SUBMISSION FROM FIFE COUNCIL

Background

Fife Council is committed to assessing the impact that changes in service delivery have on equality groups. This is done when changes are made to existing policies and procedures and when policies are reviewed. Staff have been provided with guidance and training on when to undertake an impact assessment and advice is also provided by the Council’s Equalities Unit either through facilitation or commenting on draft impact assessments.

Prior to the introduction of the equality impact assessment guidance for the 2012-13 budget, the Council used the integrated impact assessment to assess impact – this included taking account of issues in relation to equality and diversity; health and well-being; economy and the environment. The integrated impact assessment and the equality impact assessment takes account of all the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.

Response to the specific questions is provided below.

Annex Questions

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

All Directorates completed a proforma for each budget saving proposed and indicated whether a full equality impact assessment was required or not. All impact assessments were sent to the Equalities Unit to be logged and checked to ensure that, where appropriate, action would be taken to mitigate any negative impacts identified.

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 same approach was taken as for the previous financial year – an equality impact assessment was required to be undertaken for all budget proposals being put forward. In the 2011-12, there were a few impact assessments which required specific consultation with equality groups and this was undertaken through organised meetings.

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

There are no specific examples of how equalities considerations influenced the final budget – equalities issues were considered alongside other issues particularly on how the Council is considering delivering services in the future to everyone in Fife.

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>£321,031</td>
<td>£319,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>£197,996</td>
<td>£193,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>£15,883</td>
<td>£15,736</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Education and Social Work consult with their respective clients when making changes to services. Any significant changes are reported through committees. We are not aware of any particular negative impacts in respect of service delivery on equality groups.

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>£29,768</td>
<td>£29,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older people</td>
<td>£74,497</td>
<td>£71,135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) The impact that this service has on equality groups

The services highlighted above provide additional support to pupils (ASN) and dedicated support is also provided to older people to improve their quality of life. In recognition of this, the budget for these groups is only being marginally reduced.

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

As can be seen from the above reduction, in recognition of the fact that pupils with disabilities and older people need additional support, the budget for these two services has largely not been affected.
Mainstreaming equalities

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

We encourage Directorates to consider all aspects of equalities as part of their day to day work with advice and support provided by the Council’s Equalities Unit.

Council officers in general are aware of their responsibilities under the general equality duty in respect of disability, race and gender, and further equality and diversity training is delivered on an ongoing basis 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.

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. This information will be part of the evidence used to revise and set appropriate equality outcomes when developing the Council’s corporate Equality and Diversity Scheme from 2013. The Council also funds a number of voluntary organisations in respect of older people, disabled people and ethnic minority groups and feedback from these organisations ensures that the services are meeting the needs of these groups.

In addition,

In addition, any equality impact assessments undertaken are scrutinised to ensure that proper consideration is given to any potential impact on equality groups and that they are involved in decisions affecting them.

Ronnie Hinds
Chief Executive
Fife Council
18 September 2012