



Tough Choices Equal Chances Programme

Revenue Budget Savings Measures Equality Impact Assessment

Corporate Report

December 2010

FOREWORD

Welcome to the report on the West Lothian Council Revenue Budget Savings Measures Equality Impact Assessment. The council faces significant challenges going forward as it prepares for unprecedented financial pressures, at the same time as public expectations regarding quality of service continues to increase.

In February 2010 the council first published its Contingency Strategy and the subsequent May 2010 Tough Choices consultation outlining the draft proposals for managing the impending reductions in local authority funding from financial year 2011/12 forward. The full officer-led strategy has been subject to robust equality impact assessment activity. This substantial project was designed not only to mitigate against disproportionate impact of structural and service changes on equality and diversity within the council, but also to identify added value solutions to promote equality and diversity as a result of change implementation. The council is committed to ensuring that our progress in promoting equality and diversity in recent years is not disproportionately affected by the change we will face going forward.

The council is committed to equality of opportunity. We recognise that taking proportionate and relevant account of equality throughout our change implementation will contribute significantly to our wider aims of ensuring that we create a West Lothian in which all people and communities have a say in their future and a high quality of life.

It is important to note that the contents of this report relate to draft officer proposals within the Contingency Strategy and subsequent Tough Choices consultation, and final decisions will be taken on approval or implementation of proposals outlined late 2010, early 2011. This report has assisted to inform the final decision making process.

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Leader of the council

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Chief Executive

December 2010

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Contingency Strategy

In February 2010 the council first published its Contingency Strategy for managing the impending reduction in public sector and local government funding from financial year 2011/12 forward. The UK Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010 confirmed a real terms reduction in total managed UK expenditure for the period 2011/12 to 2014/15.

Scotland's share of that reduction for 2011/12 was announced on 18 November when the draft Scottish Budget confirmed a reduction in total for 2011/12 of £1.3 billion compared to spending in 2010/11. Prior to the Scottish Budget announcement, a funding package for local government was offered by the Scottish Government with revenue funding equivalent to an overall 2.6% cash decrease for revenue funding compared to 2010/11. The exact percentage cut for each council was dependant on distribution, and West Lothian Council's percentage was confirmed following the Local Government Finance Settlement announcement on 9 December 2010.

Any programme to address a shortfall will require to draw on efficiencies (reductions in expenditure which do not have a significant impact on services provided), increases in charges and service changes (reductions in expenditure which have a negative impact on services provided).

Although the issues which the council faces are far more challenging than ever before, the council has always had a culture which has addressed issues proactively and delivered innovative solutions. This has ensured West Lothian Council is regarded as Scotland's leading local authority, and this has been recognised through a whole series of awards including Charter Mark, Customer Service Excellence, the 5 Star rating from the European Foundation for Quality Management and the council being named the UK Council of the Year. These reflect the fact that the council is already focussed on providing excellent customer-centred services.

1.2 Tough Choices Equal Chances Programme

Following the publication of the Contingency Strategy, the Tough Choices Equal Chances Programme was launched in February 2010. The Programme was led and managed by the council Corporate Working Group on Equality (CWGE) with the aim of conducting robust equality impact assessment on the officer led proposals within the Contingency Strategy and subsequent Tough Choices consultation documentation.

The Programme encompassed more than a practical evaluation of Contingency Strategy implications from an equality perspective. It was designed as a strategic change management initiative with a number of integrated and complimentary elements in order to assist with the wider aim of mainstreaming equality and diversity throughout the organisation and via our change implementation. The key work streams of the Programme are outlined below:

- Diversity Leadership Programme – The Programme was implemented between April and June 2010. The top 140 senior managers across all council services attended the programme, which provided specific awareness around equality impact assessment, assisting to engage support for wider elements of the Contingency Strategy assessment work going forward.

- Members Awareness – An amended version of the Diversity Leadership Programme was delivered in tandem to the council elected members via a quarterly awareness session held in May 2010.
- Employee and Community Development – A unique initiative delivered jointly to council employees and volunteer citizens of West Lothian simultaneously, the initiative was a capacity building intervention around equality impact assessments. The specific role of our Employee Equality Networks and Community Equality Forums in relation to consultation and involvement within the impact assessment process was outlined, along with support to enable volunteers to critically analyse the assessment work presented to them by council officers.
- Data, Research and Evidence Gathering – A wide range of data, research and other evidence was collected in order to inform the assessment process as far as possible. This was designed to ensure that the considerations and decisions reached by the assessment process were informed and objective. This has been important to assist in evidencing that the steps we have taken are reasonable, and that our decisions on the recommendations for change arising from the assessment are objective and justifiable.
- Impact Assessments – In April 2010 the CWGE was divided into three sub-groups in order to take the lead on alternative aspects of assessment for the Contingency Strategy. The three CWGE sub-groups covered: internal efficiencies; service proposals and workforce management. Representatives of all council service areas worked together within the sub-group structure, with input from policy area experts, to conduct relevance assessments; consider and gather appropriate evidence for individual proposals and host and manage impact assessment panels. This significant project included involvement across all council services and functions.
- Phase 2 Impact Assessments – Between July and November 2010 a series of special Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels were held in order to enable formal consideration of all Contingency Strategy and Tough Choices proposals by elected members in order to inform the final decision making and budget setting process. As a result an additional 34 new or amended proposals and actions for officers related to existing proposals were identified. These 34 points have also been subject to equality impact assessment as part of the Programme.
- Consultation and Involvement – The Tough Choices consultation during May and June 2010 provided extensive mainstream opportunity to comment on the Contingency Strategy proposals for key stakeholders of the council. A corporate consultation plan was developed in order to ensure a robust approach to consultation and involvement across each of the individual equality strand areas in relation to the findings and recommendations of the equality impact assessment process.

1.3 Equality Impact Assessment Strategic Results

The equality impact assessment process identified three key strategic policy issues within the Contingency Strategy proposals which were consistently referenced within equality impact assessment panel discussions, consultation and involvement forums and local and national evidence of equality impact. This section provides an overview of these three policy areas and the issues identified through the implementation of the Tough Choices Equal Chances Programme:

- Public Transportation

The equality impact assessment process highlighted public transport provision as a key strategic area of importance in terms of ensuring that the Contingency Strategy does not impact disproportionately on the promotion of equality. This has been identified as a result of the need to support and maintain public transport provision in order to counter balance many of the service rationalisation proposals that are anticipated to take place as a result of the wider Contingency Strategy implementation.

The key groups identified as likely to be impacted upon disproportionately by a reduced public transport infrastructure in the wider context of the Contingency Strategy are: older people, younger people, people with physical disabilities, people with learning disabilities and women (as evidenced by the fact that women remain majority providers of unpaid care in communities).

The key concern related to public transport and equality surrounds the rationalisation of council premises, and the ability of individuals within the categories outlined above to be able to continue to access essential services. The maintenance and enhancement of public transport provision will assist to mitigate against the closure of local community centres, libraries, CIS offices, community education centres and community high schools. This is relevant both in relation to the service proposals outlined within the strategy as well as the impact upon the council workforce.

Although not directly related to equality, it was also highlighted through the assessment process that maintenance of public transport provision is crucial for environmental sustainability and in relation to supporting improvements in health inequalities for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups within the community.

- Voluntary Organisations

The equality impact assessment process highlighted that the simultaneous contraction of public sector service provision and public funding for voluntary sector organisations is anticipated to create a service delivery gap across a range of public policy areas.

While the principle of voluntary sector commissioning is supportive and in line with the councils approach to equality and the shift to focus on lifestages outcomes, concern was raised throughout the equality impact assessment process regarding the impact of commissioning on small, specialist voluntary organisations that provide expert support to a number of groups and individuals within the community under the categories of equality protected characteristics. Evidence highlights that the tendering process can provide advantage to larger organisations due to economies of scale, which can in practice impact on service delivery standards. A number of recommendations in order to assist to mitigate against this potential impact have been identified within the voluntary sector service proposals assessment, as detailed at section 4.2.38.

In relation to both public transport and voluntary organisations, it is important to note that these two areas were identified specifically within the West Lothian context following internal assessment results and consultation and involvement. Through our national gender consultation event (detailed below) it was confirmed that these two policy issues have also been identified nationally as the key priorities for focus during recent consultation events on gender facilitated by the Scottish Women's Convention.

- Workforce Management

The corporate workforce management procedures (as highlighted within the Contingency Strategy) recently approved by Council Executive have been subject to equality impact assessment as part of this Programme. Any organisational change implications resulting from implementation of service proposals will be managed under these policies, and therefore subject to the wider recommendations to promote equality identified within this report.

A corporate data analysis of the diversity implications of the workforce changes will be conducted at the earliest appropriate opportunity. At time of writing (December 2010) the implications of Contingency Strategy and Tough Choices on the make-up of our workforce remains unclear across the organisation as a whole. The assessment process has identified that it will be critical to conduct a thorough workforce diversity analysis once detailed service redesign and restructuring is fully mapped out in order to consider implications in relation to all protected characteristics, but with particular attention to the impact upon age, disability and gender given the current organisational diversity profile.

1.4 Equality Impact Assessment Service Results

Each of the individual service proposals within the Contingency Strategy and Tough Choices consultation documentation have been subject to equality impact assessment. Each of the proposals identified as high or medium relevance to equality underwent full assessment, and the individual specific results from each of these assessments can be viewed at section 4.2 of this report.

