



Norfolk County Council

Communities Committee budget proposals 2019-2020

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 purpose of equality and rural assessments is to enable elected members to consider the potential impact of decisions on different people and communities prior to decisions being taken. Mitigating actions can be developed if detrimental 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** – evidence is gathered on the proposal, to examine who might be affected and how. This includes reviewing the findings of related assessments and public consultation, contextual information about local populations and other relevant data. Where appropriate, public consultation takes place.
 - **Phase 2** – the results are analysed. The assessments are drafted, making sure that any potential impacts are fully assessed. If the evidence indicates that a proposal may have a detrimental impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural communities, mitigating actions are considered.
 - **Phase 3** – the findings are reported to service committees, to enable any impacts to be taken into account before a decision is made.

Communities budget proposals 2019-2020

6. Communities Committee has put forward nine budget proposals for 2019-2020:

| | Title of proposal | Description |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | Norfolk Record Office (NRO) – reduction in search room opening hours | This proposal would see the opening hours of the search room reduce from 41.5 hours a week to between 28 and 30 hours a week. There will also be reductions in the amount of documents the NRO is able to receive and process, educational and outreach work, support for the NRO's charitable partner and preservation work. This is not expected to impact on the income that the service generates from copy certificates and digitization. |
| 2. | Reduction in Strategic Arts Development Fund | This proposal would reduce the budget we make available for strategic arts initiatives which require local authority match-funding investment. This would still leave £0.035m in the budget to continue to support arts initiatives which leverage substantial external funding. We will continue our significant work supporting the Arts in Norfolk through other funding streams and major strategic projects. |
| 3. | Vacancy management – removal of vacant posts | This relates to posts in various services within the CES department. As part of the overall recruitment approach in the department, we actively review vacancies and, where they arise, take opportunities to test out new ways of working, including alternative ways to structure work allocation within teams. |
| 4. | Restructure of teams - Millennium Library | As part of previous savings proposals, a number of changes were made to the staffing structure in branch libraries. A saving associated with the staffing structure at the Millennium library was also agreed for 2019-20. Work to implement the agreed saving, and to develop a revised staffing structure, has identified opportunities to make additional savings with limited impact on front-line services through further rationalisation of management posts. As with the changes in branch libraries, the change will reflect the changing role of front-line library assistants and will bring the grading of these posts in line with colleagues in branch libraries (which will represent an increase in pay). |
| 5. | Library service back office efficiencies | The saving will be delivered through re-procurement of contracts for public access PCs, cleaning and maintenance, and a reduction on the spend on the materials budget. |
| 6. | Income Generation | The majority of this saving (£70k) relates to the Trading Standards service. This will be through generating additional income from the Metrology team and Primary Authority work. Based on previous activity, we feel that this is a level of income that can be delivered. The Amber rating reflects the inherent risk associated with income generation i.e. that we are subject to market factors. The remaining £50k will be delivered by renting space available at the Millennium Library – this will not affect the operation of the library. |
| 7. | Review of contract inflation | The saving will be delivered by not applying inflation to contracts. There is no statutory requirement to apply |

| | Title of proposal | Description |
|----|---|---|
| | assumptions | inflation increases. There is an assumed level of inflation increase already built into planned budgets, and by not applying this inflation (where appropriate) we can revise this. |
| 8. | Restructure of teams – various changes to team structures (reduction in overall numbers of posts) | This proposal relates to reviewing and remodelling staffing structures in some teams in customer services, trading standards and museums. This includes taking further opportunities to further rationalise management structures and introduce new ways of working e.g. self-service. There will be an overall reduction in the number of posts but this should not have any significant impact on service delivery. The 2020/21 saving amount relates entirely to the Castle museum. There will be a need to deliver this saving for 2019/20, so that it can be used to offset anticipated income pressures as a result of works on the Castle Keep during that year. |
| 9. | Remodel the service provided by the MATCH team within the Norfolk Community Learning Service (NCLS) so that the employment support service can be provided directly to clients by day opportunities providers (DOPs). | <p>In future, the MATCH team – which will be known as the LD Skills and Employment team - will have a more strategic role, leading the development of employment and volunteering opportunities with employers, supporting and increasing the confidence of employers, supporting the day opportunities providers and creating strong links with mainstream services and training providers.</p> <p>The team will also develop online information for stakeholders so that readily available links to resources are available to support people with a learning disability into employment.</p> <p>The team will increase support for the day opportunities providers and will be less involved in directly supporting individuals with a learning disability. They will become specialists in their job role and develop a strong understanding of gaps in the employment market so as to support the Norfolk economy.</p> |

