

# Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Thursday 14 January 2016

## Council Revenue Budget Framework 2016/20 – Impact Assessments

Item number	7.8
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	All

### Executive summary

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This report presents a summary of the main potential equality and rights impacts of proposals described within the draft Revenue Budget Framework 2016/20, and identifies recommendations for mitigating potential negative equality and rights impacts alongside assessments of cumulative impacts.

### Links

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Coalition pledges	All
Council outcomes	All
Single Outcome Agreement	All

## Council Revenue Budget Framework 2016/20 – Impact Assessments

### Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that the members of the Committee:
  - 1.1.1 Pay due regard to the potential equality and rights impacts associated with the revenue budget 2016/20 options, and the recommendations to mitigate potential negative impacts;
  - 1.1.2 Consider the cumulative equality and rights impacts across all revenue budget options; and
  - 1.1.3 Refer this report for consideration at the Council budget meeting on 21 January 2016.

### Background

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- 2.1 The Council's Draft Revenue Budget Framework 2016/20 sets out a series of savings, and additional income proposals. This report presents a summary of equality and rights impact assessments (ERiAs) on these proposals, and of associated mitigating actions to address negative impacts, all of which should inform the budget decision on 21 January 2016.
- 2.2 Under the 'Framework to Advance Equality and Rights 2012-2017', the Council is implementing a five year corporate programme of ERiA development. The programme comprises ongoing ERiAs of existing policies and services, which includes any proposed changes to policies and services. Continual improvement of budget proposals and decisions are a key feature of this programme.
- 2.3 As well as meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 public sector equality duty, and human and children's rights conventions, ERiAs enable the Council to assess the positive and negative impacts on people with protected characteristics in the City. It also enables the development of mitigating actions to counteract negative impacts.

## Main report

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- 3.1 The findings from the annual review of the budget ERIA process identified the need to incorporate an initial proportionality and relevance assessment at the beginning of the development of budget proposals.
- 3.2 Budget proposers were asked in July 2015 to carry out an initial proportionality and relevance assessment of the proposals as they were developing. The purpose of the initial assessment was to determine which protected characteristics might be impacted on, the significance of the impacts and if a full ERIA was required.
- 3.3 Subsequently the potential equalities and rights impacts were reported on the early option proposals that were considered and approved by Council on 22 October 2015.
- 3.4 In September 2015 the 13 initial assessments that identified the need for an ERIA started to gather evidence to be presented to the January committee. The key findings from these ERIs are summarised at 3.8.
- 3.5 The remaining budget proposals are undertaking ERIs throughout the development and implementation stages of the proposal and the ERIA findings and recommendations will be reported to Senior Management Teams, Council Leadership Team and Executive Committees over the coming financial year.
- 3.6 Throughout this process, support and advice was provided by the Equality and Rights Lead Officers in each service area. The Corporate Policy and Strategy Team co-ordinated delivery of the ERIA programme, subsequent analysis and reporting. Completed budget ERIs are published on the Council website and initial assessments can be supplied on request.
- 3.7 In order to ensure that opportunities for coproduction were maximised, the Council's Equality and Rights specialists developed a programme of events to encourage the involvement of organisations working with people with protected characteristics. These were aligned to the Council budget engagement activity and attended by the Budget Engagement Team. The information gathered from the budget engagement process has been analysed for relevance to the Council's equality and rights framework and used as evidence to inform the ERIA analysis of the budget options.
- 3.8 **Summary of the main potential equalities and rights impacts**
  - 3.8.1 Business Support Services – Transformation programme – phase one. The ERIA covers Communications, ICT and Human Resources. *Impacts* - The Business Support integrated services model will consolidate teams, improve processes and align ways of working. This will significantly improve customer relations and ensure the delivery of an efficient and effective customer service. The Review will follow the Council's

Organisational Review Procedure and Recruitment and Selection Policy to make sure all staff are treated with equality and non-discrimination before the law. The review will seek to protect existing flexible or part-time working arrangements. Staff will be assigned to posts in the new structure in accordance with the Protocol for Assignment to Posts. *Mitigation* – Officers will ensure the views of staff/unions are taken into account and help finalise the terms of reference, job descriptions and Protocol for assignment to Posts. There will be continued engagement for those with protected characteristic (as set out in the guidance for stakeholder engagement).

