

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/18 to 2019/20 - Summary Equalities Analysis

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide a summary equality analysis of the budget reduction and income generation proposals 2017/18 in line with the Public-Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as created by Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.2 It is important to note that this is a report on those budget reduction and income generation proposals that are being put forward for approval. As such those discussed here are those that, in the large majority of cases, have no equality impact. A smaller subset of proposals, which do have an adverse equality impact, have had that impact mitigated as the Council is required to consider and to provide for if it is possible. Where a proposal is not yet complete this will be dealt with via conditional recommendation or a separate report.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Council continues to be faced with a challenging projected financial position over the medium term, and significant Budget Reduction and Income Generation proposals are required to maintain a robust financial position.
- 2.2 It is important to note that the updated projected budget deficit assumes the achievement of prior year Budget Reduction and Income Generation proposals amounting to £37.4 million over the four year period to 2019/20. In March 2016, Full Council approved that work started immediately to identify opportunities to deliver the £22.2 million projected budget deficit in 2017/18 and that the Council would be faced with finding further Budget Reduction and Income Generation proposals totalling £54.6 million over the three year period to 2019/20.
- 2.3 When identifying budget reduction and income generation proposals the Council's strategic approach to address the budget deficit continues to be to align resources to the Corporate Plan to achieve:
 - a Stronger Economy,
 - a Stronger Community,
 - a Stronger Organisation.

The Council does not want to simply manage decline, investment in the future is essential for both the Council and the City.

- 2.4 The targets were classified into proposals upon which the outcome of formal budget consultation is required – budget reduction and income generation proposals – and proposals which can be implemented without reliance on the outcome of formal budget consultation – Financial Transactions and Base Budget Revisions.

2.5 There were 32 Budget Reduction and Income Generation proposals for 2017/18 summarised by Cabinet Portfolio in the table below:

Table 1 – Budget Reduction and Income Generation Proposals for 2017/18 by Cabinet Portfolio

Cabinet Portfolio	No.	2017/18 £000
Adult Services	6	(4,835)
Children and Young People	4	(3,014)
Public Health and Wellbeing	-	-
City Housing and Assets	4	(1,200)
City Economy	1	(200)
City Environment	8	(3,250)
Resources	4	(170)
Governance	5	(870)
Education	-	-
Total	32	(13,539)

2.6 A report was presented to Cabinet in October 2016, which detailed the outcome of work that has been in progress across all areas of the Council to identify budget reduction and income generation targets to deliver the strategy of identifying £22.2 million for 2017/18.

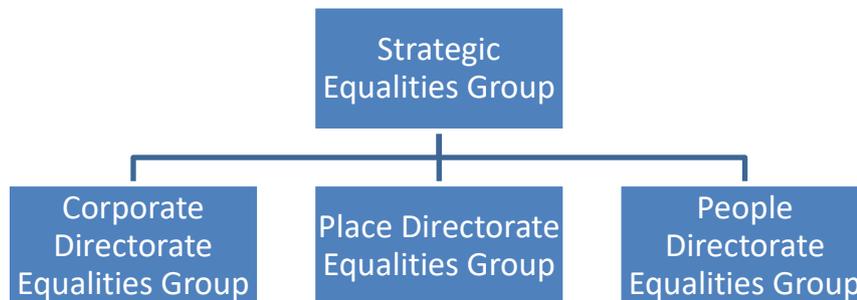
2.7 The projected target of £22.2 million at March 2016 was revised to £23.5 million. This was due to a number of proposals being reprofiled or removed.

2.8 Cabinet approved that 32 Budget Reduction and Income Generation proposals totalling £13.5 million proceed to formal budget consultation and scrutiny stages of the budget process, whilst 24 Financial Transactions and Base Budget revisions totalling £10.0 million in 2017/18 be incorporated into the 2017/18 Draft Budget and did not form part of the public consultation.

3.0 Equalities at Wolverhampton City Council.

3.1 Since the previous financial settlement the Council has greatly strengthened its approach to the equality and diversity element in policy development and in performance managing the equalities agenda.

3.2 The Council now has a Directorate Equality Group in each directorate which is chaired by a Service Director and has “equality champions” from each section of that particular directorate as well as being supported by the Equality and Diversity Team. Seated above these directorate based group is a Strategic Executive Group which is led and chaired by the Director of Corporate Governance and involves those Service Directors from the contributing Directorate Equality Groups.



