SUBMISSION FROM PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL

Equalities in the budgeting process

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

Any specific impacts that relate to equalities duties were identified.

This is not intended to highlight just the statutory equalities characteristics, e.g. disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion and belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, but should also include other groups of people who experience inequality because of being low paid, part time staff, geographically remote etc.

A full Equality Impact Assessment is carried out prior to any savings being implemented.

- 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)

No, the assessment processes is strengthening as Service Management Teams, the Executive Officer Team and Budget Review Group become more experienced in asking the appropriate questions and challenging specific proposals.

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

See section on “Service provision of equalities groups” for examples of where budgets have been maintained or increased for specific equalities projects.

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
  b) The impact (positive or negative) that this service has on equality groups
  c) The impact (if any) that any budget changes have had on equality groups

Each relevant, new or revised project/policy is assessed to identify equalities impact both positive and negative. The outcomes of these assessments are reported in each Council and Committee report.
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

1. Show Racism the Red Card programme – this work is funded through the Perth & Kinross Community Safety Partnership and the budget was increased by £3,000 in 2011/12 and this increase is now expected to remain in place for 2012/13. The budget is now £8,000 per annum.

2. Sensory Impairment social work services – the Council commissions social work services for visually impaired and social work services for deaf people from 2 specialist voluntary organisations who deliver the services on behalf of the Council. The budget for the specialist social work service for visually impaired people for 2011/12 was £140,078 and the budget for social work service for deaf people was £48,723. These budgets have remained unchanged for 2012/13 despite funding savings being applied in other externally commissioned voluntary sector projects.

3. Minority Ethnic Access Development (MEAD) Project – the Council provides funding via its Carers Strategy for this voluntary sector project which is an information and advice service which provides support to the members of the black and minority ethnic communities in Perth and Kinross. The project received £24,000 funding in 2011/12 and received an additional £5,000 in 2012/13 in response to additional demands placed on the project for the English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) classes that it facilitates. In addition, the Council provided funding of £22,548 for a new initiative in 2012/13 to the Minority Ethnic Carers of People Project (MECOPP) to enhance its work with Gypsy/Traveller carers in this area and this project will work in partnership with MEAD.

b) The impact that this service has on equality groups

With regards to each of the above examples:

1. Show Racism the Red Card – additional funding was awarded in response to the positive feedback received for this preventative work in schools. There was a 31% increase in participating schools and a 68% increase in participating pupils. The increased funding allowed a specific ‘Out of Site’ workshops (focusing on anti-racism towards Gypsy/Roma/Travellers to be included in the programme for the first time. In total 1101 pupils from 36 individual primary schools have benefited in total during 2011/12. Impact from the workshops can best be evidenced by a sample of comments from the participating pupils in their post-workshop evaluations such as “I didn’t know how serious racism can be” and “That children can learn racism from adults”. The Council recognises that this preventative work in schools can impact positively on the wider community both now and in future years.
2. Sensory impairment social work services – the Council has a statutory duty to provide a specialist social work service for people with a sensory impairment. The Council has endeavoured to ‘protect’ these services from significant financial impacts despite the fact that they are externally commissioned in recognition of the specialist area of service provision.

3. Minority Ethnic Access Development (MEAD) Project – although only a funding partner of this project (the key funding being provided from external sources) the Council has recognised the significant ‘front-line’/first point of contact service which is provided by this project with 288 new individuals registered with the project requiring dedicated one-to-one advocacy and casework to resolve issues or help them access a local service during 2011/12. Demand on the service continues to be high and the service provides a range of specific work/events either solely or in partnership, for example: MEAD supports in partnership or facilitates the Chinese Community Lunch Club; Perth Polish Support Group; South Asian Women’s Group; Women’s Only Swimming Group; Eastern European New Mums Group. MEAD undertook 2 community consultation exercises: Eastern European Community Needs and Demands Survey (144 participants) and BME Carers Needs Assessment (253 participants). MEAD also facilitated (in partnership) an NHS Awareness Event and a BME Cancer Awareness Event, supported service users to find out about voting in local government elections and to fully participate in the Annual Carers Conference. The additional ESOL funding was provided in response to the demands placed on this service which is hosted by MEAD. Additional funding to MECOPP for its Gypsy/Traveller carer project was in response to particular carer issues identified in this area which highlighted significant levels of need and a distinct lack of awareness amongst Gypsy/Traveller carers about their entitlements. The majority of the community members MECOPP had identified had difficulty in accessing, mainstream health and social care support services. The services provided by both of these minority ethnic carer initiatives positively impact on the communities concerned but also on service providers who become more culturally aware as a result.

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

Equality Impact assessments were undertaken prior to implementing any financial savings within the voluntary sector.
Mainstreaming equalities

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

All services in the Council produce a Service Equalities Action Plan. The Housing & Community Care Service Equalities Action Plan has a clear statement of intent to the effect “that regardless of the equality area covered the fundamental aim of ‘furthering accessibility inclusion and respect’ (FAIR) applies throughout and by introducing this plan with that aim in mind we will make it easier to mainstream equalities across the service, whilst reducing any bureaucracy which may be involved in the process as a result”. In addition specific care group strategies will each have different priorities which services will deliver to meet the identified needs of the care group service users involved – this is a mainstream part of the service delivery for these care groups who fall into equalities agenda e.g. learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health.

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

Regular reporting of the Service Equalities Action Plan and care group strategies takes place to ensure governance and scrutiny within the Council at a senior management and elected member level.

Chief Executive
Perth & Kinross Council
7 August 2012