

Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment

This assessment has applied the interim guidance from Scottish Government available online at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/03/6918/2>

Name of Proposal	Recasting of the 2020/21 Budget in light of COVID-19
Lead Department/Service	Finance

What is the aim of the proposal?

The aim of the proposals at the Angus Council meeting on 10 September 2020 is to meet the Council's statutory duty to:-

- Set a revised balanced General Fund Revenue Budget for 2020/21
- Set a revised General Fund 2019/2024 Financial Plan incorporating the 2020/21 Final Capital Budget.

Stage 1 – Planning – Is this proposal/decision strategically important or not?

Notes

The guidance reminds us that the duty is set at a strategic level – these are the key, high-level decisions that the public sector takes. Many of these decisions may be made in the context of public service reform and improving outcomes for people and communities. In general, they will be decisions that affect how the public body fulfils its intended purpose, over a significant period of time. It is likely that for Angus Council the decision would involve a Committee report.

The guidance offers some examples:

Preparation of the Local Development Plan	City deals or other major investment plans	Preparing legislation
Development of new strategic frameworks	Development of significant new policies or proposals	Preparation of an annual budget
Major* procurement exercises	Decisions about the shape, size and location of the estate	Preparing a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan as part of a CPP
Preparing locality plans	Preparation of a Corporate Plan	Commissioning of service

The decisions to be taken at the Angus Council meeting are strategically important given the revenue and capital resources allocated will have significant influence over the manner of service delivery by the Council.

YES –
Begin the Fairer Scotland assessment process during development of the proposal.
Move to Stage 2.

NO –
There is no requirement for a Fairer Scotland assessment.
Move to Stage 5.



Stage 2 – Evidence

What evidence do you have about socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in relation to this issue or decision?

Is it possible to gather new evidence, involving communities of interest?

Notes

'**socio-economic disadvantage**' means living on a low income compared to others in Scotland, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation,

restricting the ability to access basic goods and services. Socio-economic disadvantage can be experienced in both places and communities of interest, leading to further negative outcomes such as social exclusion.

In light of the impact COVID-19 has had and will continue to have on the Council and its citizens the analysis informing the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Council Plan indicates that child poverty and women's inequalities are issues for Angus Council to address. Additional health inequalities continue to present challenges for our older and most vulnerable populations, as well as those with disabilities albeit these are mainly addressed by the Angus Health & Social Care Partnership as well as the Angus Alive (the Council's Arms Length Organisation for delivery of sports, leisure and culture). We know that a number of communities across Angus will be experiencing challenges associated with increased deprivation due to the impact of COVID-19 and although there are pockets of deprivation throughout Angus Arbroath is particularly associated with inequality in these communities around income, employment and health.

Ongoing engagement is being undertaken with groups and communities to understand the nature of the socioeconomic impact arising from the proposals and any mitigating actions that may be available.



Stage 3 – Assessment and Improvement

In discussion, consider: What are the main impacts of the proposal? How could the proposal be improved so it reduces or further reduces inequalities of outcome?

The main aspects of the recasting of the 2020/24 Budgets are:-

Change Programme

The aspect of the budget setting proposals which will have the most significant impact on people who already experience socioeconomic disadvantage will be those related to elements of the Council's Change Programme. This Programme very much focuses on efficiency and minimising the impact on front line services but does include some reduction in services or changes to how they are provided. It is likely that a small number of these proposals will have a negative impact on those families and people on: low incomes; those facing in-work poverty; receiving key benefits; and affected by the introduction of Universal Credit. Most of the budgets these groups rely on are being protected and in some cases enhanced through additional investment and government funding. The groups most likely to be affected are: lone parents; those with disabilities; and large families already experiencing poverty.

It is highlighted that each of the proposals within the Change Programme was subject to its own Equality Impact Assessment and these will not have changed since the setting on the Council Tax in February 2020 and is therefore not separately addressed here.

Safe Return to Schools

The Council will consider additional budget requirements submitted by the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning as part of the budget recast process. It is noted that any impact on families experiencing social economic disadvantage around the safe return to schools have been considered and form part of the recast budget submitted e.g. digital inclusion.

Provision for Key Supplier Support

The Council and the Angus Health and Social Care Partnership, have made provision in our revised budgets to support our key suppliers through the COVID-19 pandemic. Ensuring the continuity of service provision for the vulnerable members of society will be a significant benefit of this approach. eg early years payments to private providers to ensure sustainability, payments to private providers acting as childcare hubs and payments to Dundee childminders for providing childcare services to Angus key workers.



Stage 4 – Decision

This stage is for an appropriate officer to confirm that due regard has been paid. They should be satisfied the body has understood the evidence, considered whether the policy can narrow inequalities of outcome, considered improvements and the links to socio-economic disadvantage and equality.

The officers named below consider that due regard has been paid by Angus Council to the impact onto inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when recasting the 2020/21 Budget. It is highlighted that positive mitigating action is being undertaken in a number of areas to assist those who are experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage, as detailed in the accompanying committee report. Some other examples of these actions can be seen through the provision of free school meals which continued throughout the summer holidays, the provision of food, fuel, social and emotional support, collection of medication etc through the Humanitarian Assistance Angus Response Team.

	Prepared By	Reviewed By:	Approved By:
Officer Name:	Steven Mill	Doreen Phillips	Ian Lorimer
Post:	Service Lead (Finance)	Senior Practitioner (Equalities)	Director of Finance
Date:	27 th August 2020	1st September 2020	2 nd September 2020