Who is affected?

7. The proposals will affect residents, visitors and businesses in Norfolk, including people with protected characteristics and in rural areas, and our staff:

| | |
|---|------------|
| People of all ages | YES |
| Disability (all disabilities and long-term health conditions, including but not limited to people with, for example, reduced mobility; Blind and visually impaired people; Deaf and hearing impaired people; people with mental health issues; people who are neurodiverse (e.g. on the Autism spectrum); people with learning difficulties and people with dementia). | 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/people who identify as intersex) | YES |
| Sexual orientation (e.g. lesbian, gay and bisexual people) | YES |

Potential impact

8. At this stage, there is no evidence to indicate that any of the proposals will have a detrimental impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas.
9. The proposal to remodel the service provided by the MATCH team within the Norfolk Community Learning Service has the potential to increase the number of employment and volunteering opportunities available with employers for people with learning difficulties and disabilities, by supporting and increasing the confidence of employers, supporting the day opportunities providers and creating strong links with mainstream services and training providers.
10. The proposal to reduce the search room opening hours for the Norfolk Record Office will impact on all service users, but this will not disproportionately impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas.
11. The reasons for this are set out below:

| | Title of proposal | Impact |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | Norfolk Record Office – reduction in search room opening hours | <p>People who use our searchroom services would be affected by this proposal, which includes people with protected characteristics and in rural areas.</p> <p>Probably the greatest impact is on working people who may not be able to use the searchroom during working hours and rely currently on the Thursday late night opening.</p> <p>However, the Council is proposing to maintain one late-night opening a month, which means that working people will continue to have access to later opening.</p> <p>Other people using record office services might be affected. The change in focus of staff might mean that there are fewer outreach and educational events for people to attend. The NRO may also not be able to support as many volunteers or people on work experience placements. However, this would affect all users, and not disproportionately impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas. If someone needed help to access NRO services due to, for example, a disability, they would continue to be able to access this help.</p> |

| | Title of proposal | Impact |
|----|---|---|
| | | Some staff on temporary contracts would not have these renewed. However, there is no evidence to indicate that staff with protected characteristics would be disproportionately affected by this element of the proposal. |
| 2. | Reduction in Strategic Arts Development Fund | <p>A reduction in the Strategic Arts Development budget will mean that there is less resource available to the County Council for strategic arts initiatives which require local authority match-funding investment.</p> <p>However, there is no evidence that this will impact disproportionately on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas, as the impact will be across all groups and projects, not one group in particular.</p> |
| 3. | Vacancy management – removal of vacant posts | There is no evidence to indicate that this proposal would have any detrimental impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas. This is because the deletion of these posts will not lead to changes to service standards, quality or delivery. Staff with protected characteristics will not be disproportionately affected compared to other staff. |
| 4. | Restructure of teams - Millennium Library | There is no evidence to indicate that this proposal would have any detrimental impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas. This is because the restructure of these teams will not lead to changes to service standards, quality or delivery. Staff with protected characteristics will not be disproportionately affected compared to other staff. |
| 5. | Library service back office efficiencies | There is no evidence to indicate that this proposal would have any detrimental impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas. This is because there is no change to service standards, quality or delivery. |
| 6. | Income Generation | There is no evidence to indicate that this proposal would have any detrimental impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas. This is because there is no change to service standards, quality or delivery. |
| 7. | Review of contract inflation assumptions | There is no evidence to indicate that this proposal would have any detrimental impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas. This is because there is no change to service standards, quality or delivery. |
| 8. | Restructure of teams – various changes to team structures (reduction in overall numbers of posts) | There is no evidence to indicate that this proposal would have any detrimental impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas. This is because the restructure of these teams will not lead to changes to service standards, quality or delivery. Staff with protected characteristics will not be |

