

Equality Impact Assessment Form for the Budget process



Warwickshire County Council

Equality Impact Assessment for Budget process

Directorate	<i>Corporate</i>
Service Area	<i>Countywide</i>
Policy/Service being affected	<i>All services</i>
Is this an investment or proposed saving?	<i>The 2011/12 budget for the county council includes both revenue and capital investment and a significant level of revenue savings</i>
Is this proposed saving or investment directly linked to another i.e. that an investment in a new or existing service relates to a saving in another area? If so please name the linked proposal.	<i>All the savings and investment proposals covered by this EIA are part of the Council's overall approach to balancing the 2011/12 budget within the resources available for the benefit of the people of Warwickshire.</i>
Who is undertaking this assessment?	<i>Virginia Rennie</i>
Date of this assessment	<i>9 February 2011</i>
Signature of completing officer	
Name and signature of Strategic Director (to be signed after the EIA has been completed)	<i>David Clarke</i>
Name and signature of Corporate Equalities Lead Officer (to be signed after the EIA has been completed)	<i>David Carter</i>
Is your proposal likely to result in complaints from existing services users and/or members of the public?	YES



Form A1

INITIAL SCREENING FOR BUDGET DECISIONS – DO THEY HAVE ANY RELEVANCE OR POSE ANY RISK TO ANY OF THE EQUALITIES GROUPS?



High relevance/priority



Medium relevance/priority



Low or no relevance/ priority

Note:

1. Tick coloured boxes appropriately, and depending on degree of relevance to each of the equality strands
2. Summaries of the legislation/guidance should be used to assist this screening process

DEPARTMENT:	Relevance/Risk to Equalities																				
State the service or proposal being assessed:	Gender inc transgender			Race			Disability			Sexual Orientation			Religion/Belief			Age			Priority status For EIA		
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>The overall budget for the County Council agrees the allocation of £341.8 million. This includes £15.5 million of new allocations and £32.9 million of savings. Allocations of this significance will impact on all those who come into contact with the county council be they service users, staff, of the citizens of Warwickshire more generally.</i>	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓					
Are your proposals likely to impact on social inequalities e.g. child poverty for example or our most geographically disadvantaged communities																					

Form A2a – proposed savings

Equality Impact Assessment

Stage 1 – Scoping and Defining

(1) What are the aims and objectives of where savings are to be made?

With the reductions in public spending required as part of reducing the national deficit it was inevitable from an early stage that significant savings would be needed. This meant that everything was on the table, everything was examined. From the outset a clear set of principles were put in place to evaluate and assess both demands for increased resources and the potential savings. These principles were:

- ❖ To protect the most vulnerable and the front line services that support them.*
- ❖ To keep people safe, foster independence and support enterprise*
- ❖ To strive to achieve value for money*
- ❖ To focus on providing a leaner organisation, essential to having effective front-line services*

At all stages in the development of the budget these principles were key to the decisions made. However, the level of savings needed meant that nothing could be protected entirely. Instead the focus was on ensuring only areas of clear need or unavoidable costs were funded and where possible mitigating actions could be put in place to minimise the effects of service users, staff and the people of Warwickshire, as identified in the specific EIAs for each savings proposal.

(2) How does the service fit with the council's wider objectives?

The principles and approach taken are consistent with both the Corporate Business Plan and Directorate objectives. The joint process for the development of both the Corporate Business Plan and the Budget, agreed in June, recognised that the Corporate Business Plan, Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan are the key documents in outlining the direction of travel of the organisation and that the focus of the budget and medium term financial plan is put the resources in place which allow the authority to move towards the delivery of it's Vision.

The link to directorate objectives was achieved through key role of service statements about their contribution to the delivery of the Vision and Corporate Business Plan but also reflecting:

- ◆ A working assumption that by 2013/14 services will only have 70% of the resources they have this year.*
- ◆ A narrative of the rationale used in coming to these conclusions to generate a common understanding of why the direction of travel is being proposed.*
- ◆ The changes that would be required to the current method of service delivery, and*
- ◆ The services that would no longer be provided, consistent with the rationale outlined above.*

