

# Service and Financial Planning 2014/15 to 2015/16 – Equality Impact Analysis

## Section 1 – Overview

The Service and Financial Planning report aims to show how we will achieve a balanced budgetary position for the coming financial year 2014/15 and provide a clear pathway for future financial management. This report identifies how we intend to spend our money and gather income for the whole Council on an annual basis. Included in this are recommended savings and potential income generating actions that may have an impact on people within the borough.

This impact assessment is designed to draw out identified potential positive and negative impacts related to the overarching budget strategy and its implementation in relation to the protected characteristics;

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Transgender Status
- Race/Ethnicity or Nationality
- Religion or Beliefs
- Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy Or Maternity
- Marriage Or Civil Partnership
- Deprivation
- Or any combination of characteristics

It does this in respect to the protected characteristics and the aims of the General Equality Duty;

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between different groups

This impact analysis does not look at each saving individually but refers to the overarching budget strategy and cumulative sections.

The process that has been used to identify savings which require further analysis is detailed within the main report, Section 12. The outcomes of that process are shown in Appendix 4B.

### Background

The Council is facing a challenging time and has done for a number of years. The situation can be summed up as reducing resources in the face of greater demand for statutory services.

On 7 March 2013, the Council's Service & Financial Planning strategy for the period 2013/14-2015/16 was approved by Full Council.

This strategy outlined a range of principles that had been established to provide a fair and consistent needs-based approach

- Develop spending plans that address the community's needs and priorities and support the long-term economic growth of the Borough;
- Be transparent about how resources are spent across the Borough, but target spend at issues and areas where need is greatest;
- As a Co-operative Council, involve the community and partners in the budget-setting process;
- Seek to minimise the level of Council Tax increase, balanced against growing demands for Council services;
- Deliver efficiencies and savings, as far as possible minimising the impact on priority front-line services;
- Adopt a commercial, entrepreneurial approach to generating additional income and securing external investment;
- Like a business, it is prudent to set aside some money to deal with any unforeseen circumstances caused by the current economic situation (a contingency);
- Use reserves and balances responsibly, balancing the need to maintain services with financial prudence;
- Where possible cut our reliance on borrowing for some capital schemes so that expenditure on debt repayments can be reduced;
- Sell some of our land and property to reduce borrowing, cut running costs and to fund priority facilities and schemes.

These principles have been developed from engagement conducted with several thousand contacts including professionals and members of the public through a range of methods and techniques to deliver a representative sample. The consultation feedback used to develop these principles can be found [http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/3700/2012\\_budget\\_consultation\\_final\\_summary](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/3700/2012_budget_consultation_final_summary)

The saving and efficiency programme has been on-going for sometime and the Service and Financial Planning 14/15–15/16 report continues to build on the 2012/13 and 2013/14 reports The 2013/14 report can be found here; [http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4496/overview\\_and\\_revenue\\_budget\\_report](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4496/overview_and_revenue_budget_report)

The Council's budget situation is constantly changing, so in line with good financial management we monitor the situation throughout the year. Regular reports are made to Cabinet, Council and Scrutiny with action identified to correct any variations. We revisit analysis of our Service and Financial Planning regularly and as savings are proposed, assess their relevance and impact in relation to our equality duty.

We have been direct in tackling the challenges we face and taken a number of steps;

### **Restructuring & service review**

We have gone through a fundamental change in philosophy of approach and organisation, focusing our attention on co-operative preventative actions rather than costly unilateral interventions. In doing so reducing management and staffing costs whilst maintaining standards and avoiding duplication. This also affords us the opportunity to improve access to services and therefore equality of opportunity.

## **Growth and investment**

There are Government incentives to grow our business and housing numbers. Along with direct capital investment in the likes of Southwater the Council has been able to attract significant levels of investment into the borough. This has seen a return in business rates, Council tax receipts and New Homes Bonus.

Through economic growth we are able to mitigate some of the impact of budget reductions and invest resources into tackling key challenges. Examples include;

- Youth Unemployment – approximately 1 in 4 young people (16-24) who are actively seeking work or training in the borough are currently unemployed. £1.3 million will be invested in programmes of support over the next 2 years.
- Disabled Facilities Grant – £0.7 million supporting people to remain independent in their home rather than a care facility matched against a Government grant of £0.7 million
- Children and Young People Safeguarding – creation of £1.2million drawdown budget to meet peaks in demand
- Pride in Your Community - £8 million capital and £1.6 million revenue funding in highways, the environment and community led investments and initiatives across the whole of the borough.
- Care leavers grant – doubling to £2,000, a £30,000 per annum investment

## **Council tax**

The Council has the power to alter the level of Council Tax.