| | Title of proposal | Impact |
|----|---|---|
| | | disproportionately affected compared to other staff. |
| 9. | Remodel the service provided by the MATCH team within Norfolk Community Learning Service so that the employment support service can be provided directly to clients by day opportunities providers. | <p>There is no evidence to indicate that this proposal would have any detrimental impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas. This is because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal to remodel the service provided by the MATCH team within the Norfolk Community Learning Service has the potential to increase the number of employment and volunteering opportunities available with employers for people with learning difficulties and disabilities, by supporting and increasing the confidence of employers, supporting the day opportunities providers and creating strong links with mainstream services and training providers. • The proposal may lead to some changes in how employment support is delivered, and who delivers it, but this is not anticipated to have any significant impact on service users. This means that service users, including service users from rural areas, will not experience any changes in the quality or standards of the service they receive or be disadvantaged. They will continue to receive support relative to their needs. • The proposal will not lead to new or increased costs for service users. • The principles of promoting Independence strategy will guide the design and delivery of this proposal. Promoting independence strategy prioritises the independence, dignity and safety of disabled people, including people with learning difficulties, and draws directly on the voices of disabled service users to guide service design. Disabled people consistently report that these are critical factors in supporting well-being. • Opportunities for building greater levels of accessibility and inclusion for disabled and older people into the design of services will be considered as part of the commissioning process. • To ensure a smooth transition for the 90+ people currently supported by the MATCH service, commissioning staff, operational staff, NCLS, and Day Opportunity Providers will write and implement a transition plan for service users. This will ensure a comprehensive transition phase, and adequate support, from the existing service to the new service. Communication with service users and their families and carers will be managed robustly by Social Workers or relevant operational staff. Communication with DOPs will be increased to ensure that the hand over to the |

| | Title of proposal | Impact |
|--|-------------------|--|
| | | successful new providers of Skills and Employment Pathways can be carried out successfully. There is approximately a 6 months period whereby the support provided by the current MATCH will move over to the new arrangements. |

Accessibility considerations

12. 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.
13. Proposals relating to business process re-engineering will take full opportunity to build accessibility considerations into service planning and design.
14. Proposals relating to contract review will also take full opportunity to build accessibility considerations into service design.

Human rights implications

15. Public authorities in the UK are required to act compatibly with the Human Rights Act 1998. There are no human rights issues arising from the proposals.

Recommended actions

| | Action | Lead | Date |
|----|--|---|----------------------|
| 1. | To ensure a smooth transition for the 90+ people currently supported by the MATCH service, commissioning staff, operational staff, NCLS, and Day Opportunity Providers to write and implement a transition plan for individuals. This to ensure a comprehensive transition phase, and adequate support, from the existing service to the new service. Communication with service users and their families and carers to be managed robustly by Social Workers or relevant operational staff. Communication with DOPs to be increased to ensure that the hand over to the successful new providers of Skills and Employment Pathways can be carried out successfully. | Assistant Director, Community, Information and Learning | By 30 September 2019 |
| 2. | 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. | Senior HR Consultant (Workforce Insight) | From 1 April 2019 |

Evidence used to inform this assessment

- Norfolk budget proposals 2019/20 – consultation documents, background papers and consultation findings
- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- Business intelligence and management data, as quoted in this report.
- Relevant service specific Codes of Practice and national guidance

Further information

For further information about this equality impact assessment please contact Jo Richardson, Equality & Diversity Manager, Email jo.richardson@norfolk.gov.uk



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Jo Richardson 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.