
With the requirement to make efficiency savings for the years 2011 – 2014 North Lanarkshire Council undertook a process to prioritise services and consider the impact of any savings proposals in general terms and specifically on the current SOA. A framework was developed within which each service could be assessed, in terms of its priority to the Council, and provided officers and elected members with a list of Council functions assessed in terms of-

- Our statutory responsibility to deliver the service
- Contribution towards council policy or achieving the targets within our Corporate Plan
- Relevance and priority for customers, residents and services users and
- Our comparative costs to deliver the service.

The framework comprised of two stages:-

- completion of a Ranking Scores pro forma for each function of the council
- application of a weighting exercise to reflect their relative priority of each function

This exercise resulted in the collation of a range of data for each service and by function for the first time which provided a useful reference for the Council in reaching decisions on priorities and how financial savings targets could be met over the following three years.

Following the identification of the draft efficiency savings options’ proposals further impact assessment work was undertaken. This involved assessing the savings options in terms of their potential impact on:

- Front line service delivery;
- Statutory duties / council policy;
- Council posts (Full Time Equivalent);
- General impact including sustainability, equalities considerations and carbon emissions; and,
- Targets included in our 2009 to 2011 Single Outcome Agreement (SOA);

The following link to a Council report to our Policy and Resources Committee provides the detail
http://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=5118&p=0

With individual savings proposals developed the Council then undertook a major public consultation - ‘Hard Choices Big Decisions’ – The detailed proposals were published on the Council web site and a number of public meetings were held across North Lanarkshire with Community Forums, Local Area Partnerships and with voluntary sector and community organisations. The information gathered in this consultation process informed the 156 equality impact assessments that were carried out on the individual proposals for efficiency savings.
As well as assessing the impact of each individual proposal the Council’s Corporate Equality Working Group looked at the overall picture – the accumulative effect of the proposals. Was one group of people overall faring worse than other groups? This work carried out by the CEWG deemed that the efficiency savings proposals would impact mostly on women, older people and disabled people though not disproportionately.

2. EQUALITIES IN MAINSTREAM SERVICES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mainstream Services</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Leisure Services</td>
<td>£407,956,461</td>
<td>£409,126,206</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing and Social Work Services</td>
<td>£323,775,003</td>
<td>£327,675,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Services</td>
<td>£230,305,003</td>
<td>£221,051,543</td>
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Learning and Leisure Services

LLS covers a diverse range of services from school based education to libraries, community learning and development and early years provision. The overarching strategy, Raising Achievement for All: Experiences to Last a Lifetime, commits us to developing better joint working across all strands of LLS, harnessing all of our resources to make learning meaningful, connected, relevant and enjoyable, thus creating 'experiences to last a lifetime' for all our learners. This strategy is inclusive and based on fairness and equality of opportunity for all and has a significant positive impact on equality groups. Some positive areas to highlight

- In schools regular consultation takes place with pupils, parents and carers through Pupil and Parent Councils. Parents and carers of children with additional support needs (ASN) are consulted on key aspects of policy and improvement
- 38 people from Polish, Urdu and Cantonese speaking communities attended library event to find out about community language collection.
- Annual Grant distribution is currently monitored by age, disability, gender and ethnicity on an annual basis and any pertinent issues highlighted.

The budget changes for the years 2011-12 and 2012-13 had no differential impact on equality groups.

Housing and Social Work Services

Two mainstream services in one that manages our housing stock (we are a social landlord) of 37,269 properties which include some specialist housing such as sheltered and assisted living. Housing Services also provides a range of services which include advice on housing options, a repair service (tenants only), services for homeless households and estate caretaking service. Our vision is to build housing futures for all people in North Lanarkshire by meeting their housing needs and providing opportunities for them to fulfil their housing aspirations.
This service is also responsible for social work support to individuals and families. The range of services includes children's and families services, community care services, justice services and advice services. Social work services are also provided at two hospitals in North Lanarkshire. Our key objectives are based on promoting dignity, empowerment and choice for the people we care for and support. Our services have a significant positive impact on equality groups.

Positive impact areas to highlight:
- Making Life better initiative allows people access to equipment and adaptations on-line. It encourages independent living through allowing people to access equipment without the need to go through social work.
- An exercise has been completed to determine the housing aspirations and needs of Gypsy Travellers to inform the local housing strategy. This work is now being progressed by the Gypsy Traveller Liaison Group that is a multi-agency group. A face to face survey with the transient Gypsy Traveller population in North Lanarkshire took place over the summer months in 2011 and a report and action plan has been developed.

The budget changes for the years 2011-12 and 2012-13 had no differential impact on equality groups.

Environmental Services

This service has 5 main functions: facility support services; Land services, Planning and Development; Protective Services and Roads and Transportation. The service mission is to protect communities through the development of quality services, to enrich lives and meet peoples’ needs through environmental maintenance and development. Its services have, in many areas, significant positive impacts on equality groups.

