

Appendix 6

Equality analysis on budget proposals, January 2016

1. Introduction and legal background

This appendix outlines how the impact(s) of the Council's budget proposals have been fully considered from an equalities perspective within the People & Communities Directorate Plan, the Place Directorate Plan and the Resources Directorate Plan. Budget proposals in each of the Directorates have been considered individually and alongside each other in order to identify and mitigate any unexpected or unintentional cumulative impacts.

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual because of certain personal characteristics ('protected characteristics'). The law also requires that equality issues are considered as part of decision making and where reductions or closures are proposed. In B&NES Council, proportionate 'equality analysis' is carried out to demonstrate that the Council is meeting its legal duties to pay 'due regard' to equality.

2. Actions so far

Potential equality impacts were initially identified through templates where budget proposals from all three Directorates were set out. The initial proposals set the high level intentions, with the finer detail expected as the proposals developed. The initial proposals did identify if service redesign was proposed and, where enough data was available, the cumulative impact upon different groups. These templates were presented to Elected Members during September 2015, and requests for further working up of many of the proposals/ business ideas was requested.

Now that the above mentioned budget proposals have been worked up into more specific plans, detailed equality analysis has been carried out on the areas which are likely to have an impact upon customers and staff in respect of one or more protected characteristics. This includes likely adverse impacts (and associated mitigations where possible), and also positive impacts.

3. Directorate Proposals

Across the Council, every attempt has been made to achieve efficiencies without service cuts or through disproportionate increases in charges. It should also be noted that 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.

In the sections that follow, budget proposals from each of the three directorates are listed where equality analysis has been undertaken, with a summary of the key issues emerging.

4. People & Communities Directorate - equality analysis

Equality analysis has been undertaken on the following:

1. Adult Social Care Placements & Packages Inflation
2. Adult Social Care Social Work and Safeguarding Activity
3. Adult Social Care Older people over 65
4. Adult Social Care Mental Health Over 65
5. Adult Social Care Learning Disabilities
6. Adult Social Care SC People with Physical Disabilities
7. ASC Mental Health in Adults of Working Age
8. Sirona Care and Health Contract review
9. Sheltered Housing Support Service (Banded)
10. Substance Misuse provider organisations
11. Healthy Lives, Healthy People Community Grants Scheme
12. Health Improvement Programmes
13. Prioritisation and efficiency within the public health intelligence work
14. Sexual Health Portfolio
15. School Improvement redesign
16. Redesign of Family Information Service/One Stop Shop delivery
17. Schools Capital Team
18. The Music Service redesign

5. Key issues emerging within People & Communities equality analysis

5.1 A focus on prevention

a. Adult Social Care proposals include managing demands arising due to demographic change within Mental Health (adults of working age); Mental Health (over 65); older people over 65; People with learning disabilities; and people with physical disabilities. To achieve this there will be a greater emphasis on evidenced based prevention, early intervention and self-care. Practitioners will use their professional judgment to put in place personalised services, based upon outcomes rather than “inputs” or “outputs”. This will involve balancing the needs of individual people against what is both affordable and also sustainable. This may mean, in some instances, that a more limited range of choices are available to an individual, with adverse impacts for service users (older people, disabled people and carers). This could lead to increased challenge, including possible legal challenge.

5.2 A new relationship with customers

a. In respect of the **SEN Transport budget**, independent travel (with appropriate support) will be promoted where possible, with transport provided to meet the needs of those who are unable to travel independently. Parents and carers may be anxious that support they are currently receiving will simply be cut. This is not planned, and support will be reviewed and discussed fully with parents and carers, to ensure full

consideration of the family's needs are taken into account. This proposal aims to ensure the greatest amount of support is given to those who need it most. Specialist consultancy advice will help us to undertake wider consultation on this proposal, and will ensure that the needs of disabled young people and their parents/carers are taken into account (across all impairments whether these are physical, mental or sensory). Alternative options, such as mileage allowances for parents/carers or a move to community transport (where appropriate) may be more beneficial than current arrangements. Any new arrangements set up will need to be risk assessed in relation to road safety and also in relation to any other risk such as bullying.