- 3.8.2 Youth Work Redesign (relates to the proposal to reduce third party payments in CLD related services). *Impacts* – Concerns have been raised about limiting the youth work contract to service for young people aged 11-25 and not younger children and how the needs of vulnerable groups such as disabled young people will be met. *Mitigation* - a strategic oversight group will ensure that issues of distribution across the strategic outcomes addressed as part of the grant programme and with contracts. Staff will continue to meet with organisations to discuss implications and inform them that they will have the opportunity to apply to the Communities and Families grants programme. The views of children and young people will continue to be central to the redesign.
- 3.8.3 Adoption allowances for young people aged 18 and over *Impacts* – young adults will have equality and consistency with peers and have access to universal benefits.
- 3.8.4 Review of family and pupil support services *Impacts* – No negative impacts have been identified at this early stage of the review. The review will take into account statutory duties and the delivery of Council outcomes regarding exclusion and priorities in regard to early intervention, the balance of care and securing positive outcomes for children and young people in need. The review will involve all key partners including schools, Police Scotland and Children Services Management Groups and Area Co-ordinators. *Mitigation* - Area Co-ordinators are involved in further development of this proposal and ERIA and ensuring that monitoring of impact is embedded in planning and implementation.
- 3.8.5 Reduce spending on block-contracted services by 10% *Impacts* - There may be impacts arising from this proposal as a result of reduction in levels of contact with vulnerable people. *Mitigation* – Support provider organisations will be asked to make necessary reductions in a way that minimises impact on front line services.

- 3.8.6 Increased charges for residential accommodation, telecare and other local authority charges *Impact* – Paying more in charges for care will not be perceived as positive by service users or their families. However, the financial assessment rules are designed to ensure that people are not charged more than they can afford. The rules for charging for residential care are prescribed by statute and residents do not pay the full cost of residential care. *Mitigation* - The impact of increases in social care charges is mitigated by means-testing. However, the impacts on individuals may be perceived or experienced as significant. Council officers have discretion under the Council’s current charging policy for adult social care to reduce charges in response to evidence of individual hardship.
- 3.8.7 Unblock reablement allowing more people to benefit from improved self-care at lower cost *Impacts* – the reablement approach enhances people’s health and wellbeing by maximising opportunities to undertake daily living activities and provides an environment whereby people can achieve their potential.
- 3.8.8 Reduced funding to Police Scotland *Impacts* - The reduction of funding to community policing will not impact on access to Police Scotland and on core policing duties and responses. However, public perception and media coverage could report the reduction as impacting negatively. *Mitigation* – Any changes to accessing community policing services provided by Police Scotland are publicised and communicated to the public.
- 3.8.9 Commissioned services Housing Support *Impacts* – A reduction in services could result in less support for people in many areas of service delivery. Many services assist clients to access housing, health, care and other services, that they would not be able to access without support. Many services work to eliminate harassment, discrimination and victimisation and to promote understanding of the specific issues facing clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness across the protected characteristics. Services encourage clients to participate in the community and use their voice to influence how services are run. A reduction in service may mean this is no longer supported leaving vulnerable clients without an opportunity to participate in society and influence service delivery. *Mitigation* – The Commissioning Team will work with services to see what the effects will be and update the ERIA and present this with all future updates.
- 3.8.10 Increase parking permit charges *Impacts* – there could be negative impacts for older people, and people on fixed incomes. However, it is hoped that this will encourage, where possible, more motorists to

consider alternative forms of transport. *Mitigation* – Officers would develop a framework to profile individuals by protected characteristics who do not renew or cancel their parking permit due to increased cost. Consideration should be given to broadening the pricing criteria for permits.

3.8.11 Increase pay and display charges *Impacts* – This income generating proposal will support the ongoing delivery of statutory services to the most vulnerable members of our communities. The increase in charges have potential to impact negatively on older drivers, families with young children and pregnant women. *Mitigation* – Officers can develop a promotional campaign to highlight alternative forms of public transport and with partners, develop key indicators to assess the impact of the changes aligned to the Hate Crime Strategy and Transport Charter.

3.8.12 Street lighting repairs *Impacts* – the new approach may impact negatively across all rights as the fear of going out in the dark could restrict attendance to events/organisations where there is a lack of light in and around buildings. If there is no escalation in policy to repair street lights around buildings of significance in terms of protected characteristics there could be an increase in victimisation and harassment. A Gold Command Group has been established in response to the increase in Islamophobia incidents in the City post Paris bombing. *Mitigation* – develop a framework to identify building of significance and localities to enable the Confirm system to automatically categorise the repair classification. A staff development programme to support hate crime identification to be implemented.

3.8.13 Clarence response service *Impacts* – a new approach should enhance rights by increasing road safety and reducing the risk of injury (including the potential for life limiting injury). Potential negative impacts could arise if there was an increase in Category one defects that exceed the reduced number of Defect Repair Squads and access, and/or safeties were comprised. *Mitigation* - A framework to ensure consistent categorisation of defects needs to be developed and implemented across localities. Diversity Officers and Roads Managers to identify key buildings (e.g. place of worship) that may require a higher priority in to the Confirm Works Order Management System. The impact of the repairs of Category 2 defects will be monitored for disproportionate impacts.

