

Communities Committee budget proposals 2017-2018

Equality and rural assessments – findings and recommendations

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This assessment helps you to consider the impact of service changes on people with protected characteristics and in rural areas. The assessment can be updated at any time to inform service planning and commissioning.

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The purpose of equality and rural assessments

1. The key aim, with both equality and rural assessments, is to enable elected members to consider the potential impact of decisions on different individuals and communities prior to decisions being taken. Mitigating actions can then be developed if adverse impact is identified.
2. It is not always possible to adopt the course of action that will best promote the needs of people with protected characteristics or people in rural areas. However, assessments enable informed decisions to be made, that take into account every opportunity to minimise disadvantage.

The Legal context

3. Public authorities have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to consider the implications of proposals on people with protected characteristics. The Act states that public bodies must pay due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act¹;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic² and people who do not share it³;
 - Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it⁴.
4. The full Act is available [here](#).

The assessment process

5. This assessment comprises three phases:
 - **Phase 1** – we gather evidence on the proposal – looking at the people who might be affected, the findings of related assessments and public consultation, contextual information about local areas and populations and other relevant data. Where appropriate, we engage with residents, service users and stakeholders to better understand any issues that must be taken into account.
 - **Phase 2** – we analyse all the results. We make sure that any impacts highlighted by residents and stakeholders inform the final assessment. If the evidence indicates that the proposal may impact adversely on people with protected characteristics, mitigating actions are identified.
 - **Phase 3** – we report the early findings to the Council's Strategic Equality Group, so that elected members can scrutinise the process, and highlight any specific equality or accessibility issues that should be factored into the assessments.
6. When completed, the findings are provided to decision-makers, to enable any issues to be taken into account before a decision is made.

Communities Committee 2017-2018 budget proposals

1. Communities Committee budget proposals for 2017/18 will see an overall saving of £0.615m in 2017/18, including a one-off saving of £0.090m.
2. There are seven new proposals in total:

	Title of proposal	Description
1.	Cross-cutting savings - using some Public Health grant to off-set cost of CES services	The Director of Public Health has identified an opportunity to use some of the ring-fenced Public Health grant to fund some existing services in CES which deliver Public Health priorities. Doing this means we can make a revenue saving.
2.	Vacancy management and deletion of vacant posts	We take a strong vacancy management approach in the department which means we have taken the opportunity to freeze posts as individuals leave, and change ways of working. This proposal relates to part of a post in the Resilience Service.
3.	Further reductions in back office spend	The Trading Standards and Resilience Services will reduce spend on transport and supplies and services.
4.	Bring forward part of CMM018 from 2018/19 to 2017/18 - Customer Service delivery re-design	Members have previously agreed a proposal to save £100k in 2017/18 and £100k in 2018/19 from the Customer Service area. This proposal brings forward this saving to deliver early. It will involve some staff reductions in the customer service centre, at management level posts, some changes to the mail room team and a re-design of the website team. A staff consultation has been carried out and some changes to the proposals have been made as a result of this and a further staff consultation carried out.
5.	Additional income generation (Museums, Records Office, Trading Standards)	These services already have targets to generate income. Based on current income levels, there is scope to increase our targets.
6.	Bring forward part of CMM023 from 2018/19 to 2017/18 - Fire service – reductions in back office support and running costs	Members have previously agreed £600k saving in 2018/19 for reductions in fire service operational support. This proposal brings forward some of this saving to deliver early. The saving relates to the deletion of two back office administration posts, and reductions in some back office running costs. For example, the fire service has signed up to the new NCC wide printing contract, which will enable some savings, and there has been some success in reducing the amount of business rates we pay on some sites. We can also make savings on some other similar running costs.
7.	One-off saving through re-setting budgets for leased equipment	This relates to Fire Service Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). PEE like gloves and helmets are leased from a third party. The current lease arrangement is coming to an end and is there is an opportunity to

	Title of proposal	Description
		extend the life of some equipment for a small period (around a year) to generate a one-off saving in advance of agreeing a new lease.
8.	Capitalisation of spend on library books to release a revenue saving	Increasing our capital funding to enable us to transfer some revenue costs to capital. Overall, there will still be the same level of budget available to spend on library books etc. and therefore no service reduction.