5.3 An efficient business

a. Reviewing the **Sirona Care and Health Contract** will ensure that adult social care services are as effective as possible and represent best value and fit for the future. This approach will be informed by a review of adult social care services by an independent organisation PeopleToo, which has considerable experience of working with commissioners and providers of integrated health and social care services to improve value. PeopleToo will assist both Sirona and commissioning staff with learning from other areas on what works. This proposal is very closely linked to the Your Care, Your Way Community Services review and redesign.

b. The **Adult Social Care Placements and Packages inflation** proposal means that fees will be restructured for care homes to better reflect complexity and acuity of individual rather than notional 'service users groupings' such as "Older Person", "Adult with a Learning Disability". This move to a "banded" fee structure will more appropriately reflect individual need and the true cost of meeting those needs. There is a risk that providers might seek to reduce staffing costs by recruiting less experienced and/or trained/qualified staff, including from overseas, potentially with limited English, which could then result in a decline in service quality or safety. Close monitoring of care home quality and safety as part of existing quality assurance and safeguarding processes will mitigate this risk.

c. Reviewing the **Sheltered Housing Support Service (Banded)** contract will help to improve service user outcomes and secure better value for money. A more focused service with revised service user outcomes may mean reduced access to this service for some older people (the majority of users), and, possibly, a very small number of younger disabled people. However, this potential adverse impact will be mitigated by the following. Firstly, there is little evidence that service users are currently enjoying a benefit from receiving the service over and above that achieved by occupancy of sheltered housing. Secondly, the service will continue with a revised specification. Thirdly, those with higher levels of need will be able to access other services evidenced to be delivering good outcomes for older people (also funded by the Council), including the Independent Living Service.

d. **Substance Misuse** services will be redesigned through the commissioning of more time focused services that concentrate on people with more complex needs

and/or people eligible for a statutory service. Service users most likely to be affected include people with alcohol/drug addiction, those with lower level mental health need (i.e. those who do not currently meet the criteria for statutory services provision), carers, homeless people and young people). The two providers, DHI and SDAS (part of AWP) have been working closely with commissioning managers from the Council/CCG to help shape the service redesign with the least adverse impact possible through the following measures which include: co-location of services/offices; reduction in tiers of management; increases in community detox rather than residential rehabilitation (evidence suggests community detox, which is less costly, is likely to be more successful); greater emphasis on group/peer support sessions rather than 1-1; and ensuring smaller teams of staff have a greater skill mix.

e. There will be efficiencies within **public health intelligence work**. The contract with the Commissioning Support Unit will be ended. However, the majority of services will be provided by other contracts.

f. The proposal to reduce commissioned preventative services across a range of **public health improvement programmes** will have impacts across a number of protected characteristics. These programmes tend to target/be taken up by some of our most vulnerable communities, from our most deprived areas. There are attempts to target support to where it is needed most (for example, passport to health will be more targeted to benefit people in the most deprived wards and older people, along with promoting mental wellbeing; the smoking service will move towards a more targeted service focusing resources on those most in need). There are potential adverse impacts upon people with learning disabilities. For example, the '*Feel Good foods*' programme: given that people with Learning disabilities are at greater risk of becoming overweight/obese – (and there is a gap in current service provision for this group), this will need to be mitigated by being embedded into future specification for day services. There is also potential for reduction in cycling for disabled children and adults in relation to the Wheels for All funding. However, attempts are being made to set up an externally provided core service and to develop a sustainable future for the project. The PSHE training programme element may mean that young people have less awareness in relation to sexual health and drug taking – which could result in more young people presenting to sexual health and drug services. The significant reduction in the scope and scale of play services for children means that there will no longer be a universal offer, but instead will be available to a reduced number of targeted families. In mitigation, training on active play is being provided through the Director of Public Health Award.

