

Assessment of the County Council's Equalities Duty in relation to setting of the 2017/18 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 2017-2018 budget report. Equality scores and comments have been updated to reflect developments during the past year.

Directorate	Programme	2016/17		2017/18		Degree of potential impact 1=Low, 5=High	Numbers potentially affected 1=Low, 5=High	Total	Comments
		£m	£m	£m	£m				
		Budget (net of savings)	Savings	Budget (net of savings proposal)	Savings proposals				
E&I	Drive Efficiencies through Shared Services (Self-Financing):	0.799	0.100	0.832	0.100	1	3	3	The projects included in this programme will only be of equality relevance where substantial change is proposed to an existing, publicly-accessible, service. If this were the intention the equality impact for Protected Groups would be assessed.
E&I	Act Local:	10.286	0.500	0.000	0.000	5	3	15	Of relevance to all Protected Groups both when receiving support and participating in their local community as volunteers. Where the County Council ceases funding for non-statutory support services, the general health and well-being of some of those who have Protected Characteristics could be adversely impacted unless those services can continue to be delivered by volunteers. The success of the Act Local programme therefore has considerable equality relevance. The expiry of the Changing Futures Fund has provided an opportunity for further consideration of the ways in which the Council can most efficiently and effectively support development of community resilience.
E&I	Other E&I Savings:	28.988	0.046	49.947	5.364	2	2	4	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.
E&I	The Open Road:	8.560	0.098	0.000	0.000	1	4	4	The programme area of potential equality relevance is street-lighting. This was assessed prior to the commencement of implementation and no significant equality impact was then (or has since been) identified.
E&I	Transport Operations & Fleet:	19.400	0.192	13.206	0.180	4	3	12	Access to both public and tailored transport is key to advancing equality of opportunity (one of the three aims of the Equality Duty). The beneficiaries of the transport which the Council provides, commissions and subsidises will generally be older people, children or those who have a disability. Change proposals to the ways in which service users' transport needs are met continue to be carefully assessed to determine both positive and negative potential impact. The Independent Travel Training initiative in Children's Services is an excellent example of positive equality impact.
E&I	E&I Management:	0.000	0.162	0.000	0.000	1	1	1	This programme is of very limited equality relevance.
E&I	New Models of Delivery for Cultural Services:	1.383	0.050	0.000	0.000	2	3	6	Where projects include changes to opening hours and increased use of volunteers there is potential for both enhancing and detracting from equality of opportunity for service users and volunteers. Projects will be assessed for equality relevance/impact and mitigating action taken, where appropriate.
E&I	E&I Monitoring:	1.791	0.243	0.000	0.000	2	3	6	There is no project within this programme which has to date been identified as having particular equality relevance.
E&I	New E&I Savings	0.000	0.632	0.000	0.000	1	4	4	There is no project within this programme which has to date been identified as having particular equality relevance.

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CFC	Promoting Improved Educational Outcomes (PIEO):	2.593	1.495	2.864	0.476	5	3	15	This remains an area of considerable equality relevance. 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 CFC Savings:	0.818	0.111	1.275	0.735	2	3	6	There is no project within this programme which has to date been identified as having particular equality relevance, but screening for equality relevance and, where appropriate, more detailed assessment of potential equality impact will be carried out.
CFC	Early Help & Partnership:	9.450	3.590	5.384	1.480	5	4	20	Ongoing development of The 0-19 service has considerable equality relevance (both for children and young people and their families/carers). The planned redesign of the provision of Short Breaks is of considerable equality relevance.
CFC	Children's Social Care (CSC):	3.237	0.714	35.209	1.515	5	3	15	Changes to these services are focused on improvement of outcomes and life chances for children and young people. Equality of outcome is an integral part of this programme.
CFC	Communities:	3.783	0.939	3.020	0.084	3	4	12	programmes included under this heading are of equality relevance. Any proposals in respect of Libraries are always carefully assessed for equality impact and the return of Regulatory Services to the County Council should maximise their potential to inform and assist vulnerable residents.
DAS	New Models of Care:	13.278	2.000	0.000	0.100	5	3	15	Highly relevant in the lives of older and disabled service users and their carers. Demand management (including ongoing development of the Your Life Your Choice) website, revised assessment processes and service/staff restructure all mitigate potential for potential negative impact for these groups.
DAS	Integrated Recovery:	0.000	0.100	1.004	0.000	5	2	10	This ongoing programme is of considerable relevance in the lives of older and disabled patients/service users. The integrated approach has a very significant impact on the nature and effectiveness of the care and support they receive during their recovery and in planning for the future.
DAS	Market Transformation	23.960	3.310	55.644	3.300	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.
DAS	Learning Disability Review of Care	0.000	0.300	51.374	2.560	3	5	15	Changes to available services (including housing) and other aspects of care packages are very relevant to equality of opportunity and outcome for these service users and to their families/carers. 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.
DAS	Other DAS	63.344	1.646	0.000	1.260	2	2	4	Equality relevance will be assessed as necessary.