Who is affected?

3. The proposals could affect staff, residents, visitors and businesses in Norfolk. The proposals could also affect people in rural areas:

People of all ages	YES
Disability (all disabilities and long-term health conditions)	YES
Gender reassignment (e.g. people who identify as transgender)	YES
Marriage/civil partnerships	YES
Pregnancy & Maternity	YES
Race (different ethnic groups, including Gypsies and Travellers)	YES
Religion/belief (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)	YES
Sex (i.e. men/women/intersex)	YES
Sexual orientation (e.g. lesbian, gay and bisexual people)	YES

Potential impact

4. Overall, there is no evidence to suggest that the Communities Committee budget proposals for 2017/18 will have any detrimental or disproportionate impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas.
5. A summary is provided here:

	Title of proposal	Description
1.	Cross-cutting savings - using some Public Health grant to off-set cost of CES services	There is no evidence to indicate that this proposal would have any detrimental or disproportionate impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas. This is because:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be no changes to service standards or delivery.
2.	Vacancy management and deletion of vacant posts	There is no evidence to indicate that this proposal would have any detrimental or disproportionate impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas. This is because:-

	Title of proposal	Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This post is already vacant. • The deletion of this post will not lead to changes to service standards or delivery.
3.	Further reductions in back office spend	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this proposal would have any detrimental or disproportionate impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas. This is because:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no changes to service standards or delivery.
4.	Bring forward part of CMM018 from 2018/19 to 2017/18 - Customer Service delivery re-design	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this proposal would have any detrimental or disproportionate impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas. This is because:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no changes to service standards or delivery. • The number of Customer Service Assistants dealing with front line contacts and phone calls is unchanged. • The Social Care Centre of Expertise Team dealing with some of the most vulnerable calls/contacts is not affected. • The re-design of the website team is to ensure that we are best placed to develop and implement improvements to our website and associated electronic processes, as part of the Customer Service Strategy. This will make it easier and cheaper for customers to contact us electronically, potentially freeing up resource to focus on those people who are in most need of support. It is important to ensure that web design is accessible for disabled people, and this is dealt with in Action 2 below. • Whilst it is possible that the reductions in staff could impact on the responsiveness of the service for example answering calls during peak times, the impact is expected to be minimal as the main reduction relates to back office management and admin support roles. • Overall, the number of posts is reducing. With the exception of (note 1) below, there is no reason to expect that staff with protected characteristics would be disproportionately represented in any redundancy or redeployment position. Current HR monitoring data confirms that the profile of redundancies remains in line with the overall workforce profile of the organisation. In going forward this will continue to be monitored. • Whilst the overall reduction in the number of posts is around 5, there is a high number of temporary, acting

	Title of proposal	Description
		<p>up, secondment and similar arrangements in place within CES that provide a great deal of flexibility to manage the impact of the change and there will be a need for a much smaller number of redundancy or redeployments. Staff have also been given the opportunity to express an interest in voluntary redundancy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It should be noted that redundancy or redeployment may have different degrees of impact on staff, depending on their background or circumstances. Staff who are older, disabled or Black, Asian or minority ethnic may find it more difficult to find new employment compared to the population as a whole (with the same qualifications, experience etc). Staff aged 55+ may have been in post for a number of years and have no recent experience of job applications and interview. • It should also be noted that some staff may have access arrangements in place to enable them to do their jobs effectively (for example, disabled parking and travel to work etc). Changes to these arrangements will be discussed with staff prior to any changes being implemented. <p>Note 1: It should be noted that some services employ a higher number of women than men, or vice-versa⁵. This, combined with a potential decrease in the number of redeployment opportunities available, means that if a service employing a higher than average number of women (or men) changed, the profile of redundancies may not reflect the overall profile of the workforce. Also, older staff (the 55 – 64 age group) may sometimes be overrepresented in redundancy figures, due to older staff being particularly likely to opt for voluntary redundancy.</p>
5.	Additional income generation (Museums, Records Office, Trading Standards)	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this proposal would have any detrimental or disproportionate impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas. This is because:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no changes to service standards or delivery. • This does not relate to new charges or increased charges. • Whilst there are risks associated with any income generation targets because we expose ourselves to market factors, current predictions are that achieving this level of income is possible.
76	Bring forward part of CMM023 from 2018/19 to 2017/18 - Fire service –	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this proposal would have any detrimental or disproportionate impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas. This is because:-</p>

