

Environment, Development and Transport 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.

For help or more information please contact Corporate Planning & Partnerships team, email: cpp@norfolk.gov.uk or tel: 01603 222611.

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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.

EDT Committee 2017-2018 budget proposals

7. EDT Committee budget proposals for 2017/18 will see an overall saving of £3.934m in 2017/18, including a one-off saving of £1.500m.
8. There are eight new proposals in total:

	Title of proposal	Description
1.	Vacancy management and deletion of vacant posts	As a result of the strong vacancy management approach in the CES department, a number of posts have been frozen as individuals have left and new ways of working have been put in place to manage within a reduced number of posts. Where these arrangements are successful, the vacant posts can be deleted to provide a saving. The vacant posts being deleted under this proposal relate primarily to the internal Business Support service, with one post in the Waste Service.
2.	Further reductions in back office spend	Reducing a number of common/shared back office budgets to deliver a saving, and where work has already been carried out to reduce costs. This includes savings in our printing and post budgets; new processes and equipment have been introduced that will enable a saving, for example laptop issued to staff as standard and increased ability to process contacts electronically through web forms etc.
3.	Reduction in Economic Development project fund	There is a small project fund allocation in the economic development service. This reduces the fund by £10k, but there will continue to be provision of around £70k. We will continue to support projects. In practice, we already seek alternative forms of funding to support new projects and so the project fund allocation is not always needed, and this will continue to be the approach.
4.	Waste – efficiency savings through robust management of costs	This relates to contracts we have in place for our recycling centre services. As with all other services, there are ongoing discussions with service providers as part of our day to day contract management to ensure that opportunities for efficiencies can be identified and progressed. There would be no change in service standards, opening times etc.
5.	Rationalise our highway depot provision and change inspection frequency for main roads	<p>There are three main elements to this proposal. The first is moving from an operational model with four area offices, to three area offices. In practice, we will close our office at Caister, but those in Ketteringham, King's Lynn and Aylsham will continue. The Caister site will continue to be used as a muster point for roadworkers and the salt dome on site will also continue to be used for winter gritting. Highway area office buildings are operational only and not intended to be publically accessible.</p> <p>The second element is changes to the staffing structure at highway area offices, with an overall reduction in staff</p>

	Title of proposal	Description
		<p>in both the highways and business support teams. The reduction in resource is on the basis of re-drawing working 'patches' to reflect the new three area model, more efficient working practices and arrangements and introducing more multi-functional roles. This includes introducing a universal area based inspector role to cover the full range of highway inspections, for example they will inspect culverts which means that specialist bridges staff based at County Hall will no longer need to do that. The main ICT system used by highways staff has been re-procured and a new system is in place. This has enabled some new, more efficient, processes to be put in place along with new equipment like tablets for staff who spend most of their time away from the office. A staff consultation on the changes has been carried out and some changes made to the proposed structure as a result.</p> <p>The final element is a change in the inspection frequency for main roads (principal main distributor and HGV access routes). This will increase from four weekly to six weekly. The new Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance allows a risk based approach rather than prescribing a standard frequency for highway inspection. The professional officer view is that the proposed change is low risk.</p>
6.	Implement new national guidance for winter maintenance	New National guidance is being issued that means we can make a small change to the temperature thresholds we work to when making a decision about whether to grit the roads. This means we will go out less, but the change will only affect marginal decisions and officers will continue to closely review information on weather and road conditions in making decision. We will still treat the roads when needed, and the network of roads gritted remains unchanged.
7.	Further capitalisation of highways maintenance activities 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 highways projects and therefore no service reduction.
8.	One off saving - Further capitalisation of highways maintenance activities in 2016/17, to release a revenue saving to carry forward to 2017/18	As 7. above.
9.	One-off saving - capitalisation of recycling centre	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 recycling

	Title of proposal	Description
	equipment spend to release a revenue saving	centres and therefore no service reduction.
10.	Additional income (Scottow Enterprise Park)	The service already has a target to generate income. Based on current income levels and site occupancy, there is scope to increase the target.

9. In addition to the eight new proposals above, it is also proposed to bring forward part of the following budget saving from 2018/19 to 2017/18. This saving has already previously been approved by Members, having considered the results of the public consultation and equality impact assessment:-

Bring forward part of EDT032 – implementing a new waste strategy - from 2018/19 to 2017/18. The full agreed saving for 2018/19 is £2.000m, and we are proposing to bring forward £0.100m to 2017/18.

Who is affected?

10. The proposals could affect staff, residents, visitors and businesses. 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

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

	Title of proposal	Description
1.	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"> • These posts are already vacant • The deletion of these posts will not lead to changes to service standards or delivery.
2.	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"> • The back office spend reductions will not lead to changes to service standards or delivery.
3.	Reduction in Economic Development project fund	<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 continue to be budget available to fund projects, and we will continue to seek funding from alternative sources. • The remaining fund will be equally accessible to groups in both rural and urban areas. • The budget being reduced is currently unallocated and therefore not linked to any specific project or area of work.
4.	Waste – efficiency savings through robust management of costs	<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"> • This relates to ‘back office’ efficiencies, and will not lead to changes to service standards or delivery.
5.	Rationalise our highway depot provision and change inspection frequency for main roads	<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"> • The only change in service standard or delivery is the change of inspection frequency for main roads, which is considered to be low risk. This impacts similarly on both rural and urban areas. There are no changes to other service standards or delivery. • The overall budget available for highway maintenance and improvements will not change. • Whilst the office at Caister will close, it was not a public facing building and therefore did not receive visitors. The site will continue to be used by roadworkers. Staff will continue to work out and about in Caister and the surrounding area.

	Title of proposal	Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area based staff will continue to be allocated to work on a specific 'patch', enabling them to focus on a particular area of Norfolk and build up relationships etc. with key stakeholders within the area to ensure we can best understand local needs. • The introduction of more generic roles, like the streetscene inspector, should lead to an improved service in both rural and urban areas as individuals carrying out the role will be able to answer queries and offer support on a wider range of services, needing to refer less to colleagues. • 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 30-35, there is a high number of temporary, acting 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. • 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</p>

	Title of proposal	Description
		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.
6.	Implement new national guidance for winter maintenance	<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"> • The proposal is about improving our decision making process so that we only grit the network when it is needed. This would apply equally to both urban and rural areas. • There is no change to the road network covered by the gritting service.
7.	Further capitalisation of highways maintenance activities 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:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall budget available for highway maintenance and improvements will not change. • The process for assessing, prioritising and planning out highway maintenance works and improvements – including accessibility considerations for disabled people, and improvements in rural areas - will not change.
8.	One off saving - Further capitalisation of highways maintenance activities in 2016/17, to release a revenue saving to carry forward to 2017/18	As 7. above.
9.	One-off saving - capitalisation of recycling centre equipment spend 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:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall budget available for recycling centres will not change.
10.	Additional income (Scottow Enterprise Park)	<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

	Title of proposal	Description
		<p>charges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

Accessibility considerations

13. 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.
14. The services reporting to the EDT Committee are universal services in that they are used by all residents and visitors in Norfolk. Individuals with protected characteristics can often have a greater reliance on the availability of the physical infrastructure, for example the highway network, to access the things they need day to day. In particular, disabled and vulnerable people (including older and young people).
15. 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 EDT 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.	Identify potential opportunities for maximizing accessibility in ongoing service planning and commissioning across EDT 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.