ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL **COUNCIL**

CUSTOMER SERVICES **21 FEBRUARY 2019**

BUDGET SAVINGS – ASSESSING EQUALITY AND SOCIO ECONOMIC IMPACT

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Council as a public authority has a duty under the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, the Fairer Scotland Duty (Part one of the Equality Act) and the Island (Scotland) Act (2018) to have due regard to their aims when making strategic financial decisions. This is done through assessing the potential impact of the decision on equality through Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessments (EQSEIAs).

1.2 This report outlines for members the process that has been undertaken to ensure that due regard is given to equalities, islands and the Fairer Scotland Duty in the decision making process on service choices and presents a strategic EQSEIA for the Budget Reconstruction programme to advise on overall impact.

This report has no direct financial implications, but provides information to inform the Council's decision on the 2019/20 budget.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL **COUNCIL**

CUSTOMER SERVICES **21 FEBRUARY 2019**

BUDGET RECONSTRUCTION – ASSESSING EQUALITY AND SOCIO ECONOMIC IMPACT

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Council as a public authority has a duty under the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, the Fairer Scotland Duty (Part one of the Equality Act) and the Island (Scotland) Act (2018) to have due regard to their aims when making strategic financial decisions. This is done through assessing the potential impact of the decision on equality through Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessments (EQSEIAs).

2.2 This report outlines for members the process that has been undertaken to ensure that due regard is given to equalities, islands and the Fairer Scotland Duty in the decision making process on service choices and presents a strategic EQSEIA for the Budget Reconstruction programme to advise on overall impact.

3.0 DETAIL

3.1 The Council as a public authority has a duty to have due regard to those groups protected under the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, the Fairer Scotland Duty (Part one of the Equality Act) and the Island (Scotland) Act (2018), must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.2 **Protected characteristics:** The protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act (2010) are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual orientation.

The areas to be considered as a result of the Fairer Scotland Duty and the Islands Act are as follows:

- Mainland rural population
- Island populations

- Low income
- Low wealth
- Material deprivation
- Area deprivation
- Socio-economic background
- Communities of place
- Communities of interest

3.3 The council discharges this duty by assessing the impact through Equality and Socio Economic Impact Assessments (EQSEIAs). The first step is to determine if a proposal relates to a strategic decision or affects people in any way. If it does, an EQSEIA is required. This was done as the proposals were being developed by Heads of Service through the Transformation Board, which is led by the Executive Director of Customer Services, includes senior management and a representative of the Joint Trade Unions.

This approach complies with the Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance (EHRC), which states that:

*Assessments of the equality and socio-economic impact on must be carried out at a **formative stage** so that the assessment is an integral part of the development of a proposed policy.*

3.4 The Budget is a strategic decision which requires a full EQSEIA. Assessments for the individual savings proposals were carried out by services between October and November 2018, as part of the preparation process and prior to public consultation on the detailed options. This gave services an indication of which savings options had a potential impact in terms of the legislation. This process identified that some of the savings do have an impact on particular groups as set out in Tables 1 and 2 of the attached EQSEIA.

3.5 The assessments carried out have considered the impact on service users and on the workforce. The EQSEIAs were prepared and finalised taking into account the information gathered through the council's budget consultation exercise and other information gathered through consultation and engagement. The process of developing the savings proposals was through the Transformation Board,

3.6 Informed by the individual savings options, a strategic EQSEIA has been carried out to assess the overall, strategic impact of the savings options on equality and socio-economic groups and on the workforce. This assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report for members' information and to take into consideration when reaching a final decision.

3.7 The strategic EQSEIA sets out the overall purpose of the Budget Reconstruction process and provides assurance to members that mitigating actions have been identified and will be put in place if the Council decides to take the savings option. The Strategic EQSEIA has been developed by a process of analysing all of the EQSEIAs prepared as part of the proposal design process and then assessing the overall cumulative impact in terms of the Council's Duties.

3.8 The strategic EQSEIA identifies that there are no cumulative impacts of the savings proposals that impact disproportionately on a specific group.

3.9 There are no impacts identified through the EQSEIA process that show actual or potential unlawful discrimination.

3.10 Members are advised that the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, the Fairer Scotland Duty (Part one of the Equality Act) and the Island (Scotland) Act (2018) duties do not prevent public bodies, such as the Council, from making decisions such as service reductions. The Council's duty is to pay due regard to the legislation and use the impact assessments to inform their decision making. The duties enable the council to demonstrate that it is making financial decisions in a fair, transparent and accountable way, considering the needs and rights of different members of the community. These duties have been discharged by the Council for the Budget Reconstruction process through the EQSEIA.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 The Council as a public authority has a duty under the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, the Fairer Scotland Duty and the Islands Act to have due regard to the aims of those duties when making financial decisions. This is done through assessing the potential impact of the decision on equality through Equality and Socio Economic Impact Assessments (EQSEIA) and identifying any mitigating measures.

