Equality in the budgeting process

- *How were equalities issues taken into consideration in allocating budgets in 2012-13? (Please describe the process undertaken)*

Priority Based Budgeting (PBB) across all services is the recognised process by which Aberdeen City Council prepares a draft budget for consideration by Elected Members and approval by Council in February of each year. The PBB process takes account of Scottish Government budget allocation, local income generation opportunities and anticipated cost pressures. Budget decisions were considered in the following categories—efficiencies, changing the nature of service delivery and options to stop or reduce services.

The outcome of the PBB exercise was integrated into the council’s five year business plan, which identifies the priorities and essential services which the council seeks to deliver over the next five years. The PBB exercise was undertaken within the overall context, to ensure that there is achievement of the corporate strategies and objectives of the Council.

The Council approved its 2012/13 General Fund Revenue Budget on 9 February 2012 which set the budget for this financial year and agreed the implementation of a number of service options. The five year business plan for 2012/13 to 2016/17 was also approved at the 9 February 2012 Council budget meeting.

Aberdeen City Council used its Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) tool to assess the impact of the options outlined in the Five Year Priority Based Budget Plan on the diverse groups within the city. The process allowed us to ensure we could meet our commitments set out in our Single Equality Scheme and to meet our statutory Race, Disability and Gender Equality Duties.

As part of the PBB process, each proposed budget saving option required the completion of an EHRIA. This included consideration of evidence to identify the potential positive or negative impacts of a budget proposal i.e. consultations and research that may have taken place, officer knowledge and experience, use of equality monitoring data and user feedback. If any negative impact was identified, then the EHRIA would contain information to highlight the mitigating action. The EHRIAs were presented as part of a package on Budget Proposals to all councillors. In this way, elected members were provided with information, results of research and consultation to take into account when making budget decisions.

- *Was the approach taken for the 2012-13 budget any different from that taken in 2011-12? (If YES, please describe what changed in your approach)*

The approach taken for 2012/13 was the same approach used in 2011/12. Each budget proposal for savings and proposed growth involved the completion of an EHRIA to allow elected members to make informed decisions and to ensure they were to meet their policy commitment to target services to people withmost need. For example, in the 12/13 budget the Council approved £2,250 million growth to the
Education, Culture and Sport service which allowed the service to increase services to children young people and families most in need.

- **Can you provide any examples of how equalities considerations influenced agreed budgets? (Please provide up to THREE examples)**

1. Education, Culture and Sport service makes decisions about the number of teachers it allocates to all schools using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. This weighting means that additional teachers are allocated to both primary and secondary schools in the city that have a higher number of children living in areas of deprivation. This allows schools to offer the additional support to pupils with the most needs.
2. The decision to review the allocation of pupil support assistants in primary and secondary schools and the completion of the EHRIA ensured that the final pupil support assistant staff allocation to schools was based on identified need rather than an historical allocation, and this provided significant efficiency savings.
3. The review of the Communities Service and the completion of the EHRIA ensured that the newly designed service could focus its activity in the neighbourhoods of the city with the families most in need of youth work, adult learning, family and childcare service support and to better meet current need.

**Equalities in mainstream services**

- **For your three most significant mainstream services (in terms of cost), please provide details of** -

The three most significant mainstream services in the Education, Culture and Sport service are Schools, Community Culture and Sport and Policy and Performance.

**a) The total budget for this service in 2011-12 and 2012-13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source ACC Budget Booklet</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>£'000</td>
<td>£'000</td>
<td>£'000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>136,275</td>
<td>135,657</td>
<td>-618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Culture &amp; Sport</td>
<td>33,390</td>
<td>32,528</td>
<td>-862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy &amp; Performance</td>
<td>4,945</td>
<td>4,923</td>
<td>-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>174,610</td>
<td>173,108</td>
<td>-1,502</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Budget figures are not comparable because of full year effect of part year saving plus reduction in internal recharging.