g. **Sexual health preventative and treatment services** will be redesigned by ending contracts, reducing contract values and changing service specifications. This will have a number of impacts. The equality analysis that has been carried out so far has outlined the potential barriers that reconfiguring any service has upon hard to reach groups or groups that for any reason may find it harder to access centralised services. These considerations include additional impacts on women (because for women to have the same control over their fertility they need to have access to a

greater variety of contraception methods when compared to men). The withdrawal of some sexual health services may have a disproportionate impact on predominantly high frequency male users of the service (e.g. MSM). For some BME people, and for people from particular faith groups, there may be additional barriers if there is a move away from anonymous screening which may not be available through GP accessed services. It should be noted that B&NES LA has a legal mandate to commission comprehensive, open access, confidential sexual health services that are available to all people who are present in the area (whether resident in that area or not). Any reconfiguration of services will ensure this mandate is met. Once detailed proposals have been agreed with our service providers a fuller equality analysis can be undertaken.

h. Public Health has given Quartet notice of their intention to cease funding (£20K per annum) the **Healthy Lives, Healthy People's grant scheme**. The scheme awards small grants to community projects that aim to reduce health inequalities, improve health and mental wellbeing across B&NES and reduce loneliness and isolation. The scheme encourages applications from vulnerable groups including disabled people (particularly those with poor mental health, carers and Gypsy/ travellers. In mitigation of the loss of this scheme, grants available were small and time limited. Groups can still apply for Supporting Communities funds provided by the Council where these relate to mental health and directly to Quartet who are able to advice on alternative opportunities.

i. Redesigning services providing information for the public, specifically by **combining the specialist Family Information Service with the One Stop Shop** service may mean less opportunity for one-to-one contact between officers and customers – particularly parents and carers who currently access the FIS. However, this can be mitigated by having information available through web-based and other channels in line with Customer First principles and as part of a combined One Stop Shop.

j. The proposal to make changes to the **Schools Capital Team** will maximise the opportunities to charge the relevant costs of officer time within the team to specific capital projects, resulting in a saving of approximately £50,000 out of a budget of several million. Disabled access improvements will still be prioritised, even with slightly less in the budget.

k. The **Music Service redesign** proposal will involve a reorganisation in ways of working (including efficiencies in invoicing, and generating extra income from training staff in schools). There will also be an increase in fees, which may mean that some schools and lower income families may feel they can no longer afford music tuition. In mitigation, ensemble work/group lessons are cheaper to run, and could provide a more affordable option. Schools could also use pupil premium funds to support music lessons.

6. Place Directorate – Equality analysis

Equality analysis has been undertaken on the following:

1. Arts Development Grants reductions
2. Film Office review
3. Developing the Digital and WiFi network
4. Improving the visitor economy (markets/pop ups and events)
5. Homeless Prevention Fund (repatriation to support existing Housing services)
6. Homesearch scheme income fees and charges
7. Reducing the Housing Renewal budget
8. Disabled facilities grant service (bringing it in house)
9. Consolidation of administrative functions across Community Regeneration
10. Bath Quays Development
11. Passenger transportation Services review
12. Public Transport concessionary fares
13. SEN Home to school transport
14. School crossing patrols
15. Reviewing parking charges
16. Development of Parks as Wedding locations
17. Bereavement Services review
18. Bereavement Services income generation
19. Recycling Centres opening hours
20. Recycling street sweepings
21. Neighbourhood planning support
22. Ceasing printing and posting applications for parish consultations
23. Improved/increased pre application review service for Planning Services
24. Public Protection and Health Improvement Service redesign
25. Bringing water monitoring in-house
26. Centralising the Place Directorate business services

7. Key issues emerging within Place equality analysis

7.1 A strong economy and growth

a. **Bath Quays North development** is a flagship employment destination for Bath which will improve our economy, and bring employment opportunities and the potential for increased skills and salary levels – which will be of benefit to all economically active people locally. The project will involve improvements to the environment (e.g. improved disabled access to the river frontage through widened footways), and also improvements in terms of security and personal safety (through the Secure by Design standard and Park Mark).