Overall, the majority of proposals within both the Contingency Strategy and Tough Choices are deemed to have little or no negative impact on the promotion of equality. In addition, a number of specific elements within proposals have been highlighted as impacting positively on equality.

A minority of proposals highlighted significant disproportionate impact on particular groups within the community. It should however be noted that these proposals are at present under review by officers as a result of decision by Council Executive. The two most notable examples include the proposal to close council run older people homes and the proposed reduction of out of hours winter maintenance.

Where specific impacts on equality have been identified, the assessment process has attempted to design actions that will assist to mitigate against identified impacts on particular groups, in order to enable those proposals to support the council's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity.

Please note that the majority of findings and recommendations within this corporate report will only become relevant once a formal decision has been taken to implement a particular proposal. However, where appropriate and of benefit, a number of the recommendations identified within the report have already been taken forward by officers, particularly in relation to internal efficiency and workforce management proposals.

Individual assessment results are split under the headings of the three CWGE sub-groups: internal efficiencies; service proposals and workforce management.

2. WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL CONTINGENCY STRATEGY

In February 2010 the council first published its Contingency Strategy for managing the impending reduction in public sector and local government funding from financial year 2011/12 forward. This section provides an overview of the purpose of the Strategy and the implications for the council in order to set the context for the Tough Choices Equal Chances Programme.

Following the establishment of the Coalition Government in May 2010, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced plans to consolidate public sector expenditure to tackle the public sector deficit. Steps taken by the government to reduce national debt included a £6.2 billion cut in UK Government Spending in 2010/11 in May and the Emergency Budget in June which established a five year plan to rebuild the British economy. The overall objective of these actions was to bring the current structural deficit into balance by 2015/16, the final year of the five year forecast, however planned reductions in public spending will have a significant impact on the amount of money available through the UK's public sector.

On 31 August 2010, an update on the council's Contingency Strategy for 2011/12 to 2014/15 was presented to the Council Executive updating projected government grant and spending assumptions following the Emergency Budget. On 31 August 2010, an update on the council's contingency strategy for 2011/12 to 2014/15 was presented to the Council Executive. Although it was acknowledged that there was considerable uncertainty until the Comprehensive Spending Review and Scottish Budget proposals were announced, the assumed level of government grant reduction in 2011/12 was adjusted upwards and an additional fourth year of grant reduction was added to council's budget model.

The UK Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010 confirmed a real terms reduction in total managed UK expenditure for the period 2011/12 to 2014/15. Scotland's share of that reduction for 2011/12 was announced on 18 November when the draft Scottish Budget confirmed a reduction in total for 2011/12 of £1.3 billion compared to spending in 2010/11. Prior to the Scottish Budget announcement, a funding package for local government was offered by the Scottish Government with revenue funding equivalent to an overall 2.6% cash decrease for revenue funding compared to 2010/11. The exact percentage cut for each council would depend on distribution, but this compared to average cuts for all other public services in Scotland of 6.4%. Following the Local Government Finance Settlement announcement on 9 December 2010, it was confirmed that the overall decrease in the council's revenue grant funding is £1.157 million (0.36%) compared to 2010/11 revenue grant of £318.580 million.

However, in addition to a reduction in government grant funding, there will be an increased demand for public services which will affect service affordability. The main factors are identified as:

- Increasing demand for social work services, including residential care and nursing placements, resulting from youth and older people demographics;
- Increases in some operating costs such as energy and fuel & food;
- Increases in the number of children who have additional learning needs resulting in an increased requirement for support, more residential places & higher transport costs;
- Pressure for financial support linked to the risk of the withdrawal of commercial bus services;

- Increasing number of looked after children;
- The requirement to invest to meet carbon targets and efficiencies;
- Additional cost of waste treatment, recycling and landfill; and
- Expenditure related to the economic downturn including increased school stay on rates and reduction in planning fee income.

The council's budget will need to accommodate all inflationary increases in costs as well as the increased demand for services. Looking ahead, while funding figures were published at a UK level for the period 2011/12 to 2014/15, the Scottish Spending Review on the 17 November 2010 contained the spending plans and draft budget for 2011/12. The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth made an announcement in the Scottish Parliament on 8 December 2010 that illustrative figures for the three years 2012/13 to 2014/15 would be provided and has confirmed this announcement will be by the end of January 2011.

Although the issues which the council faces are far more challenging than ever before, the council has always had a culture which has addressed issues proactively and delivered innovative solutions. This has ensured West Lothian Council is regarded as Scotland's leading local authority, and this has been recognised through a whole series of awards including Charter Mark, Customer Service Excellence, the 5 Star rating from the European Foundation for Quality Management and the council being named the UK Council of the Year. These reflect the fact that the council is already focussed on providing excellent customer-centred services.

The proposed strategy is to retain the best of our current approach, and to concentrate our reduced resources on delivering key priorities. This could be done by:

- Maximising efficiency and effectiveness of current services in delivering our agreed outcomes, through innovative approaches to service provision;
- Reducing or discontinuing activities which make a limited contribution to our key priorities;
- Managing and controlling growth of expenditure (as far as possible);
- Actively pursuing integrated partnership working with Civic Centre partners;
- Sharing of service provision with other bodies;
- Maximising the contribution of the voluntary sector (including volunteering); and
- Through gaining increased value for the money the council pays to voluntary organisations and by encouraging the public to become active in voluntary activity.

Any programme to address a shortfall will require to draw on efficiencies (reductions in expenditure which do not have a significant impact on services provided), increases in charges and service changes (reductions in expenditure which have a negative impact on services provided).

The specific proposals identified by officers to achieve the required financial savings are outlined within the following sections of this report. In addition to the high level Contingency Strategy as above, the council published specific draft proposals for each service area in May 2010. The Tough Choices consultation enabled council employees, community groups, external partners, Trade Unions and individual members of the public to comment on general or specific recommendations and priorities outlined within the Tough Choices documentation.

3. TOUGH CHOICES EQUAL CHANCES PROGRAMME

Following the publication of the Contingency Strategy, the Tough Choices Equal Chances Programme was launched in February 2010. The Programme was approved as an official element of support for implementation of the Strategy by the Depute Chief Executive with lead responsibility for the Strategy (now Chief Executive). The Programme was led and managed by the council Corporate Working Group on Equality (CWGE) with the aim of conducting robust equality impact assessment on the officer led proposals within the Contingency Strategy and subsequent Tough Choices consultation documentation.

The Programme encompassed more than a practical evaluation of Contingency Strategy implications from an equality perspective. It was designed as a strategic change management initiative with a number of integrated and complimentary elements in order to assist with the wider aim of mainstreaming equality and diversity throughout the organisation and via our change implementation.

Between May 2007 and May 2010 the council has completed 146 equality impact assessments on a wide variety of policies and functions across all service areas. The organisational experience and capacity with regard to equality impact assessment that has been created over the past three years ensured that as an organisation we were well placed to take forward robust assessment activity across the Contingency Strategy proposals and subsequent Tough Choices documentation. However, in order to further support mainstreaming and quality assurance in relation to equality impact assessment, the Programme was designed to support the organisation to be fully prepared for the unprecedented volume of activity which would be required to appropriately inform the decision making and budget setting process for financial year 2011/ 12 forward. The key work streams of the Programme are outlined below.

3.1 Diversity Leadership Programme

The Diversity Leadership Programme was implemented between April and June 2010. The top 140 senior managers across all council services attended the programme which was designed to: increase organisational knowledge on equality and diversity; provide a platform for exploring specific implications for the council; to help prepare the organisation for the implementation of the Equality Act 2010 and the equality implications of the Contingency Strategy implementation. As well as focus on policy and legislation, the Programme focused on culture change and key issues in managing attitudes and behaviours within the organisation to promote equality and diversity. Initial scoping of opportunities for increased productivity and employee engagement in the current economic climate were also explored. The Programme provided specific awareness around equality impact assessment, which has assisted to engage support for wider elements of the Contingency Strategy assessment work going forward.

Evaluation results evidence a positive and value added response to the programme, which sets the ground work for specific interventions for services and teams across the organisation related to equality and diversity initiatives. A majority of managers in attendance pro-actively requested further information on how similar interventions can be coordinated for their wider team or service.

3.2 Members Awareness

An amended version of the Diversity Leadership Programme was delivered in tandem to the council elected members via a quarterly awareness session held in May 2010. Members were provided with an awareness of the equality impact assessment process, with a specific focus on the Tough Choices Equal Chances Programme.

3.3 Employee and Community Development

A unique initiative delivered jointly to council employees and volunteer citizens of West Lothian simultaneously, the initiative was a capacity building intervention around equality impact assessments. Over the past three years the council has invested significant resources in the development of formal community and employee involvement mechanisms on equality. Our Employee Equality Networks report directly to the CWGE, and our Community Equality Forums report jointly to the CWGE and the Community Planning Partnership.

The specific role of our Employee Equality Networks and Community Equality Forums in relation to consultation and involvement within the impact assessment process was outlined, along with support to enable volunteers to critically analyse the assessment work presented to them by council officers. This was delivered in order to ensure a robust consultation and involvement process took place with regard to impact assessment activity. In addition to the one-off joint session, specific sessions for individual groups has taken place following the positive feedback from those in attendance at the initial session.