**b) The impact (positive or negative) that this service has on equality groups**

All Education Culture and Sport Services aim to have a positive impact on all service users including equality groups. Although the service had an overall reduction in budget between 11/12 and 12/13 it had been able to minimise the impact on equality groups by prioritising work with equality groups and disadvantaged communities and taking innovative approaches to service delivery. It has developed local partnerships to target effort and share costs, realigned budgets to invest in early intervention services to reduce high end costs and built capacity in local neighbourhoods to
enable local people to take more responsibility identifying services and supporting volunteers to contribute to local service delivery.

c) The impact (if any) that any budget changes have had on equality groups

Using the EHRIA process ensured that Education Culture and Sport was able to minimise the impact on equality groups and communities experiencing social and economic disadvantage. It has been able to redesign services and in some instances increase the service offer to better meet current need.

Housing and Environment have not experienced any negative impacts in relation to equality groups as a result of the budget process. Within Housing and Homelessness we have improved outcomes due to our focussed approach to early intervention, which is complimented by our restructure. Another area of focus in relation to equality groups is around the Gypsy/Travellers community where we strive to balance the needs of the Gypsy/Travellers and the settled community and again we have not experienced any negative impacts of the budgetary process.

Service provision for equalities groups

For up to THREE services with a specific focus or provision for equalities groups, please provide details of—

The Education, Culture and Sport service has a policy of inclusion and mainstreaming the work it does with equalities groups. However, it continues to try to develop appropriate project work to support equalities groups. Examples of services with a specific focus on equalities groups that are supported by Education, Culture and Sport service include nurture groups for children with social and emotional behavioural needs, youth work with Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) young people and adult learning services for people with mental health difficulties.

a) The total budget for these services in 2011-12 and 2012-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurture Groups</td>
<td>£163,000</td>
<td>£163,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT Youth Work</td>
<td>£1,635</td>
<td>£3,929</td>
<td>£2,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Minds</td>
<td>£102,750</td>
<td>£128,327</td>
<td>£25,577</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) The impact that these services have on equality groups

Each of the illustrated services has been developed to meet the needs identified by the specific equality group and will have had a positive effect on individuals needs. Each service monitors the impact on its services users. The Nurture Group uses the Boxhall Profile; the LGBT and Healthy Minds project uses the Performance Information Evaluation System. The services are also reviewed annually and if appropriate reconfigured to meet current need and to provide appropriate and effective support to the individuals involved in the projects.
c) The impact (if any) that any budget changes have had on equality groups

These projects illustrate that the service has maintained or increased the budgets available to support services specifically aimed at supporting equality groups or children and families experiencing social and economic disadvantage.

Mainstreaming equalities

- **What specialist services or programmes have been, or are being altered, in the interests of mainstreaming?**

The Education, Culture and Sport service has a policy of inclusion, i.e. ensuring that children and young people with additional support needs receive the appropriate educational provision within mainstream schools. The service is currently undertaking a major review of its additional support needs provision to ensure it continues to meet current needs and it will report in 2013.

Within Housing and Environment we are committed to ensure inclusion and equalities are part of our agenda and will continue to review our policies and procedures to ensure compliance with existing and new legislation and that the needs of all our citizens are met appropriately.

- **What monitoring is in place to ensure that the relevant equality groups continue to access an appropriate service?**

There are a number of different approaches taken across the Education Culture and Sport service to ensure that the relevant equality groups access appropriate services. Examples include:

- The Education, Culture and Sport service collects pupil data using the ScotXed categories. This allows the service to report information about the school population to national government and to plan services at local level.
- The Library and Information service uses city demographic data and stock requests to help ensure that the library stock meets all needs, including any specialist stock for equality groups.
- The Communities service use Performance Information Evaluation System, a monitoring and evaluation tool to inform service improvement.
- Participation in the Equalities Action Network, where city wide equality groups identify service gaps and needs.

Chief Executive
Aberdeen City Council
8 August 2012