The Government have offered an on-going grant, equivalent to a 1% increase in Council Tax, for authorities that freeze Council Tax. This is calculated prior to a range of reductions so is actually equivalent to 1.2% within our budget.

This is a significant change by the Government on how the grant is managed. Previously it was a one-off grant with no guarantee of continued funding. Accepting previous grant offers would potentially have left an even larger gap in future budgets when that funding was withdrawn.

The Council are proposing a Council tax freeze, acknowledging that this will mean there is a budget gap of approximately £350,000 per annum, the difference between 1.2% and 1.9% Council Tax increase. Our growth strategy will mitigate this shortfall and will make sure that the Council minimises its impact on the cost of living for the whole community.

## **Fair Deal**

We believe that Telford and Wrekin is not receiving a fair deal from central Government nor the local NHS Clinical Commissioning Group.

There are a number of factors;

- A population undercount impacting on the assessed needs of the block grant provided by central Government.

- Uneven grant reductions across Government and a relatively low level of Council tax - services are being further devolved to local level from central Government yet local authorities face a cut in grant allocation approximately three times more than central Government whilst being asked to deliver more. Telford and Wrekin has the fourth lowest Council tax in the West Midlands.
- Grant damping significantly impacts the borough because of our population growth. Grant damping is when the Government tries to lessen the impact of budget reductions in one local authority by removing grant from the increased assessed need of another authority. Originally designed to smooth budgetary transition, this system has had a number of safeguards removed which now penalise growing authorities.
- Continuing Health Care costs from Telford and Wrekin CCG equate to £8.5 million. The proportion of costs that have transferred to the Council is far higher than other local areas and not reflective of the health and deprivation experienced in some areas of the borough.

We will campaign for a fair deal from central Government and negotiate with Telford and Wrekin CCG to receive a fairer balance of costs relative to the regional and national picture.

### **Engagement**

Engagement with our communities is essential to develop effective approaches to the varied challenges we face. The feedback helps to inform the direction and implementation of proposals. The methods we have used are detailed in section 4 of the Service and Financial Planning 2014/15 - 2015/16 report and a programme of engagement and feedback can be found in appendix 5.

### **Timeframe**

The proposals shown in the Service and Financial Planning 2014/15 to 2015/16 report will be implemented between April 2014 and March 2016. Wherever possible they will be delivered ahead of schedule to maximise savings.

This report is updated annually with monitoring reports throughout the year. As savings are proposed they are assessed for their relevance to equality and targeted engagement. Impact analyses are integrated where appropriate. This is to ensure impact on our communities and the Equality Duty are considered in a timely manner

Name of person completing impact assessment and their post	Richard Taylor-Murison, Equalities Officer
Telephone	01952 382104
Date started	28 January 2014
Other officers/Stakeholders involved	Ken Clarke, Chief Financial Officer; Andy Challenor, Community Engagement and Equalities Manager.

## Section 2 – Impact Assessment

Positive and negative impacts are assessed with regard to the aims of the General Equality Duty;

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between different groups

		Potential Impact		
		Positive	Negative	None
People of different ages	<p>Young vulnerable people in care are being protected by continued investment in services.</p> <p>Young unemployed people will also benefit from a renewed focus on support to gain skills and employment.</p> <p>Older Adult Social Care service users will have increased opportunities and decision resulting from the further rollout of personal budgets</p>	<p>There are potential negative impacts for older people as they represent a large proportion of users of our Adult Social Care Services which are undergoing significant change.</p>		
People with ill health or people with a disability	<p>The proposals protect those individuals with the most severe disabilities.</p>	<p>Changes to criteria for services / support on may unintentionally have the effect of reducing opportunities for participation and access for some people with disabilities.</p>		
People of different gender	<p>There is a higher proportion of young unemployed men than women who will benefit from the growth strategy and focus on youth unemployment.</p>			
People who are transgender				X
Different racial groups				X
People with different religion or beliefs				X

People of different sexual orientation			X
Women who are pregnant or breast-feeding			X
People that are married or in a civil partnership			X
People affected by deprivation			X

Whilst the overall trend of service provision is realignment and streamlining, there will inevitably be some reduction in the capacity that the Council can deliver. Whilst undergoing significant changes there has been a greater recognition of the needs of vulnerable individuals in the community and that in order to best meet these needs we must work in partnership with the community, voluntary organisations, statutory agencies and businesses.