3.4 Data, Research and Evidence

A wide range of data, research and other evidence was collected in order to inform the assessment process as far as possible. This was designed to ensure that the considerations and decisions reached by the assessment process were informed and objective. This has been important to assist in evidencing that the steps we have taken are reasonable, and that our decisions on the recommendations for change arising from the assessment are objective and justifiable.

Evidence utilised throughout the assessment process included formal statistics and research reports, anecdotal feedback and information about the policy proposals from a range of perspectives. Specific reference has been made to evidence available and utilised within individual proposal areas to inform the assessment process. In addition, annex 1 provides a list of generic and strategic evidence that was used throughout the assessment process in order to inform the overall approach.

3.5 Impact Assessments

In April 2010 the CWGE was divided into three sub-groups in order to take the lead on alternative aspects of assessment for the Contingency Strategy. The three CWGE sub-groups covered: workforce management; internal efficiencies and service proposals. Representatives of all council service areas worked together, within the sub-group structure, with input from policy area experts to conduct relevance assessments; consider and gather appropriate evidence for individual proposals and host and manage impact assessment panels. This significant project included involvement across all council services and functions.

Overall, there were 68 proposals within the high level Contingency Strategy document published February 2010. All of these proposals have been through the equality relevance process. The results of this identified the following relevance levels to equality:

- 17 high level relevance;
- 30 medium level relevance; and
- 21 low level relevance.

As CWGE sub-groups planned for full impact assessments, consideration was given to the variances between original proposals for February 2010 assessed for relevance and the eventual published proposals within the Tough Choices consultation document published May 2010. Overall it was deemed that almost all of the original suggested proposals remain within the Tough Choices document and that any further detail in the most recent version can be linked back to original proposals in some form. A minority of additional proposals were identified and as a result were assessed as required and added to the list of 68 relevance assessments as outlined above.

The results of the process to identify low relevance can be viewed at annex 2. The relevance assessment template can be viewed at annex 4. The equality impact assessment template can be viewed at annex 5. The results of each of the individual assessments are provided in the following sections of this report.

3.6 Phase 2 Impact Assessments

Between July and November 2010 a series of special Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels were held in order to enable formal consideration of all Contingency Strategy and Tough Choices proposals by elected members in order to inform the final decision making and budget setting process. As a result an additional 34 new or amended proposals and actions for officers related to existing proposals were identified. These 34 points have also been subject to equality impact assessment. The results of this additional work identified the following relevance levels to equality:

- 2 high level relevance;
- 3 medium level relevance; and
- 29 low level relevance.

The three CWGE sub-groups outlined above at point 3.6 were reconvened as appropriate during November and December 2010, again covering: workforce management; internal efficiencies and service proposals. Representatives of all council service areas worked together, within the sub-group structure, with input from policy area experts to conduct relevance assessments; consider and gather appropriate evidence for individual proposals and host and manage impact assessment panels.

3.7 Consultation and Involvement

The Tough Choices consultation during May and June 2010 provided extensive mainstream opportunity to comment on the Contingency Strategy proposals for key stakeholders of the council. A number of equality focused organisations and individuals provided feedback through this mechanism. The consultation and involvement outlined below is specific to the equality impact assessment activity of the Tough Choices Equal Chances Programme.

The corporate consultation plan was developed in order to ensure a robust approach to consultation and involvement across each of the individual equality protected characteristic areas in relation to the findings and recommendations of the equality impact assessment process. Feedback from the consultation and involvement process influenced the final recommendations and decisions from the assessments and informed the recommendations and analysis presented within this report.

3.7.1 Disability Equality

Representatives of the West Lothian Disability Equality Community Forum were directly involved in the vast majority of the service proposal impact assessment Panels. In addition, all impact assessment activity was discussed and analysed via the regular Disability Equality Community Forum meetings.

The council Employee Disability Equality Network were involved in initial draft assessment discussions and recommendations. Final version submitted to Network members for additional comment, input and feedback.

3.7.2 Race Equality

A meeting of the West Lothian Community Race Equality Forum were presented with an overview of the Tough Choices Equal Chances Programme, and the assessment results and recommendations were issued to members in order to allow for additional comment, input and feedback from a specific race equality perspective.

The council Employee Race Equality Network were involved in initial draft assessment discussions and recommendations. Final version submitted to Network for additional comment, input and approval.

3.7.3 Gender Equality

A national consultation and involvement event was held with representatives of a number of key gender equality organisations in Scotland in July 2010. Organisations represented at the event included: Close the Gap; Engender; Scottish Women's Aid; Scottish Women's Budget Group; Scottish Women's Convention and the STUC. The session focused on the key issues and implications of the Contingency Strategy from a gender equality perspective, with feedback being incorporated into the assessment findings and recommendations as appropriate.

The launch meeting of the Employee Flexible Working and Carers Network were presented with an overview of the Tough Choices Equal Chances Programme, and the assessment results and recommendations were issued to members in order to allow for additional comment, input and feedback from a specific gender equality perspective.

3.7.4 LGBT Equality

A scoping meeting of the West Lothian LGBT Youth Group were presented with an overview of the Tough Choices Equal Chances Programme, and the assessment results and recommendations were issued to members in order to allow for additional comment, input and feedback from a specific LGBT equality perspective.

The council attended Pride Scotia 2010 in Edinburgh. In addition to wider community engagement activity, specific opportunity to feed in to the Tough Choices Equal Chances Programme was provided for residents of West Lothian.

The council Employee LGBT Equality Network were involved in initial draft assessment discussions and recommendations. Final version submitted to Network for additional comment, input and approval.

3.7.5 Age and Religion or Belief Equality

Presentations on the Tough Choices Equal Chances Programme were prepared for the West Lothian Youth Congress and the West Lothian Senior People's Forum. The Employee Equality Networks and Community Equality Forums across the additional strand areas were also asked to consider age and religion or belief equality implications as appropriate.

3.7.6 Quality of Life Survey

Relevant across all equality strand areas, appropriate feedback from the 2010 Quality of Life survey issued to the West Lothian Citizens Panel was disaggregated by equality strand and utilised to identify what was considered most important to people of West Lothian in terms of priorities in order to support and inform assessment findings and recommendations.

A summary report of feedback from the consultation and involvement process is provided at annex 6.

4. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – SERVICE RESULTS

This section provides findings and results from the equality impact assessment process under each of the proposals from the Contingency Strategy identified as either high or medium relevance to equality. Please note that all findings and recommendations are only relevant once a formal decision has been taken to implement a particular proposal. This is anticipated to take place end of 2010, beginning of 2011.

Results are split under the headings of the three CWGE sub-groups: Internal Efficiencies; Service Proposals and Workforce Management as outlined above.

4.1 Internal Efficiencies

Please note that each of the proposals under the heading Internal Efficiencies are part of the council Contingency Strategy of February 2010, and are not detailed within May 2010 Tough Choices.

4.1.1 Building Rationalisation

West Lothian Council currently uses 38 offices to accommodate staff. The preparation of a Ten Year Office Strategy has been undertaken as part of the council's asset management process to establish the feasibility of delivering efficiency savings, in particular reducing the number of offices (with resultant revenue and capital savings). The Office Strategy, including the Civic Centre, is also a key element of the modernisation agenda and efficiency strategy approved by Council in February 2009.

The proposed office strategy brings together projects already agreed within the currently approved capital plan and introduces additional office rationalisation opportunities to generate significant revenue and capital budget savings over the medium to long term. It should be noted that the implementation of the strategy particularly in later years relies heavily on the successful introduction of flexible working for council staff.

An employee profiling analysis was part of the assessment in terms of general consideration of groups of employees likely to be affected by the proposals. The proposals were deemed to have potential impact on employees with physical disabilities and women due to the continuing impact of unequal distribution of caring responsibilities. The gender implications were supported by evidence presented within the Scottish Government publication Women and Transport: Guidance and Checklist, which highlighted the disproportionate impact of increased travel requirements on women. Disability impact evidence sourced via various Transport Scotland and Equality and Human Rights Commission publications and website data.

Concerns were raised by the assessment process in relation to the general impact of the potential for increased travel for people with disabilities following the closure of local workplaces. It was explained that there are active discussions ongoing to assess whether IT issues can be overcome in order to enable staff to utilise local schools to reduce travel to new formal base offices once the strategy has been implemented. It was flagged as a potential positive impact of introduction of the proposal that increased flexible working, meeting both the needs of the employer and employee, will potentially reduce work related travel which could support employees with disabilities.

Both from an employment and service provision perspective, the assessment process identified concern about the potential of any particular geographical location in West Lothian failing to retain a major council building. It was made clear that the strategy as proposed will ensure that employees and service users within towns will maintain access to a building within that town. The mitigating measures and proposals outlined above for people with disabilities were also deemed to be proportionate responses to reducing any potential negative impact on women as a result of introduction of the proposed strategy.

A discussion took place regarding the accessibility of the 16 buildings remaining following full implementation of the strategy. It was suggested that there may be potential positive impact for people with disabilities in that the existing budget available for implementation of access audit recommendations would now require servicing of fewer premises. The assessment process highlighted a number of instances where building or refurbishment work had been completed and subsequently required amended due to a gap in involvement of the Access Committee.