3.3 Employees are involved in the policy making process via a range of staff equality Forums of which there are four:

- race, religion and belief;
- gender, pregnancy, maternity
- disability and age;
- LGBT

3.4 The Council has a Councillor Champion for equalities, who chairs the Equalities Advisory Group (EAG). This Councillor group has overseen the development and roll-out of the e-learning equality and diversity training. All Councillors and Council employees are required to complete mandatory training on equality and diversity issues. New employees and new Councillors receive a wide-ranging introduction to the Council during their induction. This includes information on equality and diversity as well as human rights.

3.5 EAG has also overseen the review of the Council’s Corporate Equality Objectives Action Plan 2012 – 2016. The majority of the actions in the plan have been completed. In 2016 a new Service Equality Action Plan was developed. This plan has a range of actions specific to each service area and has been approved by the Council’s Strategic Executive Board.

4.0 Equalities and the Law

4.1 The Public-Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is established by the Equality Act 2010. The duty applies to age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation and to a more limited extent, to marriage and civil partnership.

4.2 The Equality Act 2010 needs to be interpreted in a way that is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998 unless it is impossible to do so.

4.3 The PSED requires the Council to have “due regard” to the objectives set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, when exercising any of its functions. This includes when

considering and making decisions on budget reduction and income generation proposals. “Due regard” means the regard that is appropriate in all the particular circumstances in which the Council is carrying out its functions.

- 4.4 In summary, the PSED requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, and both (a) to advance equality of opportunity as well as (b) to foster good relations, in each case between persons who share one or more of the “protected characteristics” and persons who do not share one or more of them.
- 4.5 The Equality Duty is designed to bring these important objectives relating to discrimination and equality into consideration when the Council is setting policies or making decisions.
- 4.6 Where it is apparent from the analysis of the information before the Council that a proposed policy or decision would have an adverse effect upon equality, and where adjustments are possible they should be made to avoid that affect, i.e. through mitigation. If, having rigorously considered a proposal and mitigations, an organisation, covered by the Public-Sector Equality Duty finds that it is unable to mitigate the adverse effects of a particular proposal then it is incumbent on the organisation to justify its proposal. Justification defences are not available to proposals which directly discriminate.
- 4.7 At the same time as paying the necessary “due regard”, Councillors must also pay regard to any countervailing factors, which it is proper and reasonable for them to consider. Budgetary pressures, economics and practical factors will often be important. The weight of these countervailing factors in the decision making process is a matter for Councillors, subject to the principles of public law.
- 4.8 If a budget reduction and income generation proposal remains under consideration at the point of decision for the budget as a whole then the recommendation relevant to it will be a conditional recommendation which allows for any changes to the proposal as a result of new information, for example feedback from consultation, to be made. These proposals along with a small set of others to be considered via separate report are detailed at Appendix 1.

5.0 Equalities in the 2017 Budget Setting Process

- 5.1 From September 2016 all 32 budget reduction and income generation proposals were considered for their impact on equality. Proposals were considered using an in-house IT system. Proposals could not be progressed until those proposing them had identified that an initial equality analysis had been completed and that they were satisfied with the outcomes from it. In terms of the Council’s responsibility this was principally that the proposal represented “due regard” at the time of its signing off within the IT system. This system automatically keeps an audit trail of each proposal reflecting the degree of relevance to equality presented by each proposal. Where there appeared the potential for a proposal to require further analysis a further element

of the IT system was required to be completed before the proposal could be progressed within the authority. This approach helps the authority to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act and PSED although clearly the progress of some work related to some proposals means that the Council's overall budget work must on occasion be completed outside of the new IT system. Where this is the case due process is observed via arrangements previously used to meet the "due regard" requirement.