<p>(3) What would have been the expected outcomes of the service?</p> <p>Who would have benefited from the service and in what way?</p>	<p><i>The expected outcomes for our services are detailed in the Corporate Business Plan and individual Directorate Service Plans.</i></p> <p><i>The services the County Council delivers benefit all of the people of Warwickshire, to a greater or lesser extent, depending on their needs.</i></p>		
<p>(4) Does this proposed saving have the potential to directly or indirectly discriminate against any particular group or to compound issues of social inequality?</p> <p>Please identify all groups that are affected</p>	<p>RACE ✓ A</p>	<p>AGE ✓</p>	<p>GENDER inc Transgender ✓</p>
	<p>RELIGION/BELIEF ✓</p>	<p>DISABILITY ✓</p>	<p>SEXUAL ORIENTATION ✓</p>
	<p><i>Because of the level of savings (£32.9 million) required the impact will be felt across all the communities of Warwickshire and also by staff across the organisation. Specific proposals will have greater/lesser impacts on specific groups and these are clearly identified in the individual EIAs for the savings proposals.</i></p>		
<p>(5) Are there any negative impacts on social inequality issues? This includes impacts on child poverty for example or our most geographically disadvantaged communities</p>	<p><i>Due to the need to identify £32.9 million of savings there is bound to be an impact on social inequality. There are savings proposals relating to early intervention and charging for example. However, as mentioned before all the savings proposals have been subject to an EIA that identifies any potential impacts and the mitigating actions proposed.</i></p> <p><i>Investment of additional resources to meet the growing needs for services has focused specifically on adult social care and support for vulnerable children.</i></p>		
<p><u>Stage 2 - Information Gathering</u></p>			
<p>(1) What type and range of evidence or information have you used to help you make a judgement about the cut to this particular service?</p>	<p><i>As outlined above, services' statements about their contribution to the delivery of the Vision and Corporate Business Plan played a key role in the development of the budget proposals. Scrutiny and validation of these statements was undertaken by SDLT and members. From these statements the detailed savings proposals (and their individual EIAs) and those additional spending pressures to be funded were derived, and formed the basis of the budget to be approved.</i></p>		

(2) Have you been able to use any consultation data to help make this decision, if so what?

The medium term financial plan last year identified that significant savings would be needed over the next few years. In order to seek the views of a wide cross-section of both the people of Warwickshire and staff, two consultation processes – an on-line budget simulator and an information leaflet – were launched.

Warwickshire County Council's (WCC) on-line budget simulator was called "YouChoose". It was an interactive, on-line budget simulator which allowed people to submit responses as to how they would set the Council's 2011/12 budget.

Alongside YouChoose, an information leaflet, called "Facing the Challenge", was issued. The leaflet provided background information on the level of savings needed, the overall approach to balancing the budget being taken by the Council and some of the savings proposals under consideration. In response to the information in the leaflet, the Council invited people to give their views.

In total there were 952 users who accessed and started Warwickshire's YouChoose model. 426 completed the simulator and submitted a response. Overall these show the respondents broadly reflect the demographics of Warwickshire. Of the 426 users that completed the YouChoose simulator 130 submitted further suggestions covering 341 separate points

The lowest priority services, from the YouChoose respondents were 'Council Support and Public Engagement' and 'Libraries and Culture' At the other end of the spectrum, 'Fire and Rescue and Community Safety', 'Children's Services and Education' and 'Adult Social Care' were the highest priority services.

Fifty detailed responses to the 'Facing the Challenges' leaflet were received during the consultation period. Of these respondents 13 were internal (4 from schools) and 37 were from outside the Council.

Overall the responses reflected the authority's principles in developing the budget, prioritising protection of the most vulnerable and the front line services that support them, keeping people safe, value for money and providing a leaner organisation.

With the limited resources available the draft proposals issued in the autumn have been amended in relation to the youth service and the role of the voluntary and community sector in the delivery of services in response to the feedback received. The feedback also supported the approach of making the Council a leaner organisation with streamlined management structures.

<u>Stage 3 – Making a Judgement</u>	
(1) From the evidence above is there any adverse or negative impact identified for any particular group?	<p><i>Delivery of the savings plans will have adverse impacts for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>customers from the service changes</i> ◆ <i>staff as delivery of the savings plan results in an estimated reduction of 1,855 in the number of jobs by 2013/14, and</i> ◆ <i>communities because local facilities may need to be closed.</i>
(2) If there is an adverse impact, can this be justified?	<p><i>The financial position of the authority is such that change is inevitable. £32.9 million savings cannot be delivered without any negative impacts. By the end of 2013/14 the authority will be a leaner organisation with reformed services. Throughout this period and despite the difficult decisions we will need to take scarce resources will be prioritised to meet the needs of our communities.</i></p>
(3) if there is an adverse impact on social inequalities can these be justified?	<p><i>As stated above, the authority has no choice but to find the savings needed to balance the budget. However, within this process resources have been found to meet the needs of vulnerable people where they can be identified. For example, £7.8 million has been set aside to meet the increased demand for services from older people and those with learning or physical disabilities and mental health needs and £7.2 million to fund the costs associated with the continued rise in the number of looked after children and children subject to a child protection plan.</i></p>

(4) What actions could be taken or have been taken to reduce or eliminate negative or adverse impact?

