SUBMISSION FROM ANGUS COUNCIL

Background

Angus Council is committed to equality impact assessing positive and negative impacts on existing policies a procedures, and all relevant new policies and procedures presented to committee. From 2008 all proposed budget savings have also been equality impact assessed by departments prior to submission to elected members on an annual basis. Initially, these impact assessments were required for disability, gender and race only, however from January 2011, we expanded this to include all the protected characteristics, fulfilling the council’s commitment to equality impact assess across all equality strands as stated in our Single Equality Scheme.

Training was provided to management teams in respect of the new template and guidance toolkit, introduced for equality impact assessing generally, and bespoke training was provided for departments regarding budget proposal impact assessments. A committee report highlighting elected members’ responsibilities and case law in relation to equality impact assessments and budget decision – making processes was submitted to elected members in 2009. This paper will be updated and re-circulated this year for the benefit of newly elected councillors.

Our equality impact assessment processes have therefore evolved over a number of years and have become embedded into service planning and budget decision-making throughout this period.

Annexe Questions

Equalities in the budgeting process

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

A procedure for equality impact assessing all budget savings proposals was established in 2008. There is information available to assist departments with this process in the council’s Provisional Base Budget Preparation Procedures Including Service Planning Guidance, and training on the implications of equality impact assessments is available as required.

Each council department is responsible for ensuring that a pro forma has been completed for each budget saving being proposed, either a short screening equality impact assessment (EIA), where the proposed cut is not relevant to people (e.g. reducing the number of floral hanging baskets), or a full EIA where it does have, or can have, an impact on people (e.g. increasing the charge for the provision of Blue Badges).

Public consultation exercises have then taken place and the results fed back to the elected members prior to them making their final decisions.

This approach was applied for the allocation of budgets in 2012-13.
(ii) 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)

Yes. For the budget savings proposals for 2012-13 the public consultation with communities was expanded to include focus group exercises with members of the Angus Citizens' Panel and community councils.

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

Equalities' aspects are highlighted through the EIA process which has enabled council officers and elected members to consider mitigating any negative effects of savings proposed on any one group of particular protected characteristics as follows:

- Disability/Race/LGBT etc: All areas of expenditure require to be considered for savings, and it was initially proposed for 2012/13 budget savings that the number of support for learning assistants for school children be reduced. In recognition, however, that this could have a negative impact on children who need additional support of any kind and this service cuts across several equality strands (e.g. children with certain disabilities, or those who speak English as a second language etc), this was amended from a proposed cut of several posts to none.

- Gender: The proposal to close all crèches at leisure centres was overturned in recognition that women are still the main carers of young children and there would be a significant detrimental impact on them and their ability to use leisure facilities should the crèches cease to exist. All crèches were maintained.

Equalities in mainstream services

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>100.84</td>
<td>100.132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work &amp; Health</td>
<td>61.966</td>
<td>61.883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood</td>
<td>24.811</td>
<td>24.652</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

The developments/improvements achieved by departments in respect of equalities are reported on annually in our departmental Annual Reports - within each is a section dedicated specifically to Equalities.

We are not aware of any negative impacts in respect of service delivery on equality groups being reported.
c) The impact (if any) that any budget changes have had on equality groups

We are not aware of any impact on equality groups being raised as a result of the council’s budget savings.

Service provision for equalities groups

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional Support Needs (ASN)</td>
<td>9.652</td>
<td>9.465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School and Family Support (SFSS)</td>
<td>0.891</td>
<td>0.936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Psychology (EPS)</td>
<td>0.667</td>
<td>0.756</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) The impact that this service has on equality groups

These three services combine to specifically work to support children and their families who face barriers to learning and success. This includes physical and learning disabilities, and also children with social and emotional challenges. These resources are also used to support Looked After Children, Young Carers, EAL, Gypsy Traveller children, Children Educated at Home, Chronically Ill children i.e. any child who needs support, and can include LGBT/Transgender etc.

The above services work with schools to assess/identify the needs of learners and provide support. GIRFEC processes apply (Integrated Assessment Child’s Plan).

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

Although a recent review helped bring about efficiencies, direct services to children were protected.

Mainstreaming equalities

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

We consider that we have taken considerable steps towards mainstreaming, for example rather than have separate ‘equalities’ groups in Children’s Services, we expect working groups/action groups to consider equalities in all aspects of their work.

Council officers in general are aware of their responsibilities under the general equality duty in respect of disability, race and gender, but further training will be delivered over 2012/13 to ensure that the additional protected characteristics are considered in our day to day service delivery. This is with a view to eliminating unlawful/discriminatory treatment and promoting equalities between people of differing protected characteristics.
Initial consultation with members of our Disability Forum has begun in respect of collecting data for all protected characteristics.

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

We are reviewing what evidence exists in respect of service users and employees, to identify where gaps exist in order to extend the monitoring we undertake, for example, we are developing a centralised monitoring system of complaints to include all protected characteristics. We are also looking to conduct an employee monitoring survey in respect of all protected characteristics.

There is ongoing self evaluation/monitoring within services. For example, it has been noted in Angus that too many children defer entry to P1, remaining in nursery for an extra year. Over the last year this has been carefully monitored, and all reasons for deferral are analysed. Head teachers have been given clear guidance on more appropriate procedures and advice on equalities, for example, in circumstances of a child who cannot speak English – this is not a good reason for staying in nursery.

Another example is whereby all children in Angus can attend pre-school/school 3 -18 years in their local community i.e. children with additional support needs do not need to be taxed to other towns.

In Social Work &Health ongoing monitoring of the religion/belief of service users will continue to identify their specific needs in relation to, for example, dietary requirements in residential units, prayer rooms needed etc.

Richard Stiff  
Chief Executive  
Angus Council  
9 August 2012