There are a number of safety issues, particularly in relation to young adults and the student population, which are being considered as a central focus of this project due to the tragic river deaths in Bath over recent years. The design of play areas will need to take account of the proximity of the river and associated safety issues. In addition, vehicular and pedestrian ‘shared space’ is part of the design and there may be conflicts over potential barriers and access issues for people with visual

impairment. Consultation with local groups such as Deaf Plus Vision Plus will take place to ensure the use of appropriate materials and also that layouts are arranged to minimise risks. Where risks cannot be mitigated, there will always be the option to segregate vehicles and pedestrians.

b. The **reduction in Arts Grants** means that less applications will be successful. In mitigation, Bath and North East Somerset Council has developed a creative and cultural strategy with the arts and cultural community and established a Cultural Investment Board. These provide an opportunity for organisations to work together with major funders to deliver joint projects where appropriate. Whilst there are no specific equality implications within this proposal, it links to broader economic development strategies as the funding provided helps create and maintain a cultural and creative heritage locally.

7.2 A new relationship with customers and communities

a. The proposed changes to the **opening hours of our Recycling Centres** will ensure consistency throughout the year. Whilst there are potential impacts on age, disability and residents with particular working patterns, these impacts will be mitigated by the continuation of assisted collections and/or additional assistance at our recycling centres for disabled people, and a clear communication strategy regarding changes to opening hours to avoid unnecessary travel. There will need to be a clear and comprehensive communications plan once the decisions have been made. This will be available in a variety of formats to meet the needs of disabled people and those who have English as an additional language. We will continue to do targeted campaign work with the transient student population to ensure the services are publicised and understood

b. The **Strategic Transport Review** proposal (including Supported Buses and Community Transport) has the aim of meeting customer needs whilst making more use of community transport options to make the services more efficient. Even though only small numbers of people are likely to be affected in the event of a withdrawal of a Supported Bus service, it is acknowledged that there may be additional adverse impact upon disabled passengers, older passengers and young people.

c. In respect of the **SEN Transport budget**, independent travel (with appropriate support) will be promoted where possible, with transport provided to meet the needs of those who are unable to travel independently. Parents and carers may be anxious that support they are currently receiving will simply be cut. This is not planned, and support will be reviewed and discussed fully with parents and carers, to ensure full consideration of the family's needs are taken into account. This proposal aims to ensure the greatest amount of support is given to those who need it most. Specialist consultancy advice will help us to undertake wider consultation on this proposal, and will ensure that the needs of disabled young people and their parents/carers are taken into account (across all impairments whether these are physical, mental or sensory).

Alternative options, such as mileage allowances for parents/carers or a move to community transport (where appropriate) may be more beneficial than current arrangements. Any new arrangements set up will need to be risk assessed in relation to road safety and also in relation to any other risk such as bullying.

d. The proposal relating to the **provision of school crossing patrols** for Academies will have little or no impact should an Academy pay the Council to continue the service, or replace the Council provided crossing patrol with one of their own staff members (e.g. a caretaker). The Council can provide training and possibly some equipment to support this approach. Another possible mitigation could be for the Council to provide alternative infrastructure to provide schools with crossing facilities. Infrastructure improvements would benefit other users at all times of the day, particularly disabled people with mobility or sensory impairments. In addition, the Council's Educational Road Safety service could also help young people to manage road safety risks, and 'Safer Routes to School' and crossing infrastructure near schools could be prioritised in the highways capital programme. In taking forward this proposal, consideration will be given to the potential impacts upon the safety of children and young people, and the possible knock on effects of an increase in traffic congestion near schools (if parents/carers decide it is no longer safe for their child to walk to school).

e. Continued support for the **neighbourhood planning process** will help people in local communities to have more influence over their local surroundings. Plans will be focused on improvements and local development such as community buildings, community facilities and play areas. Officers can give advice throughout the plan making process on how to overcome physical barriers in relation to disabled access (e.g. lack of dropped curb provision, pavement widths, avoiding stepped access or offering alternative access) and also on other considerations relating to safety and security (such as street lighting and the layout of public spaces and squares).

f. Through improvements to the **pre-planning support process**, officers can ensure that full consideration is given to improving disabled access, and also consider issues relating to safety and security.