The renewed emphasis on growth and improvement of the local economy will have significant impact on the wider community benefiting all sections but in particular young people, people with lower educational achievement (largely young men), who have been disproportionately impacted in the labour market during recession and reduction in employment opportunities. Growing businesses lead to more jobs and greater prosperity within the local economy and in turn leads to more opportunities.

### Positive impacts

- Young people in care

Investment in the children in care is essential to ensure the safety and life chances of young people who for one reason or another find themselves in care. There has been a steady increase in the number of children entering care in recent years and despite significant efficiencies to practice and structure, resilience in the budget is necessary to manage any peaks or urgent needs. This is consistent with previous investment.

Children in care can often find themselves at a significant disadvantage when leaving care without the extended support network available to their peers. The increase in allowance will go some way to supporting this in combination with support from the Care Transition Team.

- Young unemployed people

The borough has a youth unemployment rate higher than the national and regional average. Without investment in programmes to support young people looking for work into employment, the borough is storing up long term problems. The types of programmes available are varied and include job and life skills development, mentoring and volunteering, often delivered in partnership.

Continued and increased spending in this area is essential for young local people to take advantage of the opportunities created through the growth agenda.

- Older Adult Social Care service users

The Council has an emphasis on a re-ablement and preventative approach to managing demand for Adult Social Care. The proposed investment in the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), matched funding on a £1 for £1 basis central Government funding, whilst not exclusively for the use of older people will have a disproportionate impact on this group. Disability is often acquired with age and the DFG will assist to maintain the independence and dignity of an individual preventing or delaying the need to enter residential care where outcomes diminish.

- People with severe disabilities

The most vulnerable in society, people with severe disabilities are largely protected within the proposals. That is not to say that individuals will not necessarily see a change to the way a service is delivered, it is clear that some elements of social care provision have been over-prescribed and go beyond the immediate community care needs of the individual.

- Young unemployed men

Men represent 2 out of 3 young people actively seeking work but unable to find it. Investment in youth employment and skills initiatives will enhance their opportunities and have a significant positive impact.

### **Potential negative impacts**

There is potential for negative impacts for a number of groups who share protected characteristics;

- Older People (65+ years)
- People with ill health or people with a disability

Reductions and changes in services for adult care are more likely to impact on older people and people with a disability. A significant proportion of the Council budget is spent on caring for older people or adults with a disability. It is impossible to achieve the saving without having some impact on these groups of people.

A number of large projects in Care and Support are yet to commence so more detailed information is not available. The Equalities Officer is working with the lead officers in Adult Social Care to understand the impact of the proposed changes to working practices on the Equality Duty and individual rights.

In relation to the potential negative impacts identified above further information relating to mitigating actions to reduce or eliminate the impact are included in Section 3 below.

### **No identified impact**

There is no indication that a disproportionate positive or negative impact for these protected characteristics exists.

- People who are transgender
- Different racial groups
- People with different religion or beliefs
- People of different sexual orientation
- Women who are pregnant or breast-feeding
- People that are married or in a civil partnership

Whilst we have no indication that an impact will take place for people with these characteristics we will ensure our analysis and monitoring techniques keep this under review. By further enhancing our understanding of the needs of people who share these protected characteristics we may find unidentified impacts to be acted upon.

Supporting this is Census 2011 information, which has been gradually released in more detail. It has allowed us to build an accurate picture of the residents of the borough and some of their needs. Crucial to ensuring a good detailed understanding of our communities beyond statistics is direct community engagement at all levels.

### **Engagement and consultation**

A great deal of engagement and consultation has occurred over the last 3 years, both directly and indirectly with the public, service users and partners including other public sector organisations, businesses and the voluntary sector. This has significantly influenced our approach.

This information has helped to develop the ten guiding principles listed in the background to this report.