Customers and Communities

Where difficult choices are needed will we deliver the changes sensitively, working with customers and communities to find alternative solutions to meet local needs.

The savings plan clearly identifies where policy changes are needed and the authority is committed to undertaking consultation with customers and communities on these changes to ensure all options are explored and the adverse impacts on individuals and communities are minimised.

At a local level the authority has been developing geographic ways of working that are small enough to be considered local but large enough to be affordable. Locality models will be further developed and the authority will consider how local elected members can use these vehicles to commission local solutions. The final budget reinstates £150,000 into the infrastructure of the voluntary and community sector to support the development of a joint, focussed service that offers a one-stop shop approach for organisations wanting to take up the opportunities offered by the Big Society approach to service delivery and to develop capable and able communities.

Staff

Over half of the authority's spending each year is on staffing and of these the majority are female. Any proposals to deliver savings of this level will require, in some areas, a reduction in the number of posts. A reduction of up to 1,855 posts has been estimated by 2013/14 and hence a greater number of females will be impacted by the delivery of the savings plan. A range of policies and processes are in place to mitigate the impact on staff. These include redeployment policies, freezing of vacancies and offers of early retirement and voluntary redundancy.

However, it has to be recognised, some redundancies will be necessary, resulting in a need to fund redundancy costs. A provision of £10 million to fund redundancy costs and a further £15 million to fund early retirements are available if needed.

Reinvestment

Following release of draft proposals £2.1 million available resource was identified. This has been used to mitigate the adverse impacts of the savings proposals. In addition to the £150,000 for the voluntary and community sector:

- ◆ *£1 million has been allocated to alleviate some of the savings in the youth service*
- ◆ *£250,000 will maintain road safety cameras at accident blackspots, protecting people from harm*
- ◆ *£400,000 will maintain winter gritting at current levels promoting economic well-being and limiting school closures, and*
- ◆ *£350,000 will use used to limit the reductions in bus subsidies, maintaining access to services for some of the more vulnerable people, who would otherwise remain isolated.*

<p>(5) Is there any positive impact?</p> <p>Does it promote equality of opportunity between different groups and actively address discrimination?</p>	<p><i>As outlined above, although the focus of the budget has inevitably been on the identification of savings. However, the budget also includes £15.5 million of new allocations, the majority of which are directed to meeting the increased demand for services from the most vulnerable. The investments made are seeking to promote equality and fairness.</i></p>																									
<p><u>Stage 4 – Action Planning, Review & Monitoring</u></p>																										
<p>If No Further Action is required then go to – Review & Monitoring</p> <p>(1) Action Planning – Specify any action which could be taken to mitigate or eradicate negative or adverse impact on specific groups, including resource implications.</p>	<p>EIA Action Plan</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="779 531 2042 761"> <thead> <tr> <th>Action</th> <th>Lead Officer</th> <th>Date for completion</th> <th>Resource requirements</th> <th>Comments</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Action	Lead Officer	Date for completion	Resource requirements	Comments																				
Action	Lead Officer	Date for completion	Resource requirements	Comments																						
<p>(2) Review and Monitoring</p> <p>State how and when you will monitor the impact of this proposed saving</p>	<p><i>Each of the lower level savings proposals has an EIA in place which identifies the action planning and review and monitoring arrangements needed.</i></p> <p><i>Monitoring of the overall savings plan will be reported quarterly identifying the service impacts, and adverse implications and actions needed to deliver the savings. In particular attention will be paid to the potential adverse impact of any alternative savings proposals identified, to replace any the in approved plan which do not deliver savings to the level expected or are delayed.</i></p>																									

Please annotate your proposed saving with the following statement:

‘An Equality Impact Assessment on this proposed saving was undertaken on (date of assessment) and will be reviewed on date (one years from the date it was assessed)’.