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DAS	New Technology in Care	0.000	1.900	0.000	0.000	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	Adult Provider Services	0.000	0.800	1.695	0.040	2	2	4	Initiatives will be assessed for equality relevance and impact as necessary
DAS	Future Lives - Monitoring:					4	2	8	A number of the projects included in this programme are substantially complete, though still subject to regular review. Equality implications will have been assessed and mitigated before roll-out. However, one area of particular relevance is Learning Disability employment support where the County Council is actively seeking to identify employment opportunities for service users who have a learning disability.
DPH	Public Health	0.000	0.000	0.101	1.130	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, particularly in respect of areas previously funded through Supporting People (for example, prevention of domestic abuse, drug and alcohol misuse and some advocacy support).
COaCH / FIN	Better Use of Property:	3.751	1.098	1.120	0.290	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 / FIN	Modernising HR	3.030	0.186	2.414	0.170	2	2	4	This programme offers opportunities for improving accessibility of HR applications and increasing the amount of relevant equalities data available to us. These considerations are included in service specifications and ongoing discussion with suppliers, as necessary. Organisations with which we contract are required to support equality of opportunity.

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COaCH / FIN	Digital Strategy	4.188	0.356	3.988	0.367	3	4	12	While technology can be used to empower vulnerable groups and provide methods that enhance service access, due regard will need to be exercised to make sure that an emphasis on access via the Internet and other channels does not disadvantage protected groups who may find it difficult or may be unable to access our preferred channels. The County Council continues to work in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector colleagues to promote and support digital inclusion among disadvantaged groups (many of whom will have one or more of the Protected Characteristics). The Council also takes steps to ensure that its own external website is accessible and that information it contains is clearly written and can be provided in alternative formats.
COaCH / FIN	Customer Access Strategy	0.375	0.191	0.343	0.090	3	4	12	Varied, easy-to-use customer access channels advance equality of opportunity. While all of our services should be available online we recognise that some customers will be unable to access services in this way.
COaCH / FIN	Modernising Legal and Democratic Services	2.593	0.117	1.343	0.035	2	2	4	The Equality Act recognises the need to promote participation in public life of Protected Groups whose engagement is disproportionately low. Modernisation can promote greater engagement where processes and applications are accessible and information is presented in ways which can readily be understood.
COaCH / FIN	Modernising Financial Services	31.188	0.321	31.606	0.244	2	2	4	This programme is of limited equality relevance, though processes and applications need to be accessible to users of assistive technologies.
COaCH / FIN	Commercial & Performance	2.056	0.062	1.904	0.085	2	3	6	Much of this programme will have little direct equality relevance. However, the centralisation of the procurement and contracting function has the potential indirectly to influence equality of outcome, as consistent good practice is promoted among commissioners and service managers.
COaCH / FIN	Other COaCH CEX Services (inc Comms)	1.378	-0.103	0.343	0.373	2	1	2	Of no immediate equality relevance, though future change will require assessment for Equality Relevance.
COaCH / FIN	Self Sufficient Council	0.000	2.510	0.000	0.209	1	1	1	Of no direct equality relevance.
COaCH / FIN	Commissioning:	0.000	0.500	0.000	1.000	1	1	1	Of no direct equality relevance.
COaCH / FIN	Active Alliances	0.000	0.050	0.000	0.100	1	1	1	Of no direct equality relevance.
TOTAL		24.216		21.287					

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.