Recommendations:

- The existing budget for access audit amendment implementation should remain in place and not be reduced, in order to ensure the remaining 16 buildings under the rationalisation programme are fully accessible.
- A revised access audit to be conducted on the Civic Centre, both following specific issues identified recently regarding accessibility, as well as the fact that migration to the Civic Centre is a key element of the strategy and will lead to a significant increase in employees and service users.
- As a potential efficiency gain, the assessment process recommended that a formal process for involving the West Lothian Access Committee is developed between property services, building control and planning. Although individually each of these service areas engage with the Access Committee, discussion highlighted a number of instances where building or refurbishment work had been completed and subsequently required amendment due to a gap in involvement of the Access Committee. This will increase value for money and improve accessibility for people with disabilities.
- The Corporate Working Group on Equality to be informed of any future amendments to the Office Strategy, so that the Disability Community Forum and Employee Disability Network can consider implications of changes as appropriate.

4.1.2 Civic Centre Administration Rationalisation

The use of technology to assist in administrative and clerical work has long been embedded within the council. However recent advances such as Electronic Document & Records Management (EDRM) and electronic job scheduling mean that pooling administrative and clerical resource is now feasible. This approach is being piloted within the Civic Centre and it is anticipated that sizeable efficiencies can be delivered from this initiative. This methodology will be adopted to provide pooling and scheduling arrangements around other areas of activity which are currently delivered within discrete services throughout the council. It was also outlined that administration functions within the Civic Centre have been evidenced as having significant peaks and troughs of activity and this rationalised function will ensure increased productivity.

Key evidence utilised to inform the assessment included a diversity profile of the employees originally considered as potentially suitable to take part in the initiative, as

well as a profile of employees selected as appropriate for final implementation. The key data of note identified a majority of female employees selected to be involved in the final implementation. However, it is also worthy of note that this matched proportionally with the percentage of male and female employees that currently work within the grades C, D and E that may have potentially been involved in the implementation of the rationalisation process.

In addition to projected productivity gains, specifically from an equality perspective it was felt that the rationalisation will provide benefits for employees in relation to improved flexible working opportunities due to the increased scale and cover available in order to facilitate this within the new environment. In addition, it was highlighted that the rationalisation provides an opportunity to broaden the skills base of individuals involved in administration due to exposure to the variety of elements which will be included within the rationalised service. Both of these opportunities were identified as positive outcomes in relation to all strands of equality due to the potential for business restrictions for flexibility or development within existing service structures.

A concern raised by the assessment process related to the impact on career structure and the potential to devalue administrative work, and therefore women employees due to the make-up of the proposed structure. This concern was countered in that the new structure will include C, D and E band posts with an H band management post directly, with anticipated links to F and G band posts within the education structure. It was argued that this will provide a wider ranging and more flexible career structure for the vast majority of employees involved in the rationalisation than currently available within existing service structures. It was also felt that the new structure will allow greater exposure to alternative service work and priorities than currently available.

Specific consideration was given to the process by which decisions will be taken on populating the new structure for the team. The post matching process was in line with that outlined below for the redeployment process and deemed to be appropriate. It was noted that a fair and open recruitment process will be utilised to fill posts where direct matching has not been possible.

Recommendation:

- Diversity profile and analysis in relation to promotion to be monitored and included within corporate monitoring report in order to assess medium to long term impact of proposed career structure implications.

4.1.3 Lifestages

The 'Life Stages' approach is a good example of how the council is being innovative in addressing the challenges which it faces by targeting resources where they will be most beneficial. The model is based on how the council and its partners can deliver long term sustainable outcomes for those most in need. It is based on shifting resources 'upstream' and focusing on prevention rather than dealing with issues after things have gone wrong. The model recognises that those who are most at risk of not reaching their full potential often lead complex and chaotic lives. It also acknowledges that long term outcomes which improve life chances are reached through a number of different activities. The approach engages with those most in need, and targets resource at the most effective activities to help them reach their full potential and contribute to society. The key long term objectives of the programme are that:

- Parents/carers are responsive to their children's developmental needs and children are ready to start school and learn;
- Life chances are maximised by improving educational attainment;
- Young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens and have a positive, sustainable destination;
- Every adult has the skills and ability to secure and sustain employment; and
- Older people live longer, healthier, more independent and fulfilling lives within a supportive community and continue to learn and develop.

The approach will be highly effective in addressing the issues being experienced by the individuals and families, but will also be cost effective focussing on prevention rather than the more significant costs associated with failure at any life stage.

The assessment process outlined that the principles and aims of the lifestages programme are in line with the council's equality and diversity objectives. The focus on outcomes and the specific assessment of risk and need of individuals will ensure that equality implications of economic, social or health interventions are appropriate and take account of the needs of individuals from across the equality protected characteristics.

Specifically in relation to the Contingency Strategy, the principles of lifestages have been adopted in the way that the organisation has so far attempted to identify strategic priorities going forward. This is useful from an equality perspective in that it helps to indirectly mainstream equality outcomes throughout the organisation.

4.1.4 Procurement

The council currently lets contracts amounting to £40 million annually. A full review of all of the council's procurement activity is being undertaken and it is anticipated that this will draw on all potential for procurement efficiencies through collaborative purchasing – including Scotland Excel and Procurement Scotland – and through more effective council contracts.

The assessment discussions and considerations are based on evidence provided within the previous UK Government's equality impact assessment for the implementation of the Equality Act 2010, which details that the decision to include procurement activity as a specific requirement within the new Act was based on evidence showing that government intervention is necessary to 'encourage' and 'enable' public authorities to use their procurement activities to further wider equality objectives, as voluntary activity over a significant number of years has not provided the platform to support the promotion of equality. It should however be noted that the Coalition Government have decided not to implement specific requirements for public bodies in relation to procurement following the original completion of this impact assessment. The Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government in England and Wales website provides significant information and evidence in relation to the legal and business implications of mainstreaming equality and diversity requirements within local government purchasing and supply functions and processes. This information has been used as additional evidence and benchmarking to inform the discussion, considerations and recommendations of this assessment.

Taking account of the evidence base outlined above, the assessment process considered the existing processes in place via Scotland Excel and Procurement Scotland in relation to ensuring standards around mainstreaming of equality within the procurement process and work to promote supplier diversity. It was noted that

Procurement Scotland has a standard contractual clause with suppliers designed to ensure race equality at present, but this is not necessarily mainstreamed into the process and does not cover the additional protected characteristics that will be covered under the Equality Act 2010. Discussion took place regarding the standards by which Construction Line require suppliers to adhere to equality and diversity issues, and the standards and questions asked during the tendering process.

Although it was acknowledged that any amendment to these processes is not the responsibility of West Lothian Council, as partners and users of the service, structures exist to influence future decisions within both organisations with regard to equality and diversity. It was deemed via the assessment process that flagging this up would be important in order to help meet the duty upon West Lothian Council to evidence continued positive promotion of equality, as well as potentially helping both organisations to further improve value for money for the taxpayer by engaging a greater number of organisations within the competitive tendering process by supporting supplier diversity.

Recommendations:

- Existing approach and process for promoting equality within the procurement function and in relation to supplier diversity within both Scotland Excel and Procurement Scotland to be confirmed. Plans for revision of both approaches following the implementation of the Equality Act 2010 also to be confirmed.
- Depending on feedback from above, Procurement Services to flag to suggest revision of partner processes to promote equality and consideration of development of supplier diversity policy.

4.1.5 Shared Services

The council is actively examining the scope for shared service provision with public sector partners. As reported previously to Council Executive, we are working with the City of Edinburgh, Fife, Midlothian, East Lothian and Scottish Borders councils to explore options for shared provision in areas such as payroll, procurement, roads, and audit services.

Although the relevance assessment process considered shared services potentially relevant to equality, it was not possible at this stage of development to conduct a robust assessment given the early stage of discussions regarding the above areas. As a result, the Corporate Working Group on Equality have written to Policy Leads for each of the areas outlined in order to ensure that assessment activity takes place once more formal detail is available.

Recommendation:

- Equality relevance assessment on payroll, procurement, roads and audit services shared service plans to be taken forward as appropriate by Policy Leads once clear terms of reference and objectives are available.

4.1.6 Worksmart West Lothian

Mobile and flexible working results in staff working in a way which best suits their job, and includes mobile working. It is based on using technology to allow staff to undertake their work out of the office and performance being measured in terms of productivity rather than on attendance hours. Moving staff to more flexible working will yield significant benefits to the council through increased productivity (resulting from a reduction in 'dead time'), reduced travel costs and a reduction in carbon

impact. It will benefit staff through providing increased flexibility on when they work. Finally, it will benefit the customer through pushing expertise to the front line of service delivery and allowing them to choose more flexible appointment times. Our flexible working scheme- Worksmart West Lothian - has been piloted in various services across the council. A wider deployment phase will see it rolled out across the council in a structured programme. Overall average improvements in productivity of around 15% are forecast and this will mean that fewer staff will be required to deliver the same outcomes.

The assessment process discussions were informed by a number of publications regarding the positive impact of implementation of flexible working practices within organisations. Particular reference to the publication “Working Better: A Managers Guide to Flexible Working” produced by the EHRC was made as the publication from October 2009 consolidates previous EHRC research, evidence and findings related to the impact of flexible working on business and the workforce, and makes specific reference to the impact of the recession and ongoing public sector financial situation. This report provided evidence highlighting impact on particular equality groups and the particular requirements of individuals, in relation to how these balance against business need.