	Title of proposal	Description
	reductions in back office support and running costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no changes to service standards or delivery. There will be no changes to front-line service delivery (retained and whole-time staff) and no changes to fire stations or fire operational delivery standards. • The Chief Fire Officer is satisfied that the proposals are deliverable and will not have any adverse impact on front line service delivery or responsiveness. • The proposal relates to the reduction in overall number of posts by two posts, one of which has been vacant for some time. • The potential impact in staffing terms is as set out in 4. above.
7.	One-off saving through re-setting budgets for leased equipment	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this proposal would have any detrimental or disproportionate impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas. This is because:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire professionals confirm that it is safe to extend the life of the equipment by around a year and that there is no adverse risk.
8.	Capitalisation of spend on library books to release a revenue saving	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this proposal would have any detrimental or disproportionate impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas. This is because overall, there will still be the same level of budget available to spend on library books etc. and therefore no service reduction.</p>

Accessibility considerations

6. Accessibility is a priority for Norfolk County Council. Norfolk has a higher than average number of disabled and older residents compared to other areas of the UK, and a growing number of disabled young people.
7. The services reporting to the Communities Committee are community focussed and universal services in that they are used by all communities, residents and visitors in Norfolk. This includes providing emergency services.
8. Individuals with protected characteristics can often have a greater need for personal support, and/or be less able to travel to be able to access the things they need. In particular, disabled and vulnerable people (including older and young people). For example, some library visitors are able to self-service without any staff help or intervention, and others need individual support from front line staff to access services.
9. Accessibility considerations are taken into account as part of day to day processes and working. Because of the importance of ensuring that accessibility is integrated into ongoing service planning and commissioning of community services, consideration will be given to any opportunities for maximizing this in 2017.

Recommended actions

	Action	Lead	Date
1.	HR Shared Service to continue to monitor whether staff with protected characteristics are disproportionately represented in redundancy or redeployment figures, and if so, take appropriate action.	HR Shared Service	From 1 April 2017
2.	Ensure maximum possible accessibility for disabled people in the re-design of the website team.	Equality & Cohesion Officer	From 1 April 2017
3.	Consider opportunities for maximizing accessibility in ongoing service planning and commissioning across community services and bring a report to Strategic Equality Group proposing possible options.	Corporate Planning & Partnership Manager, in consultation with Business Support and Development Manager	By 31 March 2018

Evidence used to inform this assessment

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- Relevant service specific Codes of Practice and national guidance

Further information

For further information about this equality impact assessment please contact Sarah Rhoden, Business Support and Development Manager, Email sarah.rhoden@norfolk.gov.uk



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Sarah Rhoden on 0344 800 8020.

¹ Prohibited conduct:

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a condition, rule, policy or practice in your organisation that applies to everyone disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”.

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

2 The protected characteristics are:

Age – e.g. a person belonging to a particular age or a range of ages (for example 18 to 30 year olds).

Disability - a person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment - the process of transitioning from one gender to another.

Marriage and civil partnership

Pregnancy and maternity

Race - refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief - has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (such as Atheism).

Sex - a man or a woman.

Sexual orientation - whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

3 The Act specifies that having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity might mean:

- Removing or minimizing disadvantages suffered by people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of others;
- Encouraging people who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such people is disproportionately low.

4 Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between people and communities involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding.

5 This is due to a number of reasons, e.g. it has been well documented that different genders have traditionally been attracted to specific career choices, or because women are more likely than men to want to work part time or flexibly to accommodate parenting responsibilities.