

## Bath and North East Somerset Council

### Three year budget; year 3: 2015/16 – equality analysis

#### 1 Introduction

- a. This document provides a mechanism to understand the broader community impacts of proposals made as part of the 2015/16 financial planning process.
- b. The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual because of certain personal characteristics. It also places a duty on public sector bodies to consider the impact of decisions on groups of people with protected characteristics, and identify opportunities to counter discrimination and promote equality (the 'equality duty').
- c. The Council's Human Resources policies already ensure there is proper consultation and consideration of staffing matters and that employment-related equality issues are fully taken into account.
- d. Equality issues are considered as part of decision-making and where service reductions or closures are proposed; proportionate equality analysis is carried out and published.
- e. The majority of budget savings will be achieved by internal efficiencies and additional income generation activity rather than through service cuts or disproportionate increases in charges.
- f. The Council three year financial plan was agreed in 2013; full equality analysis was carried out and the cumulative impact report for the three-year financial plan was considered.
- g. To date, as a result of carrying out the medium, term service resource plans, no further or additional adverse effects requiring mitigation have been identified.
- h. Detail on the nature and makeup of our population against key equality groups are continually updated and are provided through links to our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: [JSNA](#).
- i. During period 2014-15 we have not experienced changes in service demand or population change that will affect the three-year financial plan proposals. However we are continually reviewing intelligence and data that are reflected in individual equality analysis/impact assessment documents.

## 2 Bath & North East Somerset Council's approach to equality & diversity

- a. B&NES council takes a proportionate approach to equality where service leads complete, when necessary, a simple analysis template enabling the Council to demonstrate that we have met the equality duty and "paid due regard" to equality. This approach helps to ensure that services are tailored to the needs of all service users in particular vulnerable people.
- b. Training in equality issues is provided largely in-house by the Equality Team (comprising 1.8 staff) through the corporate training standard programmes alongside bespoke customised training, briefings and updates

## 3 Capital investment:

- a. It is considered that there are no specific adverse impacts on individuals or groups of people with protected characteristics within the continuing capital programme of works.
- b. Positive improvement of facilities within the capital programme include:
  - the completion of the Civic Centre and staff offices at Keynsham
  - the continuation of programme of improving access for Disabled people into public buildings and spaces (the Equality Act capital programme of works').
  - Improvement of the quality of substandard footways in the area with a result of increasing independence for older people, Disabled people and those with young children.
  - Consideration of the improvement of the riverside path as part of the transport strategy along with River Corridor and RoSPA safety works if approved will deliver environmental, safety and usage improvements to the River Avon, specifically the stretch within the city of Bath. It is anticipated that this will have benefits for all residents and visitors to Bath city, however specific beneficial effects are expected for gypsy travellers (boat dwellers), students and young people.
  - The consideration of the leisure facility modernisation (refurbishment of Bath and a newly built centre at Keynsham) if approved, will address some of the long standing issues of limited access for some Disabled people and people with long term health conditions.

- The consideration of the Saw Close pedestrianised highway ‘shared’ space will be influenced by the current ‘street scape’ audit being carried out (due to report during April 2015). The audit is consulting with Disabled people and key stakeholders to identify possible improvements to the built environment in the city centre.

#### 4 Revenue proposals and one-off funding:

- a. It is considered that the additional spend proposals are a positive demonstration of how we are committed to protecting front line services and our staff and how these revenue proposals may go towards mitigating some of the wider effects of our financial decisions.
- b. These include but are not exclusive to:
  - Meeting the costs associated with the changes to the provisions for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
  - Costs arising from the implementation of the Care Act
  - Maintaining the Welfare Support Scheme and local food banks.
  - Implementing the Living Wage for Council staff and for non-teaching schools staff (for one year for schools).
  - Implementing the Green Deal: Energy at Home scheme
  - Supporting the proposed adult advice and information strategy.
  - The delivery of the Council’s Advice Services Strategy and protect as far as possible the universal services currently provided under contract to the Council.

#### 5 Actions taken

- a. Equality issues identified in the three-year budget were addressed at Policy Development and Scrutiny meetings in their consideration of medium term plans. Where services reductions were deemed necessary, interventions were made to minimise the effects.
- b. In implementing service reductions, consideration was given to any substantial negative impact on vulnerable people and avoided wherever possible including, for example, ensuring that cuts in voluntary sector funding (when commissioned) are kept to a minimum; that there is investment in supporting communities to gain better access to services will not affect our most vulnerable communities.

## 6 Mitigations; positive actions, projects and interventions

- a. Some recent examples of how the Council is committed to delivering services that meet the needs of our diverse community include but are not exclusive to:
  - Development of a new One Stop Shop, partners' areas and community space in Keynsham has improved access to services and information for people outside the Bath city area; improvements to the entrance to the One Stop Shop and Shop Mobility at Lewis House in Bath further ensuring that all customers including people with mobility impairment have improved and often instant access to public services and to information. Closer working with external partners has greatly improved the way we identify and provide appropriate services for our communities.
  - Through working with partners in our One Stop Shops we aim to provide the right intervention at the right time to help those at risk or to stop people falling more into risk. (Our key partners include Housing, Social Care, Family Information Services, Curo, Learning Partnership West and Bristol Credit Union.)
  - Research into the needs of vulnerable people trying to access health and public services has been carried out and the findings have been integrated into the JSNA. This includes the needs of gypsy travellers and boat dwellers, Black minority ethnic communities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. The results have influenced commissioning decisions of services across the public sector in B&NES. Further research during 2015 is being carried out into the needs of older people; those with sensory impairment and into the efficacy of social prescribing for people with mental ill health.
  - The Council continues to address the difficulties faced by families and households through the 'connecting families' project, focussing on households with at least one young person with education absence of greater than 15%; those involved in housing related anti-social behaviour, and young offenders. Research shows there are over 300 households meeting one or more of these criteria.
  - In order to deliver good services that meet people's needs, we use the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to work closely with our partners in providing good services that in turn help us to address inequality. The use of the JSNA is instrumental in assisting the Council and our partners to make difficult decisions about budget and spending priorities, we refer to this as 'evidence based commissioning'.