The Cranfield School of Management report “Working Families: Flexible Working and Performance” provides specific evidence of the impact of flexible working initiatives on specific groups of employees. Although the research outlines that flexible working is overwhelmingly a positive experience across all equality groups, workplace and management culture have a significant role to play in both the achievement of productivity gains and ongoing satisfaction and engagement of employees.

An employee diversity profile analysis was utilised to provide evidence of particular groups affected by the implementation of the proposal. Data from the original diagnostic exercise which split the council workforce into four separate categories (Fixed, Flexible, Mobile and Home workers) in terms of potential for implementation of flexible work practices was also assessed to identify different implications from a service perspective.

The assessment process noted a number of positive potential impacts across each of the equality strand areas which would result from implementation of the Worksmart Programme. The pilot programme conducted by the Modernisation Team in early 2010 highlighted a significant average increase in productivity as well as increased employee satisfaction across the pilot. General issues across all equality protected characteristics were discussed in relation to culture change aspects of the programme. It was confirmed that a major change programme, as part of the wider modernisation agenda, would be taken forward and details of the communication and cultural change programme were provided for the assessment process. Some of the major initiatives include the use of corporate communications methods and ongoing manager and employee briefings on the programme. In addition, the practical implementation of the programme via the Business Improvement Team was seen as a major factor in creating cultural shift, as they would be working directly with managers and employees to develop flexible solutions that meet both sets of need.

The pilot and evidence base for this assessment also identified a number of specific benefits that would support people with disabilities and promote gender equality in the workplace. These included: reduction in personal travel to work and associated mobility, time and mileage and caring responsibility implications; reduction in workplace interruptions – improved ability and opportunities for concentration and productivity; more flexible start and finish times, which would provide specific positive

benefits for people with certain disabilities who can be more productive at particular times of the day and benefits for women and men in relation to caring and family commitments, particular in relation to childcare; Ability to start or end shifts at more appropriate venues as opposed to the need to travel to “HQ” for team or service; the approach of the programme to take account of individual employee need will ensure that appropriate reasonable adjustments will be taken into account during the assessment process for employees, due to involvement of health and safety and HR advice at each stage of the process; people with disabilities or caring responsibilities would have the potential to build their working environment and working times around the specific needs of their disability, in cases where this would also suit the needs of the business in that productivity would be increased as a result.

Recommendations:

- Implement a specific set of questions within the ongoing employee engagement survey. The purpose of this is to ensure that going forward the organisation can gain tangible feedback from employees as to how Worksmart is perceived and whether the efficiencies and workplace changes put in place continue to add value and improve productivity going forward. The results of this survey should then be disaggregated by equality protected characteristics in order to assess whether there has been a medium to long term positive or negative impact from the perspective of each of the equality strand areas.
- Following results of above, put specific positive action measures in place to support individuals from particular equality group areas to identify why Worksmart is not proving as effective for these groups compared against workforce as a whole, as appropriate.

4.2 Service Proposals

4.2.1 Advice Shop – Revert to Core Advice Shop Provision

The core provision of the Advice Shop will still support an effective service provision contributing to alleviating financial exclusion and working productively in partnership with a range of council services and partner agencies. This proposal is the model of service delivery that was in place for the first ten years of West Lothian Council prior to the Community Regeneration Fund (subsequently Fairer Scotland Fund). The use of technology (the Safe at Home assessment tool) should give some additional capacity allowing the efficiency to be delivered without major impact on service provision.

This proposal will include the removal of a current post, widening the scope of financial advice provided to older people. However, the original limited term funding was to develop a Toolkit to maximise financial inclusion for older people and this specific purpose for the post has now been achieved.

The proposal includes the removal of a current Energy Advice post for older people. Although the assessment process identified a potential impact on provision of energy advice and financial inclusion for older people, it was identified that telephone and office support for energy advice will remain due to mainstreaming of training on provision of energy advice throughout Advice Shop staff. It was identified that older people and older people with disabilities may be disadvantaged by the loss of direct home visits. However, it was noted through the assessment process that staff from MacMillan Cancer Support and the Pensioner Income Maximisation Service would remain in place and would be capable of providing this advice due to mainstreaming training outlined above.

The proposal includes the removal of an Employability Advice post which provides specific one to one support to clients. It was outlined that any impact of this will be mitigated by engagement with Access2Employment. It was outlined that a mentoring project to support BME women had been developed through this work, but that now the infrastructure to support the project was in place the Advice Shop would be able to support this project through remaining resources.

The proposal includes a support worker for ex-offenders in relation to financial inclusion. The specific one-to-one support provided via this post is unlikely to continue if the post is removed. In order to attempt to maintain the post, the Advice Shop is actively seeking alternative funding arrangements, including application for European funding in collaboration with Economic Development. The assessment identified a significant impact with regard to disability, as assessment evidence suggests that approximately 60% of prisoners (and therefore ex-offenders) have learning disabilities covered by the Disability Discrimination Act. The assessment process did not identify any mitigating recommendations related to this potential impact.

The proposal includes a support worker for people with mental health in relation to financial inclusion. The specific one-to-one support provided via this post is unlikely to continue if the post is removed. In order to attempt to maintain the post, the Advice Shop is actively seeking alternative funding arrangements. As a significant proportion of mental health issues are covered by the Disability Discrimination Act, it was deemed that this proposal will have a significant impact on disability equality. The assessment process did not identify any mitigating recommendations related to this potential impact.

4.2.2 Remove Support to West Lothian Financial Inclusion Network

Funding to the Financial Inclusion Network was intended to be time limited with the aim of becoming self-sustaining. This proposal would remove the small projects fund. An analysis of the types of organisations applying to the small financial inclusion projects fund from an equality perspective did not identify any potential disproportionate impact on equality going forward.

As general positive impacts on equality in relation to future Advice Shop provision, the assessment process identified that the core advice shop services will be maintained as a result of these efficiencies, and that a positive decision had been taken to maintain the BME Development work currently funded through the Advice Shop. This was seen as both an operational and strategic imperative in ensuring forward support for equality and diversity within the organisation.

4.2.3 Arts, Sports and Communities – Reducing Number of Community Education Buildings and Rationalising Service Provision at Community High Schools

At time of assessment it was unclear which particular buildings will be considered as part of the rationalisation process. It was therefore felt that in order to identify the implications in relation to equality, where possible the evaluation process for rationalisation should include service user equality monitoring data. This will enable analysis of buildings which are of most benefit to vulnerable groups within the community.

Recommendation:

- Feasibility of equality monitoring process for rationalisation evaluation to be considered.

4.2.4 Arts, Sports and Communities – Removal of Current Arrangements for Free Swimming for Under 16s

It was highlighted that this proposal is to move from universal service provision and provide enhanced service provision to those young people most in need. This proposal is in line with the shift to an emphasis on outcomes based on the principles of the lifestages programme as outlined above. The assessment process deemed this proposal to be reasonable and proportionate, in that individual requirements based on need and risk will include equality considerations where appropriate.

4.2.5 Arts, Sports and Communities – Rationalisation of Swimming Pools

At time of assessment it was unclear which particular swimming pools will be considered as part of the rationalisation process. It was therefore felt that in order to identify the implications in relation to equality, where possible the evaluation process for rationalisation should include service user equality monitoring data. This will enable analysis of swimming pools which are of most benefit to vulnerable groups within the community.

Recommendation:

- Feasibility of equality monitoring process for rationalisation evaluation to be considered.

4.2.6 Arts, Sports and Communities – Removal of Infant and Senior Peoples Swimming Subsidies

It was highlighted that this proposal is to move from universal service provision and provide enhanced service provision to those people most in need. It was confirmed that the proposal is to maintain a subsidy based on ability to pay. This proposal is in line with the shift to an emphasis on outcomes based on the principles of the lifestages programme as outlined above. The assessment process deemed this proposal to be reasonable and proportionate, in that individual requirements based on need and risk will include equality considerations where appropriate.

4.2.7 Arts, Sports and Communities – Rationalisation of Library Provision

The relevance process identified that although this proposal will impact on all library users or potential users, there may be a particularly negative impact on older people who use the libraries more often, and there could also be a potential negative impact on people with physical disabilities who are unable to travel to alternative libraries. The assessment process clarified that library provision would still be provided and that all current services were anticipated to remain. The rationalisation would focus on the number of library buildings, or providing services in alternative local council premises (CIS offices was provided as an example). It was felt that although this may minimise impact on older people in terms usage, the issue of physical location of services remains. It was suggested however that consideration should be given to the increased use of e-book technology via the library service in order to mitigate this impact going forward.

The assessment process flagged that the housebound library provision review should also take account of the impact that it has on people from vulnerable groups within the community, as opposed simply looking at the service in terms of volume of users.

The anticipated increase in the use of the Teletalk system should be specifically considered for the impact on people with disabilities. The assessment process

identified concerns from people with sight or hearing loss in terms of practical usage of the system.

Recommendations:

- Consider increased use of e-book technology via the library service in order to mitigate the impact of physical relocation of library service provision.
- Review Teletalk system usage and potential impacts on people with sight and hearing loss, as well as any mitigating actions that can be taken forward.

