

APPENDIX 9

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. The budget outlined here endeavours to continue to provide appropriate outcomes for all the county's citizens, but as there was insufficient increase in our income to meet inflation, etc, we must implement the savings schemes already approved, together with the package of additional schemes which are in Appendix 3.
2. With savings, there is a possibility for us to have an impact which would disproportionately affect those with protected characteristics, but the departments responsible for the individual savings schemes have held appropriate impact assessments regarding the financial decisions on the savings and cuts presented here. Where appropriate, in Appendix 3, there are comments opposite the individual schemes, or a link to detailed assessments.
3. Our aim was to ensure that our financial decisions conform with the requirements of the Equality legislation, namely:
 - Eliminate illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Promote equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Encourage good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In assessing, the relevant departments attempted to identify how to make the best of every opportunity to improve equality as well as trying to avoid or mitigate any negative effects to the best of their ability.

4. In planning our budgets for the continuation of the Council's services, our accountants have given consideration to equality on every level, by utilising data and evidence in relation to demography and trends by planning at a strategic level. In the same way (but more specific) when coming to decisions on individual savings schemes, the Council's heads of department have collected data, analysed the effect of schemes and monitored appropriately.
5. We have clear regimes for finding savings, which include a full assessment of the impact of savings in terms of equality. The relevant department has analysed each individual scheme, noting if an impact assessment needs to be conducted when developing the project. This will be the procedure with further efficiency savings by 2019/20.
6. The recommended budget does more than meet inflation costs. It also attempts to ensure that unavoidable financial pressures being placed on services (due to greater demands from increasing numbers of clients, pupils, etc) are also addressed by making conscientious and reasonable budgetary decisions (see the additional expenditure requirements, including 'demography', in part 3 of the report).
7. Each service has the right to submit a request for resources if it considers that additional funding is required to ensure that services continue. The sums seen under the "service pressures" heading is recognition that the Council provides sufficient funding to ensure that our financial arrangements do not have a detrimental impact on the level of services provided. Full details are given in Appendix 2 and it can be seen that a substantial part (£1,786,350) of the total sum of permanent revenue bids (£3,060,030) is going to social care, and the majority of the remainder (£1,139,640) will go towards school pupils' special needs.

Here is a presentation on Equality Impact Assessments by the specialist Policy and Equality Officer, together with her observations, specifically about the effect of the savings (she has not commented on other positive aspects of the budget mentioned above, such as care 'bids').

What is an equality impact assessment?

It is very important that consideration be given to people regarding the nine equality characteristics that are protected under the Equality Act 2010 when making decisions about savings. The nine characteristics are as follows - age, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership. Many of these characteristics are common for all people of Gwynedd, e.g. all of our residents have an age and race. The others are characteristics that affect a percentage of the people of Gwynedd, but it is important to bear in mind that people who have a relationship with the individual are also protected, e.g. family, friends, carers (in the case of disability), etc. Without considering the impact on these characteristics, it is not possible for us to ensure that the people of Gwynedd are treated fairly.

The Act also places a general duty on us as a Council to give due attention to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
2. Promote equal opportunities between people that share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relationships between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

It should be noted that the general duty is only relevant for eight of the nine characteristics (it does not include marriage and civil partnership).

Welsh Government has placed further duties on public organisations in Wales, which are specific duties. One of these duties is to carry out an equality impact assessment when considering the introduction of a new policy or when making changes or cuts to a service. Sufficient evidence is required to consider whether the decision would have a disproportionate impact on people who share one or more protected characteristics. There is also a need to assess the impact of its ability to conform to the general duty. We are required to ensure that there is relevant evidence in order to understand the likely or real impact of policies, including the opinions of people who have protected characteristics.

How much emphasis should be given on an equality impact assessment?

Having considered this, the decision makers must give due attention (i.e. appropriate weight) to the results of such assessments. This makes it a requirement to consider taking action to deal with any problems noted, such as dealing with negative impacts, where possible. The fact that an assessment shows an impact does not therefore prevent you from breaching a service level, but the Council must consider every possible way of preventing or mitigating any negative impacts.

Assessing the impact of the savings

The Equality Impact Assessments are available by clicking the link next to the proposal on the table. You will notice that an equality impact assessment has not been completed for each proposal. Of course, each service, when preparing to submit its proposals, had a responsibility to look at whether there was an impact. If there is no impact on people with protected characteristics, there is no need to complete an equality impact assessment. Sometimes, it would become clear that there was no impact when completing the assessment, and these assessments have been submitted as summaries. Although the Equality and Policies Officer has given an input,

it was the responsibility of the Department to determine whether an equality impact assessment was required. A summary is also available in the table but it is extremely important that everyone reads the full assessments in order to obtain the full picture of the impacts on different cohorts of people.

Results of the Equality Impact Assessments

By looking at the equality impact assessments, you will notice that the proposals have a greater impact on some protected characteristics than others. The cumulative impact on people in such a situation should always be considered. Some of the assessments show that the greatest impact is on disabled people, older people and children, be that negative or positive. Bearing in mind that people who have a relationship with a person with protected characteristics are also protected, the impact on carers and parents should therefore also be noted. Having said that, it must be borne in mind that the Council has considered a large amount of other savings and has attempted to select those with the least impact on the overall population in addition to people with protected characteristics. The assessments also show the measures that will be taken, if possible, to mitigate any negative impact highlighted.

Another factor for consideration is poverty. Although it is not a protected characteristic, statistics show that people with some equality characteristics are more likely to be poor than the rest of society. This includes families of disabled people, some people from ethnic minorities and families with children. Some of the proposals will have a detrimental impact on some of these people.

Location must also be considered when looking at the impact. Some of the proposals impact specific areas, but no clear cumulative impact has currently been identified. This will need to be assessed further when developing the assessments as the proposals mature.

It is also important to consider the impact these savings will have on staff members. Some staff members will lose their jobs or will have to change their job. As approximately 70% of the Council's workforce are women, it is unavoidable that these savings will have a greater impact on women.