4.2 This report and the accompanying strategic Equality and Socio Economic Impact Assessment, informed by specific options EQSEIAs, overall assessment analysis and the resultant mitigating actions demonstrate compliance with those duties.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy: The report complies with the Council's equality and diversity policy

5.2 Financial: None from this paper

5.3 Legal: Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, the Fairer Scotland Duty (Part one of the Equality Act) and the Island (Scotland) Act (2018)

5.4 HR: none directly from this paper, but there will be HR implications from the savings proposals that affect employees, but there are none directly from this paper

5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:

5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – As identified in the attached EQSEIA

5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – As identified in the attached EQSIEA

5.5.3 Islands: As identified in the attached EQSEIA

5.6 Risk: Risk has been mitigated by carrying out EQSEIAs and a strategic EQSEIA on the savings proposals

5.7 Customer Service: None

Executive Director of Customer Services

Policy Lead Rory Colville
Jan 2019

For further information contact: Jane Fowler, Head of Improvement and HR on 01546 604466

APPENDICES
Appendix 1 – Budget Reconstruction – Strategic Equality and Socio Economic Impact Assessment

Argyll and Bute Council: Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

Section 1: About the proposal

Title of Proposal
Budget Reconstruction Savings Proposals 2019/20

Intended outcome of proposal
To deliver redesigned services that meet the Council's revenue budget reduction targets.

Description of proposal
The overall budget proposal contains a series of service redesign proposals that have been developed through the Transformation Board. The process was based on the assessment by Heads of Service in relation to statutory and non-statutory service areas, identifying the de minimus required to remain within the law. The proposals will deliver £1.873m revenue savings and reduce 49.2 Full Time Equivalent jobs. The detailed savings are set out in the associated 2019/20 Budget papers – policy options.

Business Outcome(s) / Corporate Outcome(s) to which the proposal contributes
The proposals impact across all Business Outcomes

Lead officer details: The lead officer for each savings proposal is the relevant Head of Service. The lead officer for the strategic Equality and Socio Economic Impact Assessment (EQSEIA) is the Head of Improvement and HR	
Name of lead officer	**Jane Fowler**
Job title	**Head of Improvement and HR**
Department	**Customer Services**
Appropriate officer details: There are appropriate officers for each proposal – the Heads of Service. The appropriate officer leading the overall proposal is Douglas Hendry, Executive Director for Customer Services.	
Name of appropriate officer	**Douglas Hendry**
Job title	**Executive Director – Customer Services**
Department	**Customer Services**
Sign off of EqSEIA	D. Hendry
Date of sign off	**Jan 2019**

Who will deliver the proposal?
The proposals will be delivered by the Heads of Service as follows: Head of Customer and Support Services Head of Roads and Amenity Services Head of Education (Early Years and Lifelong Learning) Head of Education (Teaching and Learning) Head of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transportation Executive Director – Customer Services

Section 2: Evidence used in the course of carrying out EqSEIA

Consultation / engagement
Heads of Service have consulted with staff groups affected to develop options and proposals for service redesign. They have also engaged with potential external funders, affected community groups, including Colonsay Community Council, Jura Development Trust, Tiree Community Business. External bodies consulted include the Deputy Registrar General. The services have also identified information from wider public consultations pertaining to their proposals.

Data
Data has been gathered by Heads of service from a range of sources that are specified in the service EQSEIAs

Other information
Heads of Service have looked at alternative service delivery models in local authorities, engaged with third and private sector providers, drawn on professional networks and service specific data and engaged with partner organisations. The Heads of Service have also looked at the performance information relating to their service and analysed the potential impact of the proposed change to service users.

Gaps in evidence
There are a small number of service proposals where the impact is not known. This will be monitored and assessed by the head of service during implementation of the proposal if it is approved.

Section 3: Impact of proposal

Budget Reconstruction Proposals 2019/20 - Cumulative Impact

	Negative
	Positive

	No Impact
x	**Don't know**

Table 1 – Impact on Service users

		Equalities Impact									**Socio Economic Impact**								
		Age	**Disability**	**Ethnicity**	**Sex/Gender**	**Gender Reassignment**	**Marriage and Civil Partnership**	**Pregnancy and Maternity**	**Religion**	**Sexual Orientation**	**Mainland Rural population**	**Island Population**	**Low income**	**Low Wealth**	**Material Deprivation**	**Area Deprivation**	**Socio-economic Background**	**Communities of Place**	**Communities of Interest**
Ref	**Proposal**																		
PHRS04/ 07	Biodiversity, Local Plan Team																		
PHRS14	Marine and Coastal																		
PHRS16	Regulatory Services (Trading Standards)																		
EDST02	Business Gateway																		
EDST03	Economic Growth reduction of post																		
EDST05	Removal of Road Safety Unit																		
RAS05	Grounds Environment 10% reduction																		
RAS09	Reduction in Roads Management																		
RAS11	Removal of School Crossing Patrollers service																		
RAS15	Reduction in Environmental Warden Service by 5 posts																		