4.2.8 Arts, Sports and Communities – Increasing Charges for Facilities

A common price structure is desirable and should lie with the overarching strategy for sport and physical activity. Some places will benefit from additional income which can be used for the benefit of the community. Is it unrealistic to have the same price for the same facility within the area of WLC which is small in comparison to other Councils. Increased charges for library books is avoidable if books are returned (or renew) on time.

The plan is to increase letting charges by more than the standard 3.5%, but not ticket prices. The service offers concessions to older people, children, students, unwaged, people receiving income support, and people with disabilities and their helpers. These concessions will remain. The assessment process deemed this proposal to be proportionate and reasonable from an equality perspective given the maintenance of concessions.

4.2.9 Customer Services – Mobile Registration Service

The proposal relates to the potential withdrawal of mobile registration. This service currently enables members of the public to book an appointment and attend a number of local council offices for the purposes of registering life events. The assessment process identified that the removal of the service is likely to reduce the flexibility of the service to meet specific and individual needs of customers. This is likely as a result of the anticipated increase in customer use of centralised services, and customers not booking appointments and turning up on the day. The equality impact on people with mobility issues was anticipated to be minimal as registration details data evidenced that the vast majority of registration for deaths is conducted by family members as opposed to widows/ widowers, or care home staff etc. The centralised service will be capable of maintaining existing service standards.

No specific recommendations were identified through the assessment process.

4.2.10 Customer Services – Council Information Services

This proposal relates to the rationalisation of council information service offices, and potential redesign of service provision. No specific officer recommendation has been submitted to elected members under this proposal to date, however some form of collaborative rationalisation with library service provision is anticipated. A significant concern addressed via the assessment process was geographical location of council information services throughout West Lothian. It was highlighted that working to the current level of funding reductions, a service is likely to remain in some form within the towns that currently have a CIS office. It was also highlighted that it is expected that final decisions will not be based purely on volume of traffic within offices, but also on the critical nature of the service to those most vulnerable within the community.

Discussion took place regarding the potential for increased use of the Teletalk system for customer enquiries. The assessment process identified concerns regarding the ability for customers with hearing or sight loss, learning disabilities, speech impairments or some older people to utilise this service appropriately. It was suggested that appropriate employee training and support would be required in order to mitigate against disproportionate access to the service for people with disabilities should Teletalk technology become used more widely. It was also anticipated that face-to-face contact will remain available for those most in need of this type of service.

The assessment process identified that efforts are being taken in order to access enquiry location information to help inform the decision making process. This is anticipated to include diversity profile data of customers.

Recommendation:

- Extended use of Teletalk to be accompanied by appropriate employee training and support in order to both maximise the use of the technology as well as meet the individual needs of customers with specific requirements.

4.2.11 Education – Reduction of Childcare Funding to Projects

This proposal relates directly to the provision of funding for community groups and projects which provide childcare for pre-school children. Nursery provision is unaffected by this proposal. The practical implications may not necessarily lead to closure of services, but may lead to reduction in funding for staff training, or rationalisation of services in order to merge groups to provide services to same standard and capacity. It was explained that the specific impacts will not be known until the projects identified for reduction in funding are identified. This will not take place until a formal decision is taken to move the proposal forward.

From an equality perspective, the key potential impact identified was in relation to impact on women as majority providers of child care responsibility. However, the assessment process outlined that any eventual detriment in service provision is likely to be picked up by the private sector.

Recommendation:

- More detailed consideration to be given to implications for equality following formal decision to pursue this proposal, and once specific projects and funding identified.

4.2.12 Education – Reduction of Pupil Support Worker Resources Within Schools

It was clarified during the assessment process that this proposal related specifically to the provision of the Active Learning Pupil Support Worker Service. It was emphasised that pupil support related to the requirements of the Additional Support for Learning Act will not be affected by the proposals. Due to their being no detriment in relation to pupils identified as having additional learning needs, the proposal was deemed reasonable and proportionate from an equality perspective.

4.2.13 Education – Reduction in Subsidy for Wraparound Care

The proposal is to reduce the provision of wraparound care where evidence identifies that the pupil/ worker ratio is low and therefore not cost effective. The assessment process outlined concerns regarding the impact on the council's wider aims related to occupational segregation, in terms of provision of choice for women from low income

backgrounds in relation to accessing employment. It was clarified that the impact on women from low income families will be minimal, as despite original intentions analysis shows that the scheme has not had a significant uptake from families of low income. As a result of this the proposal was deemed reasonable and proportionate from an equality perspective.

4.2.14 Education – Phased Removal of Cluster Resource Funding from Schools

The proposal relates to the removal of joint funding for schools via a range of activities, projects and initiatives. The key issue identified in relation to equality impact related to funding for support for people with additional learning needs which is currently provided via this funding. It was clarified that provision of support for pupils under the terms of the Additional Support for Learning Act is a statutory requirement and will therefore remain unchanged as a result of implementation of this proposal. As a result of this the proposal was deemed reasonable and proportionate from an equality perspective.

4.2.15 Elections – General reduction to supplies and services

The reduction to the elections budget will have no impact in relation to the implementation of the equality positive action initiatives identified within the elections awareness equality impact assessment (as revised April 2010). The budget for this activity is not subject to reduction.

The assessment process identified potential impact in relation to rationalisation of council premises, and whether this will impact upon buildings currently utilised as polling stations for elections. It was felt that this may impact on travelling distances to polling stations and therefore have disproportionate impact for people with a range of disabilities, older people and carers. However, it was confirmed that were this situation to arise mitigating actions would be taken to provide local polling stations, such as utilisation of church halls etc.

Recommendation:

- Should additional polling booths require to be identified, positive promotion of the availability of the Access Fund for voluntary or community based venues to be taken forward.

4.2.16 Environment and Public Protection – Reducing the Frequency of the Garden Maintenance Scheme and Removing the Subsidy Applied for Home Owners Who Have the Means to Pay

The first part of this proposal, reducing the frequency of the Garden Maintenance Scheme, caused no real area for concern during the assessment process as this would affect each customer and resident on an equal basis with no particular equality detriment. The main area of concern highlighted by the assessment process and the West Lothian Disability Equality Forum was whether the second part of the proposal; removing the subsidy for home owners who have the means to pay, would have a significant or disproportionate impact upon people with disabilities or older people who are customers of the service.

Housing agencies will be asked to pay the full share of costs rather than 50% - West Lothian Council currently pays the first 50%. This will affect approximately 220 gardens. Customers who are private home owners, who qualify for the service through age, but who have the means to pay will be asked to pay the full share of costs rather than the current 50% - approximately 217 gardens.

Only those customers with the means to pay will be asked to pay meaning that those customers to whom this does not apply will still receive the service without any additional cost implications. There is currently no proposal to change the qualifying criteria for new or existing customers, meaning that those customers who qualify for the service through age or disability will still qualify.

The proposal should not present any significant equality issue to any particular group within the community. The equality impact assessment did not highlight any significant change to this proposal but agreed to monitor the impact if and when the proposal is implemented.

4.2.17 Environment and Public Protection – Reducing the Frequency of Street Sweeping and Gully Cleaning

The assessment process outlined that town centres would continue to be prioritised in relation to ensuring sweeping and cleaning activity takes place on a regular basis. A specific query was raised in relation to the impact of flooding on people with disabilities, however it was clarified that this specific proposal would not impact on flood prevention and management. Any complaints related to identification of flooding would be managed in the same way as all complaints to operational services, in that an appropriate investigation would take place and appropriate action would result.

As a result the proposal should not present any significant equality issue to any particular group within the community. The equality impact assessment did not highlight any significant change to this proposal.

4.2.18 Environment and Public Protection – Reducing the Winter Maintenance Service

This proposal is to amend provision of winter maintenance services, with the removal of the out of hours service and to focus provision of gritting etc during core business hours of 8am to 5pm. The assessment process identified significant potential disproportionate impact on equality as a result of implementation of this proposal. This impact would relate specifically to people with physical disabilities, older people and carers. The assessment process suggested that the implementation of this proposal as currently designed would likely disadvantage the groups within the community as outlined above in accessing essential services, due to likely build up of snow or ice overnight, therefore impacting transport and physical access. People with disabilities and older people will be particularly impacted due to inability in many circumstances to clear snow or ice from roads or paths.

The assessment process could not identify any actions that could be taken to mitigate against this disproportionate impact, other than to suggest revision of the proposal to consider alternative methods of gaining efficiencies within the winter maintenance budget.

4.2.19 Environment and Public Protection – Charging for Bulky Uplifts

The current policy entitles each home to 3 free bulky uplifts per year and this proposal would see the introduction of a £25 charge for each Bulky Uplift requested.

Whilst the proposal affects the whole population of West Lothian equally, concern was raised that there may be a disproportionate impact on those residents who do not have the means to pay for a bulky uplift and due to age or disability are unable to make use of the Community Recycling Centres to dispose of larger items.

The assessment process recommended that due consideration be given to including a form of means testing to this proposal, so that customers with relevant disabilities or older people without the means to pay for a Bulky Uplift could still receive the service free of charge. It was recognised by the assessment process that this may be a difficult process to implement and manage, but felt that the suggestion should be given due consideration as a result of the potential positive benefits this would provide for disadvantaged customers.

Recommendation:

- Consideration should be given to including a form of means testing to this proposal, so that people with disabilities or older people who are customers, without the means to pay for a Bulky Uplift could still receive the service free of charge.