7.3 An efficient business

a. The proposal to **cease printing and posting applications for parish consultations** will bring all of our processes into a fully digital consultation model. For many disabled people, the move towards electronic communication makes access to the planning process more accessible, as documentation can be accessed for a variety of places (home, libraries, Council offices). Some older people may be less used to electronic information. However, we can offer support with this, and can also make paper copies available on request if there is no other option available. As currently, officers can take extra time to explain planning documentation if needed. The Local Plan (or excerpts from it) can be made available in a variety of different formats on request.

- b. Allocating a proportion of the **DCLG Homelessness Prevention Fund** in a different way will have a limited impact for an external provider: a disproportionate number of service users are men, who may be impacted upon by this reduction in support. However it is anticipated that this limited shortfall will be met through their fundraising and charitable work. As a Council we still continue to run a range of services to this sector including the Homefinder's Scheme which provides financial assistance to our clients seeking private rented sector accommodation.
- c. The proposal in relation to **Disabled Facilities Grant** means that smaller scale jobs will be dealt with/administered in-house. This will increase continuity for clients and fits well with our 'One Stop Shop' model. Larger, more complex builds will still be dealt with by Care and Repair.
- d. As there has been a historic underspend, there are no anticipated adverse impacts from the proposal to **reduce the housing renewal budget** for loans provided for essential improvements for people on low income, older people, disabled people and otherwise vulnerable owner-occupiers.
- e. Plans to develop the visitor economy, through **markets and pop up events**, brings with it opportunities for a wide range of events (such as 'continental markets') that offer opportunities for a diverse range of products to meet diverse community/visitor interests. The experience gained from the running of the Bath Christmas Market will help to ensure that disabled access throughout B&NES during events will be maintained (e.g. not obstructing dropped curbs, ensuring hazards on pavements are kept to a minimum).
- f. The proposals to generate more income through the **Film Office** and through the development of **parks as wedding locations** will be undertaken in a way that ensures disabled access issues are considered. Clear and accessible information will need to be made available to the public about park spaces and venue accessibility. The Film Office will continue to use its existing experience and expertise to ensure that full consideration is given to issues of disabled access when filming is taking place.
- g. We will explore service delivery options for the Council's **Bereavement Services**, and this will involve a programme of consultation with service users as part of the decision making process. The review may bring increased training/development and career opportunities for staff, and any contracted services with external providers will meet the Council's equality standards. It is anticipated that we will be able to improve facilities for disabled service users with increased investment. Bereavement services have developed excellent practice in relation to meeting different cultural and faith requirements, and this will continue as part of any new arrangements.
- h. The **Public Protection and Health Improvement** proposal will involve the service redesign of a number of functions, some of which could include joint working with North Somerset Council. In any service redesign, we will continue to prioritise high risk businesses and activities along with our most vulnerable customers who are most in need. There will also be opportunities for us to develop a new relationship

with our customers through the increased use of technology where possible and to further develop business support in order to generate income.

i. The proposal to review **Parking charges** links to our Joint Local Transport Plan (two of the key aims of which are encouraging sustainable travel and easing congestion). There are no identified impacts relating to protected characteristics, but it is likely that if charges were to increase this could have a small impact upon people who are on a low income. However, in mitigation, there are options to pay for shorter duration season tickets (e.g. one month at a time) which still offer a discount on the standard daily charge.

8. Resources directorate - equality analysis

Equality analysis has been undertaken on the following:

1. Developing a new housing company
2. Energy initiatives
3. Welfare support and connecting families - payments by results (*pending*)
4. ICT resources/staffing structure
5. The phasing out of cash and cheque payments

9. Issues arising from Resources equality analysis

9.1 A focus on prevention

a. The proposal to develop a **local energy supply tariff** has the potential to reduce energy costs for everyone, and to get a better deal for those currently paying the highest costs who are on the lowest incomes. This proposal would specifically help people who are currently unable to access the lowest cost tariffs (as they are only available to people with direct debit payment facilities). Disabled people and older people are more likely to fall into the fuel poverty category, and would also therefore be likely to benefit from this proposal.

b. The energy services programme relating to **policy loan investments in renewable energy** or sustainable local energy infrastructure will not only meet various carbon reduction initiatives, but will also bring about local economic benefits and health and wellbeing improvements. It is expected that each project will benefit every community member, as they will contribute to making local communities more sustainable and resilient.