- 5.2 Full equalities analyses have been or will be completed on 14 relevant proposals. These offer the opportunity to consider more deeply and broadly the equalities implications of a proposal and to make the required mitigations, or in the absence of these, to justify an approach adopted where no better alternative is available to the Council. Where wider responsibilities placed on the Council require it to proceed, this is or will be indicated in the analysis. Principal amongst these wider requirements is that requirement to set a balanced budget.
- 5.3 The potential for adverse impact; for indirect or direct discrimination, along with the possibility for advancing equal opportunity and for fostering good relations was considered in each analysis.
- 5.4 The final list of proposals to be approved by Councillors is the overall list that includes the wider analysis of the proposals described at paragraph 4.7. This report does not cover these wider political considerations but is the narrower summary of the proposals concerned only with equalities evidence as presented by proposers and considered corporately by officers.
- 5.5 This report also concentrates primarily on service rather than employment equality impacts. Where budget reduction proposals are exclusively to be made through restructures of staff arrangements these are dealt with via well-established policies compliant with the Council's statutory responsibilities as an employer. Nevertheless, in relation to PSED requirements managers have been asked to highlight any equalities related impacts in service as a result of a loss of posts. This is an important point to note in terms of the service impact of team restructures. From an equalities point of view the Council must consider and do what it can to mitigate or justify any service loss which adversely impacts on individuals who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act. General loss of service, which the Council will also of course work to avoid, is legally distinct from a loss of service which falls on customers adversely, directly and/or indirectly as a result of a protected characteristic. The Council must rigorously consider these types of impacts as part of its "due regard" requirement. This argument also applies to advancing equal opportunities and to fostering good relations – the other two strands of the PSED.

6.0 Demographic of equality strands

6.1 National and local context

6.2 In common with other urban local authorities, Wolverhampton has considerable cost and demographic pressures which form the backdrop for considering equalities in the city. Some of these pressures do affect some equalities groups disproportionately (such as the reduction in disability-related benefits), but other pressures affect all residents regardless, such as the reduction in Government grant.

6.3 There are particular issues around deprivation in Wolverhampton which intersect with several equalities strands. 54% of the city's population, according to the 2014 Mid-Year Population Estimates, lived in areas classified as being in the top 20% most deprived within England in the 2015 Indices of Deprivation.

Disability Key facts

- 21% of Wolverhampton's residents are limited 'a lot or a little' in their day to day lives.
- Women are slightly more likely to be disabled, as well as those over 50 years of age. Therefore this group are most likely to need adult social care.
- Disabled people in Wolverhampton are less likely to have a high status job than non-disabled people.
- They are also more likely to be long term unemployed, or never have a job. According to the Office for Disability Issues, nationally, fewer than 50% of disabled people are employed.
- According to the Office for Disability Issues, "a substantially higher proportion of individuals who live in families with disabled members live in poverty, compared to individuals who live in families where no one is disabled".

Gender: Key facts

- Women headed up 90% of single parent families in Wolverhampton, at the time of the 2011 Census.
- Women in Wolverhampton are far less likely to be in the highest managerial employment than men (3.6% compared to 8%).
- They are also more likely to be long term unemployed or have never worked (11.5% compared to 8.6%).
- According to the Fawcett Society, women are more likely to rely on state-funded benefits to live, “in particular due to their caring responsibilities and their relative economic inequality and poverty”.
- According to 2011 Census information, women are more likely to be carers, and this is disproportionate to the numbers of females in the population.

Race: Key facts

- At the time of the 2011 Census, 35.5% of Wolverhampton’s citizens were not of ‘White British’ ethnicity
- BAME residents are less likely to be employed in the top three bands of occupations, including management and professional occupations.
- They are also far more likely to be long term unemployed or never have worked (14% compared to 8% of white British).
- According to the Households Below Average Income (HBAI) data, nationally, individuals living in households headed by someone from an ethnic minority were more likely to live in low income situation than a white-headed household.
- The BAME population tends to be younger than the White British population. At the time of the 2011 Census, just 7.9% of the BAME population was aged 65+, compared to 20.9% of the White British population.

Age: Key facts

- There were 20,846 Wolverhampton citizens over the age of 75 as of the middle of 2014, according to the 2014 Mid-Year Population Estimates.
- The 2012-based Sub-National Population Projections stated the number of residents aged over 75 is expected to rise to 25,200 people by 2025, and to 31,500 people by 2037, creating huge pressure on adult social care budgets
- At the time of the 2011 Census, 14% of people under 25 in Wolverhampton were long term unemployed or have never worked
- 59.8% of children aged 0-17, according to the 2014 Mid-Year Population Estimates, lived in areas classified as being in the top 20% most deprived within England in the 2015 Indices of Deprivation.
- 30.2% of children aged under 16, and 29.2% of all children in Wolverhampton, lived below the poverty line in 2012, the latest data available at present.