3.8.14 Reduce bus stops and shelters maintenance *Impacts* – There could be negative impacts on health and wellbeing if offensive graffiti removal is not put in place. The fear of hate crime incidents may increase due to concerns associated with offensive graffiti. The lack of removal may lead to the normalisation of offensive graffiti. *Mitigation* – Ensure the Councils

Offensive Graffiti Policy is communicated to the new contractor. Use hate Crime analysis to identify hot spots to priorities repairs.

3.8.15 Increase discretionary income – Retail Price Index (RPI) plus 2% - the Council's Corporate Charging Policy explicitly recognises the importance of taking into account both equalities and sustainability-related impacts in the application of charging increases. Many of the Council's charges, particularly those in respect of health and social care are also means-tested and linked to the service user's ability to pay. Given the vast range of services for which charges are levied, the appropriateness of levying the proposed level of increase, and associated mitigating measures, is best undertaken at service level. An overview of actions undertaken as part of this assessment and others where mitigating actions have been identified in the preceding sections will therefore be reported to the Finance and Resources Committee early in the new financial year.

3.9 A significant consideration is the cumulative impacts on people with protected characteristics as a result of revenue budget proposals, and associated changes to services. For example:

3.9.1 Some older citizens and disabled service users may face changes and reductions in the health and social care services that they receive. This may make it more difficult to access free or low cost activities, lead to social isolation, with associated negative health and wellbeing impacts.

3.9.2 Particular demographics of employees may be more negatively affected overall from employee cost reductions across the Council. (e.g. National concerns have been raised regarding part-time/middle-aged female staff being most affected by recession and austerity). Therefore some further analysis of who is most likely to be affected by staffing reductions is required and, if appropriate, action identified to mitigate impacts.

3.10 In line with the Council Equality and Rights Framework lessons learned from this year's budget preparation will be reviewed and incorporated into the Equality and Rights Officer Work Plan.

## Measures of success

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4.1 Due regard to the equality and rights impacts has been given to each of the savings, and additional income budget options.

4.2 The potential equality and rights impacts are taken into account when budget decisions are being made, and recommendations for mitigating negative impacts are implemented and reported on.

- 4.3 The potential cumulative (both annual and incremental) equality and rights impacts are taken into account, and mitigating actions are identified when each year's budget decisions are being made.

## **Financial impact**

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- 5.1 This report identifies the potential risks in relation to equality and rights. The Council could be the subject of a legal challenge if these risks are not considered and addressed. Other financial risks relate to savings derived from preventative services which may result in increased demand on other crisis intervention services.

## **Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact**

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- 6.1 The incorporation of equalities and rights, and carbon impact assessments as an integral part of the budget development process reflects both good practice and relevant legal duties. This activity enables the Council to highlight any unintended consequences of specific proposals on vulnerable service users, climate change and partnership and prevention activity, increasing the effectiveness of the mitigating actions.
- 6.2 The process is also aligned to wider council and Edinburgh Partnership strategies and plans, enabling more effective prioritising of available resources in a way that best supports the needs of vulnerable service users and groups.

## **Equalities impact**

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- 7.1 Undertaking equality and rights impact assessment is intended to ensure that any negative impacts, including cumulative impacts, for protected characteristic groups set by the Equality Act 2010 are reduced.
- 7.2 It also ensures that the Equality Act 2010 public sector equality duty is met with regard to (i) eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment; (ii) advancing equality of opportunity and (iii) fostering good relations, and that any infringements on human and children's rights are minimised.

## **Sustainability impact**

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- 8.1 Carbon impacts assessments have enabled consideration of the public body duties under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The findings of these assessments will also help to achieve a sustainable Edinburgh with regard to progressing climate change, social justice and community wellbeing objectives.



## Consultation and engagement

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- 9.1 Relevant feedback from the budget engagement, that has taken place in the months leading up to budget setting, has informed equality and rights, and carbon impact assessment analysis.

## Background reading/external references

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Draft Council Revenue Budget Framework 2014-2018: Additional Information on Savings Proposals

[A Framework to Advance Equality and Rights 2012-2017](#) (Policy and Strategy Committee, 12 June 2012)

[Draft Council Revenue Budget Framework 2013-2018 – Equality and Rights Impact Assessment](#) and click on Item 4.1(d)

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## Links

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<b>Coalition pledges</b>	All
<b>Council outcomes</b>	All
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	All
<b>Appendices</b>	None