



Chief Executive Office

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
Livingston
West Lothian
EH54 6FF

Our Ref: CEO/MC
Your Ref:

Contact: Graham Hope
Tel: 01506 281697
Fax: 01506 281689
e-mail: graham.hope@westlothian.gov.uk

Private & Confidential
Christina McKelvie MSP
Equalities and Human Rights Committee
T2.60
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

23 March 2018

Dear Mrs McKelvie

RE: Making the most of our equalities and human rights levers

Thank you for your letter dated 16 February 2018 with regard to how we take account of national and local equalities and human rights priorities in terms of our approach to our budget process.

The council has made significant progress in mainstreaming equality impact assessment into the budget setting process. This is the eighth consecutive financial year where an equality impact assessment has been conducted on the draft budget measures prior to approval by Council.

The Transforming Your Council consultation exercise we undertook recently provided an opportunity for partners, staff, trade unions, service users and members of the public to provide their views on the proposed priorities and officer budget saving measures. Specific sessions were facilitated with the equality forums and networks in West Lothian supported by the council. As well as contributing to the overall consultation feedback, these sessions provided input to help inform the equality impact assessment process. This was the Council's third public consultation and generated the highest responses, with over 3,000 responses and 40,000 comments

An initial equality impact relevance assessment was undertaken on all the identified officer budget saving measures included in the consultation. This relevance assessment identified where full equality impact assessments were required to ensure appropriate consideration is given to the impact of proposals on protected groups, with judgements being undertaken regarding relevance and proportionality. In addition, whilst undertaking the detailed assessments, a cumulative impact assessment was completed to identify where individual measures would have a collective impact on protected groups. Where this was the case adjustments were considered to mitigate the effect on these groups and in some cases the proposals were withdrawn after consideration of the cumulative impacts.

The Equality Impact Assessments were presented to elected members at the council meeting which considered the budget proposals, to provide elected members with the opportunity to carry out their scrutiny role and to consider any equality impacts when making their decisions. These EQIAs and the budget report are published on the council's website and can be viewed by members of the public.

The council is committed to tackling discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and human rights and promoting good relations both within our workforce and the wider community. We recognise that all services provided by the council need to reflect and consider the impact that they may have on equality and human rights. We strive to provide improved services that meet the needs and priorities of local communities.

Yours sincerely

M. Colvener

for **Graham Hope**
Chief Executive