4.2.20 Environment and Public Protection – Reducing Opening Hours of Civic Amenity Sites

The proposal is to review the opening hours for Community Recycling Centres and vary the opening times by seasonality. At present there are no specific details regarding actual times. The concern highlighted by the assessment process was whether this proposal may have a disproportionate impact on a particular group within the community who choose to use Community Recycling Centre sites at specific times. No specific evidence was available to support this consideration.

As it stands there is no fixed data to show when and who uses the sites at specific times, although there are measures being introduced to sites which will monitor the flow of traffic and therefore provide more data on when sites are used.

Reducing the opening hours for Civic Amenity Sites should not present any significant equality issue to any particular group within the community. The equality impact assessment did not highlight any significant change to this proposal but agreed to monitor the impact if and when implemented.

4.2.21 Environment and Public Protection – Redirecting Trading Standards Consumer Advice Service and Routing Enquiries to Consumer Direct

The proposal is to provide trading standards consumer advice to members of the public via Consumer Direct. The assessment process raised concerns regarding the impact on older people and people with learning disabilities who were identified through evidence as the most likely groups to be vulnerable to be conned. It was suggested that as the service moves to Consumer Direct, a positive action initiative to support vulnerable people can be incorporated into the guidance provided to Contact Centre staff.

Recommendation:

- Call script to provide appropriate advice for vulnerable people in terms of trading standards concerns to be provided to Contact Centre staff in order to maintain consistency of advice.

4.2.22 Homelessness

The aim of the savings identified on homelessness are inextricably linked to the overall aims of the 2008-2011 Homelessness Strategy through their shared aim of improving the service through making customer journeys shorter and more targeted to need at the point of delivery. The changes we have submitted to the contingency

plans form part of an ongoing review of the service and were identified during service development activity designed to improve and streamline processes and customer journeys. This will in turn deliver us with real efficiencies through the refocusing of resources and increased provision in-house for elements of the service previously provided externally. By making our processes straightforward with a minimum of beaurocracy there is less requirement for those currently facilitating these processes. By involving our staff in identifying where waste exists we have successfully managed to refine the service and provide the main areas suitable for efficiency savings without reducing our service provision or delivery options.

It is anticipated that the proposed efficiencies will have a positive impact upon equality. As the equality impact assessment on Homelessness Prevention has wider implications that the remit of the Contingency Strategy, the detail has not been provided here. For full details of the separate Homeless Prevention Equality Impact Assessment please contact E: sarah.kelly@westlothian.gov.uk T: 01506 281877.

4.2.23 Social Policy – Adult Services

The assessment process took a holistic view on the impact of the Tough Choices proposals in relation to the provision of Adult Services within Social Policy.

It was agreed that as the individual specialist areas provide specific services to people with physical, learning and mental health disabilities, that the judgement of proportionality should be based on the financial resource implications of the proposals compared against proposed cuts across the organisation as a whole.

It was highlighted that the Physical Disability Services reduction will be 4.7% on the 2010/11 revenue budget. Learning Disability Services reduction will be 8.1% on the 2010/11 revenue budget. Mental Health Services reduction will be 1.2% on the 2010/11 revenue budget. The higher percentage reduction for learning disability was considered reasonable given the 2010/11 revenue budget is almost two and half times that for physical disability.

When compared against the overall corporate current estimate of a need for 12% real terms reduction in revenue budget by financial year 2013/14, it was highlighted that these proposed reductions recognise the priority given to the needs of people with a wide variety of disabilities and specific needs within the Tough Choices proposals.

4.2.24 Social Policy – Charging Policies

The proposal is to consider implementation of a revised charging policy that would levy charges for the provision of personal care on those assessed as requiring services and who are aged below 65 years. The policy and assessment process will be developed on the principles of:

- Ensuring that individual's income was maximised as part of the process;
- Ability to pay;
- All service users treated equally; and
- The charging policy will be complaint with national guidance.

The assessment process considered the impact of proposed charging for telecare; housing support services; personal care for people aged less than 65 and transport to adult day care services as outlined within Tough Choices. Overall the assessment

considered the proposed principles for the development of a revised charging policy and assessment process as appropriate and in line with the aims of equality of opportunity.

Detailed consideration was given to the policy principle outlined within Tough Choices “ability to pay.” Following discussion through the assessment process, decision-making based on the principle of ability to pay was deemed reasonable for the specific areas where charging is currently under consideration. It was not considered that this would disadvantage any particular group from an equality perspective, as services based on ability to pay would be in line with risk and need, and providing support to those most vulnerable.

Recommendation:

- Consider revision of policy principle of “all services users treated equally” to “the individual requirements of all service users will be appropriately taken into account in line with assessment of risk and need.”

4.2.25 Social Policy – Consider Closure of 2 Council Older People Care Homes and Older People’s Day Care Services

The private sector in West Lothian provides 569 permanent care home beds in 11 units, 2 units are operated by an independent (not private) organisation providing 22 permanent beds. West Lothian Council provides 134 beds in 4 care homes, 2 of which are specialist care homes. The proposal would be to consider the closure of the 2 non-specialist units currently providing 64 permanent beds. At present a new 60 bedded private care home is under construction in Broxburn while there may be further developments elsewhere.

Currently up to 35 people per day receive day care service at these units. Consideration to be given to whether alternative services currently provided by the Voluntary Sector could be accessed or where appropriate respite at home services may be available to support carers. We will continue to incorporate “re-enablement” approaches in our work with older people with a view to achieving better outcomes, measuring their opportunity to fully engage in local community activities.

The assessment process considered the impact of commissioning this service from an equality perspective. It was felt that although the loss of council service provision is likely to have an impact on quality of life for older people involved, it was highlighted that service user engagement would ensure that service placement choice would be appropriate from a practical perspective of service users, as well as build greater trust and transparency into the process.

Given the current capacity within the external day care provision the loss of the council provision should have little, if any, impact with regard placement availability. However there will be those who have been attending their day care of choice who may be resistant to any relocation. The longer term benefits will be the progressing of the plans towards more flexible non-centre based services and the encouragement of those with lower levels of need to access community opportunities.

4.2.26 Social Policy – Frozen Meals Service Subsidy

Service users would require to pay the full cost of frozen meals ordered from Apetito. Some service users may opt to discontinue this service and rely on family or informal networks to have food delivered or prepared.

The assessment process highlighted that in relation to link to lifestages model, this is in line with move away from universal service provision to targeted approach to those deemed most in need and at risk. It was also suggested that the impact of this proposal would be significantly mitigated by the introduction of the West Lothian Food Train. The Food Train will enable many older people who previously would have been unable to access food shopping to do so, and will also increase support for independent living where appropriate.

The proposals should not present any significant equality issue to any particular group within the community. The equality impact assessment did not highlight any significant change to this proposal.

4.2.27 Social Policy – Specialist Services – Withdrawal from Existing Bookstart Agreement

Bookstart is a national initiative for providing all babies with free books and information about libraries. The assessment process identified that the specific development activity has not engaged the most disadvantaged within the community, and that the service will continue despite the withdrawal of funding by Sure Start to employ a dedicated development worker.

4.2.28 Social Policy – Specialist Services – Remove Lunch Provision in Family Centres and Replace with Soup/ Sandwiches

The equality concern raised through the assessment process related to any future health impact. The assessment identified however that the alternative arrangements will create efficiencies and increase health of meal provision within the centres compared against current provision.

4.2.29 Social Policy – Specialist Services – Family Centre Staffing Reduction/ Early Years Work Growth Restriction

Account needs to be taken of population growth leading to increased demand with consequent decrease in commitment to early intervention and preventative approaches. Consider effect of decreased investment in early years which will lead to a need for expensive resources at a later stage. Specifically, this proposal has the potential to impact upon the service's ability to achieve early identification of additional support needs and provide effective and early intervention.

4.2.30 Social Policy – Looked After Children – Reduce Residential School Placements

This proposal has the potential to have a significant positive impact on equality, as it is about ensuring early intervention supports more individuals, diverting them away from the requirement to attend residential school. The integrated focus on individuals will ensure that specific equality implications, such as disability, gender discrimination etc are taken into account within individual circumstances to meet the child's needs.

4.2.31 Social Policy – Field Work Services – Alternative Breaks for Caring

This proposal will have a potentially significant and positive impact on equality, as it is a positive action initiative designed to provide support for children and families dealing with various disabilities, in particular children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. It will increase the number of families that can be supported in West Lothian.

4.2.32 Social Policy – Criminal Justice – Staff Savings

The 21st Century Social Work Review recommended transfer of a number of functions currently carried out by Social Workers to support workers. This redesign is likely to have a positive impact on equality in that it will enable greater attention and focus to be given to working with low level offenders. Low level offenders have a higher proportionate of women, and people with disabilities (both physical and learning disabilities).

4.2.33 Social Policy – Criminal Justice – APEX Service Level Agreement Termination

This proposal is likely to have a positive impact on equality. The service will now be provided internally, enabling a greater volume of people to access employability services as well as generating greater local links with equality specialist employability organisations and service providers.