Positive impact areas to highlight
- Roads and transportation meet with the Walk ‘n’ roll group that organises walks in and around Cumbernauld for elderly people, including visually impaired, wheelchair users, etc., to identify where there are barriers that inhibit the movement around town.
- The Planning section has produced supplementary guidance for developers. This supplementary guidance will ensure that private developers have key information on inclusive design and are encouraged to ensure any developments are accessible.
- A protocol for the provision of access statements and consultation with key stakeholders in relation to the design of new or the refurbishment of council buildings has recently been approved by the Council’s Corporate Management Team.
The budget changes for the years 2011-12 and 2012-13 had no differential impact on equality groups.

3. SERVICE PROVISION FOR EQUALITIES GROUPS

Access to Interpretation and Translation

The Council has a contract with Language Line so as people can access Council services without language being a barrier and our employees can provide a service without language being a barrier.

The budget for Language Line is determined by usage and is not capped. The total spend in 2011-12 was £3,118.50. 120 calls were made across all our services providing for 18 different languages.

In 2012-13 the same budget arrangements apply. For the period April 2012 – end of June 2012, 35 interpreter calls have been made at a cost of £475.20 with 9 languages being interpreted.

Supported Employment within Housing and Social Work Services

NLC has a long established and successful Supported Employment scheme to secure and sustain full time, open employment for people with learning disabilities, acquired brain injury, mental health issues and most recently young care leavers. This involves a job coach working with the individual to complete a vocational profile which helps identify the right job match. The job coach then assists the individual with looking for a job. When they have found employment, the job coach will train and support the individual on site. We also provide monitoring support to both the employer and employee and this can help with job retention. Over the last decade we have demonstrated flexibility by adapting the model and timescale to meet the needs of the individuals care groups/service users.

Specific achievements include;

- 258 Individuals who use the service
- 245 Completed Vocational Profiles
- 13 On-going Vocational Profiles
- 100 Job Finding/Marketing
- 147 Current Jobs  - 93 Private Sector, 54 Public Sector,
- 232 Total Jobs (inc. 2nd/3rd jobs), 147 Private Sector, 85 Public
  * 2 people with two jobs
- All service users experience a minimum of 2 job tasters to develop their vocational profile.
- All service users looking for work (100) have individualised job finding plans.
- All individuals in work have individualised monitoring arrangements in place.
- All service users have access to a welfare rights officer to support the maximisation of benefits.
- The average number of hours worked is 22 hours per week.
The average income above benefit is £113.42 per person per week.
Job retention of 60% for those in work over 2 years is consistently reported.
17 individuals have achieved over ten years in employment.

As well as the above the qualitative outcomes detailed by the participants, and their carers, include:-
- having more control over their lives
- development of resilience and coping strategies
- being better able to sustain positive relationships with family members and the wider community e.g. education, employers, health professionals
- being happier and more productive

The budget for the supported employment service in the year 2011 – 2012 was £984,944. In 2012 – 2013 the total is £950,534.

In 2012/2013 there was a minor reduction in several budget lines to accommodate the £34,410 budget reduction; £10,000 of this reduction was the result of required staffing savings across Social Work. There was no impact on capacity/service as there was no loss of frontline staff.

4. MAINSTREAMING EQUALITIES
Specialist services altered in the interests of mainstreaming

In 2008 a pilot was undertaken to provide Deaf customers with a web based interpreting service at 2 of the Council’s 9 First Stop Shops (FSS). Our FSS provide a one door approach to Council services. The pilot resulted in this service being rolled out across a number of the FSS. More recently the service has extended to Registrars Offices within Airdrie and Cumbernauld.

Also in the past year a new initiative has been piloted for Deaf people to allow them greater access to communication support. 30 Deaf people have been provided with an internet notebook that gives them access to an on-line interpreter 5 days a week during office hours thus allowing them to access services not only in Council buildings but in shops and leisure facilities.

The Council recently developed and undertook awareness raising sessions on disability equality, inclusive design and the need to engage with disabled people when designing new buildings or undertaking refurbishments with our architects, commissioning staff and employees who process repairs. Members of North Lanarkshire Disability Access Panel co-facilitated 3 sessions, along with Council officers. This brought real life experiences of the problems that can arise for disabled people when accessing services and all participants valued the Panel’s input.

Monitoring

The Council has a number of engagement arrangements in place for ensuring equality groups continue to access appropriate services:
- The Disability Equality Monitoring and Review Group – a partnership between local voluntary organisations representing disabled people and the Council. This group meets quarterly and monitors and reviews the work of the Council in relation to its Equality Strategy action plan.
- A number of our services have partnerships with local community organisations to engage on specific service issues
- An annual disability community conference where the council feeds back to the wider community on progress made but also engages with service users to hear their views and opinions on our services and areas to improve. This year the community conference will cover all protected characteristics of the Equality Act.
- Our employee fora for race and disability also bring issues to the fore not only as employees but also as service users.
- Individual Council services also engage with their own service users to ensure accessible and appropriate services in a number of ways including:
  - customer satisfaction surveys
  - Pupil and parent Councils in schools
  - Citizens Panel
  - Focus groups and
  - Public meetings

Chief Executive
North Lanarkshire Council
9 August 2012