		Equalities Impact									Socio Economic Impact								
		Age	Disability	Ethnicity	Sex/Gender	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Religion	Sexual Orientation	Mainland Rural population	Island Population	Low income	Low Wealth	Material Deprivation	Area Deprivation	Socio-economic Background	Communities of Place	Communities of Interest
SSSRVW 01	Corporate management review																		
CSS02	Rationalise Customer Service Points																		
CSS03/ 05	Centralise Housing Benefits processing																		
CSS04	Restructure creditors team and increase income																		
CSS10	Creditor payments phased automation																		
ED05	Restructure of Youth and Adult Learning			X		X		X											
ED06	Music Instruction												X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Table 2 – Impact on Employees

		Equalities Impact									Socio Economic Impact								
		Age	Disability	Ethnicity	Sex/Gender	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Religion	Sexual Orientation	Mainland Rural population	Island Population	Low income	Low Wealth	Material Deprivation	Area Deprivation	Socio-economic Background	Communities of Place	Communities of Interest
Ref	**Proposal**																		
PHRS04/ 07	Biodiversity, Local Planning	■			■														
PHRS14	Marine and Coastal	■																	
PHRS16	Regulatory Services (Trading Standards)	■																	
EDST02	Business Gateway	■																	
EDST03	Economic Growth reduction of post										■		■	■					
EDST05	Removal of Road Safety Unit										■	■							
RAS05	Grounds Environment 10% reduction																		
RAS09	Reduction in Roads Management																		
RAS11	Removal of School Crossing Patrollers service																		
RAS15	Reduction in Environmental Warden Service by 5 posts																		
SSSRVW 01	Cross cutting management structure review	■			■														
CSS02	Rationalise Customer Service Points				■						■	■			■			■	

		Equalities Impact									Socio Economic Impact								
		Age	Disability	Ethnicity	Sex/Gender	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Religion	Sexual Orientation	Mainland Rural population	Island Population	Low income	Low Wealth	Material Deprivation	Area Deprivation	Socio-economic Background	Communities of Place	Communities of Interest
CSS03/ 05	Centralise Housing Benefits processing																		
CSS04	Restructure creditors team and increase income																		
CSS10	Creditor payments phased automation																		
ED05	Restructure of Youth and Adult Learning			X															
ED06	Music Instruction																		

If any 'don't know's have been identified, at what point will impacts on these groups become identifiable?
The areas of service that have identified 'don't know' in any particular sections will ensure that work is carried out during the planning and implementation phase if the proposal is to be approved by Council.

How has 'due regard' been given to any negative impacts that have been identified?
In each case, the savings proposal has taken into consideration the impact on the service users and the employees. It is clear that there are a range of groups impacted, but no single group is impacted more than any other. In terms of service users, it is clear from the assessments matrix of impacts above that there are some savings that have an impact on particular groups. These are addressed and mitigated in a range of ways by the Heads of Service. Mechanisms for mitigation include the use of online service delivery, focusing the resulting service on users with higher levels of need, providing additional, alternative means of making information available through other existing networks and concentrating on prioritising statutory areas of service only. In terms of the employee profile, it is noted that there are a large number of employees affected with potential redundancy or with significant change to their posts. There is no specific impact on one group over another – the savings range from frontline, lower grade front line employees such as School Crossing patrollers, administrative/clerical staff and LETs operatives, through technical and team lead posts, professional and managerial to senior management and Heads of Service. All employees are supported through the redundancy and change process by the policies and procedures that we have in place. If an employee does not wish to leave the organisation, we provide support and training opportunities to seek suitable alternatives to redundancy. The age profile of the staff affected is predominantly in the older age category, but this is not unexpected as the Council provides an early retirement severance package. This aligns with our Strategic Workforce Plan in terms of the age profile of the organisation. The location of the majority of the staff is on the mainland in our towns. There are a small number of posts affected on the islands and we will offer specific support to these employees, recognising the challenge of redeployment in these locations. The Council takes into consideration all suggestions brought forward by the Joint Trades Unions in statutory consultation to mitigate redundancy.

Section 4: Interdependencies

Is this proposal likely to have any knock-on effects for any other activities carried out by or on behalf of the council?	Y

Details of knock-on effects identified
Overall the budget proposals will reduce levels of service, which must be recognised. Each proposal will have different specific impacts and these are detailed in the individual

EQSEIAs. There are no particular knock on effects that impact on any one group disproportionately as a result of the overall package of savings proposals.

Section 5: Monitoring and review

Monitoring and review
The Heads of Service will, through the implementation of approved proposals, monitor the impact of the changes on service users and employees, giving due regard to those groups where they currently do not know the impact.