7.0 Breakdown of Budget Reduction and Income Generation proposals by Cabinet Portfolio.

7.1 These are indicated by Cabinet Portfolio in the table at paragraph 2.5 above.

8.0 Summary of Budget reduction and Income Generation proposals.

8.1 Where a proposal is not yet complete this will be dealt with via conditional recommendation or via separate report. In this way the Council can be certain that it has given each proposal proper consideration.

Of the 32 proposals, 18 required no more analysis than that offered by an initial equality analysis. 14 proposals went on to full equality analysis. These were:

- 1. Review of Transport Fleet:** An external review has been undertaken of the operation of the Council's vehicle workshops and passenger transport fleet, including staff travel. It has identified potential efficiencies through reduced staff travel costs, reduction in the size of the Council's vehicle fleet, a reduction in external vehicle hire together with improved parts and spares procurement. As well as efficiencies, some of the budget reduction proposals will be delivered through reducing the demand for services in line with our strategy to promote independence. The potential for adverse impacts has been identified and as a consequence these will be considered in the context of eliminating discrimination, advancing equalities and fostering good relations when the proposal is more closely defined. This proposal will therefore be supported by the approach indicated at paragraph 8.1 above.

- 2. Develop commercial facilities at Northcote Farm:** This proposal involves the creation of a commercial facility suitable for the holding of events and private functions. The proposal will generate additional income because it will better cater for diverse communities. The equality analysis identified this proposal as one that advanced equalities as the new arrangements will provide for a separate prayer room as well as kitchen facilities that prepares food in a way that is possible for a wider range of cultural and religious groups to use.
- 3. Cease printing residual payslips:** The Council has replaced its traditional paper payslip for employees with access to the same and more information via a secure online service. It was acknowledged that there was the potential for this to impact adversely on a small number of employees with some visual impairment. This is mitigated by the availability of reasonable adjustments supporting employees in these circumstances. New employees who are in similar circumstances will also be supported to ensure that they have the same level of access to this data as their non-disabled counterparts.
- 4. Review of Waste and Recycling:** A full equality analysis and consultation on the options related to the waste and recycling services has identified that the elderly and people with disability may be affected in moving the bins due to mobility constraints. To mitigate this, the Council will continue to provide assistance to such residents via its Assistance Domestic Waste Collection Policy.

For residents where English is their second language, and for those who have difficulty reading or understanding written information, this will be mitigated by putting a sticker with pictures on bins, showing what can and cannot go into each bin. In addition to this Amey's Community Engagement Team provides an outreach service visit to community groups and households supported by City of Wolverhampton Council's Communications Team. Messages will be available to all using a range of media and messages appropriate to the target audience. The service will refocus resources on hard to reach communities, particularly during the transition period but potentially for longer when particular requirements are identified. These mitigations were covered in the questionnaire that was part of the full equality analysis, i.e. "Provide additional support to communities and families to help them recycle more and so reduce their domestic waste." Mitigations through concessionary rates, on green waste collection, for people on benefits, which will indirectly support a range of people with protected characteristics are also applied to the proposal.

Regarding a new super tip site, the accessibility of the site for disabled people who can't drive and who therefore cannot use the facility needs to be taken into consideration.

The overall findings from the 2017/18 budget consultation survey shows that people with a protected characteristic are either positive or neutral about the waste services and recycling options.

- 5. Environmental Services Review:** The review will focus on how we deliver Environmental Maintenance and will analyse the operational activities and delivery of the

functions carried out across the City of Wolverhampton. This proposal will be further considered when there are a range of proposals from which the ones least impacting on equalities, while achieving the Council's need to agree a sustainable budget can be made. This proposal will therefore be supported by the approach indicated at paragraph 8.1 above. The proposal has the potential to impact on staff and where there are these impacts these will be covered by the Council's previously agreed HR procedures.