Details of previous engagement and equality analysis related to savings identified to be delivered in 2012/13 have informed this years approach. They can be found online;

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/3700/2012\\_budget\\_consultation\\_final\\_summary](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/3700/2012_budget_consultation_final_summary)

Specific engagement has also taken place throughout the year related to the proposals put forward in this 2014/15 - 2015/16 report. Information relating to this engagement is contained within Appendix 5 of the report and section 4 of the main report outlines the process followed.

Broad universal consultation for 2014/15 - 2015/16 has followed a similar format for the overall budget approach;

- Paper survey
- Online survey
- Your Voice (Council newspaper) feedback
- Comments, suggestions and ideas
- Public budget meeting
- Meeting with groups and organisations

A final profile of consultation responses will be published alongside the full report.

The Cabinet will consider final recommendations on 20 February 2014 and Full Council will do so on 28 February 2014.

Specific proposals will be subject to further consultation and engagement, for example the Supporting People Personalisation project, as more information is collected and analysed from service users this will adapt the detail of the proposals fine tuning them to meet the individual needs.

The service and financial planning process is continuous and due to the scale of potential impacts we are constantly looking at the cumulative effects of these changes. Performance and impact information will be made available through the Cabinet web pages;

<http://apps.telford.gov.uk/demservice/CommitteesDetails.asp?theCommittee=cabinet>

### **Section 3 – Mitigating Actions**

Since the Service and Financial Planning 2013/14 to 2015/16 report, the Council have taken steps to mitigate the impact of some savings proposal that would have negative impact on a number of protected groups.

**Older People and People with Disability** - The current year's savings are being delivered through a complete remodelling of service delivery. The new personalised model of service delivery is based on four key actions:

- The continued development of enablement and re-ablement services for the vast majority of service users prior to assessment for ongoing service eligibility and care planning with the objective of reducing or, where deterioration is occurring, stabilisation of pre-existing care package costs.
- Utilise assistive technology as a preventative measure and as an alternative to personal care provision.
- Develop personal budgets and self directed support by individuals as an alternative to Council led service determination.
- Signpost individuals to community and voluntary sector based support as an alternative to Council funded provision.

Any changes with Adult Social Care Services can cause concern and anxiety to individuals who receive those services. The Equalities Officer is working with the lead officers responsible for the suite of proposals related to Adult Social Care Services to ensure the Equality Duty and rights of individuals are respected.

#### **Third Sector support services**

A number of voluntary sector organisations have had their core funding confirmed for the next three financial years. This gives them the confidence to sustain and improve their services to vulnerable people. For example the Citizens Advice Bureau are a key partner for advising individuals who are experiencing financial difficulties or at risk of losing their homes. Without this support pressures on some Council services would increase and be more costly in the long term.

#### **Developing and supporting business opportunities**

The 'Business Supporting, Business Winning Council' priority including the proposed investment of £100,000 revenue funding into initiatives and events will promote Telford and Wrekin as a place to visit, live, work and invest in. This approach will support the growth agenda and in turn mitigate future budget changes. The outcome will be improved opportunities for employment that will benefit in particular young people and people with low educational achievement.

### **Accurate local information**

As an organisation we encourage the collection of relevant information to inform evidence based decision making. Advice and information to support this is available from the Co-operative Council Delivery Team. This has allowed the development of a consistent approach with a clear rationale for the use of monitoring categories.

In order to make sure we are gathering appropriate and relevant information we will engage with key stakeholders around proposals. In doing so stakeholders will have an influence over the decision making process and help us to gauge the impact of our proposals.

Overall, the current strategy will help us to have due regard to the General Equality Duty by driving forward equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination whilst maintaining appropriate and safe statutory services.

## **Section 4 – Review and Monitoring**

It is intended that the majority of proposals will begin implementation from April 2014.

The on-going impact of the financial report will be monitored and reviewed, below is a summary of the proposed actions and key dates

- 4 February 2014 – Engagement completed.
- 20 February 2014 – Report considered by Cabinet
- 27 February 2014 – Report considered by full Council

A series of monitoring reports to Cabinet, Council and Scrutiny will run throughout the year following appropriate financial control and auditing practice.

Individual impact analysis to be conducted on all future savings proposals using the process outlined in the report, Section 12, to occur as they are planned and developed.

Proposals that have already been identified for further analysis and work are shown in Appendix 4b.