9.2 A new relationship with customers and communities

a. Aligning the **Welfare Support and Connecting Families** programme and developing payment by results for DWP support will bring with it wider community benefits, through the support offered to vulnerable families and individuals with complex needs. A 'payment by results' approach will enable the measurement of

tangible outcomes, including benefits to the family/individual, the community and public services. The anticipated benefits to the community include reductions in anti-social behaviour and crime, and the creation of stronger and more sustainable communities.

9.3 An efficient business

a. The creation of a **new property company** to provide market rate housing to rent on council land, vacant accommodation above shops and housing returned to the Council via the housing transfer agreement with Curo, will enhance equality in respect of disabled access (as housing will be designed to comply with Equality Act requirements). The property company will also need to comply with the Council's policies for the creation of affordable homes.

b. The proposal to **reduce ICT staff resources** following the creation of new staffing structures will improve customer access to services (e.g. through more self-service options, speedier access and response times). This will be delivered by our increasingly 'digital' workforce, with different devices to enable more efficient working. As is the case at the moment, suppliers will be asked to find solutions on a case by case basis where there are particular disability access requirements for members of staff. Alternative options will be considered, depending upon the needs of individual staff members.

c. The **phasing out of cash and cheque payments** may have particular impacts upon some older people who are less familiar with, or have limited access to, web based payment options. Similarly there could be difficulties for some people on low incomes who do not have access to appropriate banking facilities to set up direct debits etc. To mitigate this, staff and partners in our One Stop Shops will provide additional support during the transition period to those customers facing difficulties in order to help them find workable solutions.

10. Cumulative impacts and recommendations

The overarching themes contained within this report relate to the following five main areas:

10.1 The need to consider cumulative impact. A number of the proposals within the People & Communities Directorate Plan contain potential adverse impacts upon disabled people (e.g. health improvement programme proposals, Adult Social Care proposals, SEN transport proposals, Healthy Lives, Healthy People's grant scheme). These same proposals also contain potential adverse impact upon people who are on a low income, or who live in some of our most deprived communities. Whilst considerations of socio-economic status are not a requirement of the Equality Act public sector duty, the 'narrowing the gap' agenda remains a key focus for the Council and partners. Whilst there are a number of opportunities being taken to

advance equality for disabled people within the Place proposals (e.g. in relation to improved physical access), there is the potential for an increased/cumulative impact upon disabled people in relation to Supported buses and SEN transport. It will be important to ensure that these proposals are considered alongside each other as further details are developed (and within any consultation), in order to identify the specific details of cumulative impact upon some of our most vulnerable communities.

10.2 Inclusive consultation. Where consultation is arranged as part of taking any of these proposals forward, it is vital that a diverse range of people take part to ensure that any additional equalities impacts are highlighted and addressed. A variety of methods should be used to access consultees, and the Equalities Team can advise on this and also on how to access participants from groups representing different equality strands. The [Independent Equalities Advisory Group](#) can also provide further guidance on likely impacts, and ways of mitigating these.

10.3 Clear communication. Wherever it is planned to introduce changes, it is important to ensure that the communication and publicity strategies are accessible to disabled people (i.e. those with visual impairments, or learning disabilities etc.) and also those for whom English is an additional language. The Council has commissioned Language Empire to assist with [Interpreting and Translation](#) where necessary.

10.4 Workforce training and development. A number of the proposals contained within this report hinge upon the ability of officers to recognise opportunities where it is possible to further advance equality (for example, to improve disabled access to facilities/services). It is also important that officers are aware of and sensitive to the particular needs of different groups of people. Equalities training is available as part of the Corporate Training offer, and bespoke training can also be arranged by the Council's Equalities Team.

10.5 Commissioning specifications. Where proposals include commissioning or recommissioning external providers, detailed equalities requirements should be built into contract specifications. This will ensure that best practice relating to equality in delivery of services is continued and improved upon when delivered by external partners.

11. Further information

For further details of the equality analysis undertaken on these budget proposals please contact Louise Murphy, Corporate Equality Officer
Louise_murphy@bathnes.gov.uk; or email equality@bathnes.gov.uk;