- 6. Managing Capacity of District Car Parks:** This review considers income generation at outlying car parks in the City by increasing the turnover of spaces. This will encourage motorists to adopt short term parking throughout the day. An Initial Equalities Analysis has been completed and there are some equalities implications. A full Equality Analysis is required which will consider how these proposals can be introduced in a way that removes or undercuts adverse impacts on, for example, disabled people. Considerate and safe parking assists access generally, but especially for mobility or visually impaired people. The Council has a track record of considering parking that is accessible to disabled people and will look at the range of proposals so that the detail and scope of these can best deliver a solution which generates the additional income required but meets the disability related needs of disabled drivers and passengers. This proposal will therefore be supported by the approach indicated at paragraph 8.1 above
- 7. Facilities Management:** A full equality analysis has been completed and it has been identified that further work needs to be undertaken with Community Associations to ensure that their booking procedure captures the use of the centres by different community groups.
- 8. Older People Assessment and Care Management:** This budget reduction and income generation proposal will impact on service users and staff. It will result in a new customer pathway for older people who are engaging with Adult Social Care. The ethos will be in promoting independence for older people and providing information and advice. The new ways of working Team have engaged and worked with Service Users feedback which has assisted this proposal's development. The Pilot includes Individuals from all people with protected characteristics. The full equality analysis indicates only positive or neutral impacts.
- 9. All Age Disability and Mental Health:** This proposal is for a new delivery model across adult social care, which aims to achieve budget reduction proposals by focusing social work on specific areas such as shifting the balance from care home to placement to supported living and to develop a shared approach with Health partners. This proposal is a continuation of a Promoting Independence proposal that was considered and approved previously by Council. As the proposal is further developed it will be supported by further equality analysis at the appropriate time and prior to decision.
- 10. Increased Commerciality in Cultural Services:** The proposal is for a more commercial approach to the Bantock House complex, Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Bilston Craft Gallery and the Archives Service, in conjunction with a more flexible staffing structure.

The new structure offers the ability for staff to work across multiple sites, seven days a week, allowing for a reduction in operating costs, whilst still delivering the service. A new and more accessible booking service is available which has broadened the diversity of use. The full equality analysis identifies only neutral or positive equality impacts for individuals or groups with protected characteristics.

11. Youth Offending Team (YOT) budget reduction: This proposal will see budget reduction proposal found from vacancies that exist in the YOT establishment. The full equality analysis indicates that with smarter and more agile working, the impact of these budget reduction proposals can be mitigated. Equality impact on staff is dealt with via the Council's employment procedures.

12. Children's Services Transformation: The Children's Services Transformation Programme will continue to build on the significant changes made to date, through a number of projects across the service area in order to deliver a seamless, targeted approach to service delivery. This will ensure services are offered at the earliest point, in order to reduce demand on specialist services, and effectively and efficiently improve outcomes for children and young people. A consequence of this programme will be the continued delivery of efficiencies across the service area. This proposal is a continuation of one considered and approved previously by Council. As the proposal is further developed it will be supported by further equality analysis at the appropriate time and prior to decision.

13. Corporate Admin Review: An initial review has been undertaken on this proposal and no further scoping work is required until it is possible to consider various proposals in detail. At this point, further equality analysis will be undertaken and this will be prior to decision and via the arrangements described at paragraph 8.1 above.

14. Governance Service Restructure: This proposal follows the same approach as that described at 13 immediately above.

9.0 Corporate Employment and Equality

9.1 The Council continues to work making significant budget reduction proposals during 2017/18, and in doing so has had to further review the demand and need for services through various budget proposals. These proposals have ultimately been developed through an Equality Analysis. If the proposal has indicated that the service is new, reducing, ending or changing in some way or has indicated that employees may be made redundant or redeployed, they have been closely monitored and scrutinised by Human Resources (HR) to ensure that other options have been fully considered, and that any necessary mitigating action has been taken. For example;

- considering whether there are any employees likely to volunteer for early retirement and/or redundancy subject to there being a relevant scheme in operation;

- reducing or stopping the use of casual workers/agency staff;
- not filling posts when an employee leaves;
- freezing vacancies for an agreed period of time;
- reducing overtime or additional hours worked.

- 9.2 Throughout all stages of the Council redundancy or redeployment policies it is mandatory that equality of opportunity is observed at all times, in order to ensure that employees are treated fairly and without discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristic. In addition, named lead managers for the Equality Analysis are encouraged and appropriately supported by HR to engage with affected employees in meaningful consultation as per Council policy when engaging in any transformation programme.
- 9.3 HR is committed to ensuring that there is a holistic approach to looking at all proposals to ensure the best outcomes for staff and service users. The review of all Equality Analysis in regards to equality implications from an employment perspective forms part of HR's overarching equality monitoring of the workforce. This is carried out as part of our public sector duty as a means to monitoring changes in workforce demographics.
- 9.4 Clearly the Council employs people directly to provide, or to support those who provide services; so, when a budget reduction proposal is made, through a restructure of a team for example, there could well be service implications unless these can be removed, by smarter working arrangements for example.