	Programme	Savings proposals	Degree of potential impact 1=Low, 5=High	Numbers potentially affected 1=Low, 5=High	Total	Comments
E&I	Environment & Infrastructure services capitalisation of highways maintenance and review of expenditure and income budgets	8.600	1	2	2	Most of the initiatives included under this heading will be of limited equality relevance. However, screening for potential equality relevance will be required in respect of new and developing proposals.
CFC	Education Services	0.210	5	3	15	This remains an area of considerable equality relevance. Priorities set out in the Council's emerging SEND strategy are key to the achievement of all 3 of the Equality Duty aims. Proposals to restructure NEAT and Adult Learning services will require Equality Impact Analysis. Equality of achievement/outcome (particularly for disadvantaged groups, such as disabled and/or BME young people) will be robustly monitored during the term of the recently implemented contract with Babcock International.
CFC	Other Children, Families & Communities Savings	0.475	2	4	8	Most of the initiatives included under this heading will be of limited equality relevance. However, screening for potential equality relevance will be required in respect of new and developing proposals.
CFC	Libraries	0.200	3	3	9	Any proposed remodelling of Library Services is of equality relevance and will require equality screening/ analysis.
DAS	Innovation Through Systems and Technology	0.950	3	4	12	This programme will have varied relevance dependent on the nature of the technology and the needs of service users and their environments. Each initiative will be assessed for equality impact and inclusive design which maximises the number of potential beneficiaries. The potential impact of reduced human contact for recipients may also be of relevance.
DAS	Learning Disability Services, including review of care	2.306	3	5	15	Any change proposed in respect of replacement care and other aspects of support for service users who have learning disabilities and for their families/carers will be of considerable equality relevance. Thorough assessment of potential equality relevance (including service user and carer engagement) will be carried out. Co-production in service design has the potential to positively influence future care planning. Proposals in respect of the existing 12-week Connect service are of equality relevance and will require careful equality analysis.
DAS	Market Transformation	2.820	3	3	9	A range of providers from whom services can be commissioned at the cost and to the quality required is key to meeting service users' support needs. Protected characteristics (Sexual Orientation or Disability, for example) will continue to be of relevance in care planning and delivery.
DAS	Outcomes based commissioning	2.865	4	1	4	This approach facilitates specification of clear, equality-linked outcomes, where appropriate.
DAS	Other Adult Social Care	0.538	2	4	8	This includes proposals to maximise benefits for service users of adult social care which should have a positive impact. Any decisions relating to changes to housing related support will require equality screening/analysis.
DAS	Optimising Use of Grant Funding eg Better Care Fund	4.200	1	1	1	Use of grant funding on Better Care Fund and has no direct equality relevance
PH	Public Health	1.030	5	3	15	Potential positive impact for Protected Groups where funding targeted towards groups which are known to face health inequality. Prevention and promotion activity is often of relevance in advancing equality of opportunity in the lives of people who have one or more of the Protected Characteristics. Equality analysis will form a key part of the review of existing commitments, for example, prevention of domestic abuse, drug and alcohol misuse and some advocacy support

		2018/19 £m		Degree of potential impact 1=Low, 5=High	Numbers potentially affected 1=Low, 5=High	Total	Comments
Directorate	Programme	Savings proposals					
COaCH	Better Use Of Property	0.150		2	3	6	It is standard practice for refurbishment to comply with disability access requirements. This, together with co location of services, will often benefit service users. Flexible working environments can be challenging for staff (for example those who are deaf, dyslexic or have mental health issues) who benefit from an ordered and consistent work environment.
COaCH	Workforce fit for the future	0.600		1	1	1	Of no direct equality relevance.
COaCH	IT Technical Support	0.250		1	1	1	Of no direct equality relevance.
FIN	Self-Sufficient Council	0.775		1	1	1	Of no direct equality relevance.
FIN	Accounting and finance policy adjustments	5.609		1	1	1	Of no direct equality relevance.

TOTAL **31.578**

Key:

15-25 Substantial level of Due Regard

9-14 Moderate level of Due Regard

1-8 Low level of Due Regard

The level of Due Regard required will also be influenced by the potential cumulative impact of Council programmes for Protected Groups. As programmes progress to detailed implementation their potential cumulative impact will become clearer.