4.2.34 Transport – Reduction in Free School Transport to the Statutory Minimum and Withdrawing Non-Statutory Transport for Fare Paying Pupils

The proposal is to reduce the provision of free school transport from the current discretionary levels to the statutory minimum, as outlined below:

- Increase distance from 1½ to 2 miles from home to catchment school for pupils aged under 8 years old; and
- Increase distance from 2 to 3 miles from home to catchment school for pupils aged over 8 years old.

The assessment process considered that this proposal may have a disproportionate impact on parents with disabilities and women as predominant providers of unpaid care provision. This negative impact may be increased when considering more remote rural locations. It was however discussed that the legal requirement to implement the safe routes to school programme is likely to mitigate against major detrimental impact on these groups of parents. As a result of this the proposal was deemed reasonable and proportionate from an equality perspective.

It was clarified during the assessment process that the provision of special needs transport will remain unaffected by this proposal as this is a statutory requirement.

4.2.35 Transport – Reducing the Subsidy on Some Routes/ Substituting Responsive Transport for Some Low Use Local Bus Services/ Restricting Carlink Hours

It was outlined that an evaluation tool is currently being prepared in relation ensuring evidence based decisions regarding which bus routes may be affected by these proposals. It was clarified that the evaluation tool will incorporate demographic information that is available. From a diversity profiling perspective of bus users, it was outlined that data can be inputted to the evaluation on disability, as a result of monitoring disability bus passes and for older people, as a result of monitoring of free bus travel for over 65s. It was also clarified that the evaluation tool will take walking distances to bus stops and geographical data such as rural and urban access into account. It was suggested via the assessment process that a more detailed assessment is conducted on the specific results of the evaluation process as a result of the concerns of the impact of public transport identified within evidence base and consultation process for this assessment.

Recommendation:

- More detailed consideration to be given to implications for equality following formal decision to pursue this proposal, and once specific routes and subsidy reductions are identified following the use of the evaluation tool.

4.2.36 Transport – Withdrawing Support for PassPlus

PassPlus is an initiative to support new drivers to evidence additional competence beyond driving test standards. The proposal will remove the £55 subsidy to support young drivers through the programme. The impact assessment process outlined that the proposal will impact directly on young people who are the sole users of the service. No mitigating factors were identified. It was however suggested that the actual impact is likely to be minimal as £55 in addition to the overall cost of driving lessons was seen as negligible by the assessment process.

4.2.37 Transportation – Introduce Charging at Council Owned Town Centre Car Parks

The main area of concern highlighted by the assessment process was whether this proposal would have a significant or disproportionate impact upon people with disabilities, specifically people who are mobility blue badge holders.

The assessment process deemed this proposal to have a disproportionate impact on disability due to the lack of option available to a significant number of people with mobility impairments to use alternative forms of transport or to utilise alternative parking. The assessment process agreed to recommend consideration of a charging exemption for blue badge holders in order to mitigate against this potential negative impact.

In addition, it was also considered that the proposal may have a more indirect impact on the ability of carers to access service provision for dependants. This is a gender equality issue due to the evidence base presented highlighting that women take on the majority of unpaid care work. It was however acknowledged by the assessment process that it would be difficult to put in place any mitigating factors against this.

Recommendation:

- Introduction of charging for council owned town centre car parks in a blanket manner is likely to impact disproportionately on people with specific mobility impairments. It is therefore recommended that Transportation consider a blue badge exemption in order to enable people with disabilities to continue to access essential town centre facilities.

4.2.38 Voluntary Organisations

In 2010-11, council will invest some £22.5m¹ in third sector organisations. In light of a changing national policy context from grant aid to commissioning, West Lothian Council reviewed the value and nature of its investment in the provision of education, social and community-based services provided in partnership with third sector organisations.

Going forward, provision of West Lothian Council funded social and community-based services that are provided in partnership through third and private sector

¹ This covers all forms of grant aid and contracts for the provision of education, social and community-based services provided in partnership with third and private sector organisations.

organisations will focus on the purchasing of outcomes that align council's investment with service priorities and address the needs of West Lothian's communities. Alignment will focus on the purchasing of outcomes linked to priorities, which have been informed by the Life Stages model, Third Sector Investment Strategy and Third Sector Monitoring and Review Policy.

The impact of alignment will be variable and will result in investment being maintained, increased, decreased or withdrawn. Council will set out its priorities for the purchase of outcomes and allocate a level of investment for those priorities. It will be for the sector to determine how it responds to these priorities. Council has no desire to micro-manage its relationship with the sector.

What it will look for from providers is the design and delivery of sustainable, high quality services that meet council's priorities, address the needs of service users, achieve agreed outcomes and improve efficiency and effectiveness.

In depth data on monitoring equalities from the voluntary sector is not collected as a matter of course by either voluntary organisations or the council. Information that voluntary organisations do hold on equalities will be passed to the council through service level agreements, however this will vary in quality. Annual reports from voluntary organisations also may give information on equalities, but again this will vary. In conclusion, equalities data varies in quality depending on the size and nature of the voluntary organisation. The assessment process recommended that monitoring arrangements are agreed with individual organisations based on the EIA around the commissioning process.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance on equality implications of financial decisions guidance, published in 2008 (and as updated in autumn 2010), was utilised in order to consider the specific impact of voluntary sector funding and commission with regard to the public sector equality duties.

In principle the impact assessment process highlighted that this move to focusing on outcomes is in line with the promotion of equality, and indeed mirrors the direction of travel of the equality and diversity agenda in general terms, as evidenced by the outcomes focus of the forthcoming Equality Act 2010. However, the assessment process did identify some process amendments and recommendations in order to ensure equality becomes explicit within the process.

The assessment process agreed to recommend that an explicit statement is made within the outcome based commissioning statement and subsequent service funding agreement or contract. This statement will encapsulate the general duties within the forthcoming public sector equality duty to promote age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation and religion or belief equality. The purpose of this will be to ensure that the council is proactive in ensuring that organisations commissioned with public funding are working towards the same equality outcomes as the council. The focus of the statement including the general public sector equality duty will ensure an explicit commitment to the same outcomes. In addition the assessment process recommended that equality impact assessment activity is conducted on individual tendering processes by relevant council officers. This will be supported by equality and EIA training for all those individuals involved in the commissioning and subsequent equality assessment process.

Recommendations:

- The assessment process agreed to recommend that an explicit statement is made within the outcome based commissioning statement and subsequent

service funding agreement or contract. This statement will encapsulate the general duties within the forthcoming public sector equality duty for age, disability, gender, race sexual orientation and religion or belief equality. In addition the assessment process recommended that equality impact assessment activity is conducted on individual tendering processes by relevant council officers. This will be supported by equality and EIA training.

- In order to mitigate against discrimination on the grounds of disability both the EIA process and awareness training for those involved in contract negotiation should include specific reference to reasonable adjustments to buildings.
- The assessment process recommended that equality monitoring arrangements are agreed with individual organisations based on the EIA around the commissioning process.
- Equality focused organisations operating in West Lothian will be encouraged to seek support from the Government funded initiative “Equally Enterprising”. <http://equallyenterprising.ning.com/>

4.3 Workforce Management

Please note that each of the proposals under the heading Workforce Management are part of the council Contingency Strategy of February 2010, and are not detailed within May 2010 Tough Choices.

4.3.1 Compulsory Redundancy Scheme

It is recognised that bringing forward the additional workforce management changes will minimise the need for compulsory redundancies. The process of compulsory redundancy is both long and complex and requires clear arrangements in relation to the determination of: the pool of employees involved, selection criteria, notification and consultation arrangements and an appeals system. It is of critical importance that these arrangements, which are designed to treat employees with fairness, consistency and equality during a very difficult process, are not determined hastily and under great pressure in a financial crisis situation. It is therefore recommended that as a contingency a Compulsory Redundancy Scheme is worked up at present, with full consultation with Trade Unions, and that this scheme is brought back to the Council Executive for approval, to be applied in future - if needed.

The equality impact assessment process considered the general policy content to be relevant and clear, with no specific equality implications identified.

The assessment process focused predominantly on the draft selection assessment criteria for redundancy. The primary selection criterion within the draft is focused on the skills and competencies of employees involved in the process. Although no equality concerns were identified with this criterion in principle, significant concern was raised regarding the capacity of the organisation corporately at present to evidence objective and reasonable assessment of employee performance, skills and competencies. It was highlighted that equality legislation puts the onus on the employer to provide objective evidence to counter discrimination claims by employees, and that informal, devolved and potentially inconsistent structures across the organisation would be unlikely to provide the objectivity required to counter this corporate risk within an employee relations environment where redundancy was necessary.

The second level criterion, disciplinary record, was deemed reasonable with no equality issues identified.

The third level criterion, sickness absence record, was deemed reasonable with a flag related to sickness absence directly related to an employee's disability. It was confirmed that sickness absence which is evidenced as related to an employee's disability (under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act) should not count towards redundancy selection in the same way as it should not count towards absence management procedures. It was explicitly acknowledged that this only relates to sick absence directly related to an employee's disability, and does not cover all non-related absence an employee may have against their sick absence records. This absence should be managed in the same way as for all employees.

The final criterion identified was length of service. It was deemed that, given all else is equal throughout the process identified above, that length of service would be a reasonable method of making a final decision in difficult circumstances. It was however flagged that any amendment to the draft criteria which gives greater weighting than currently proposed to length of service will need to be equality impact assessed, given the potential age discrimination concerns that this may create.

Recommendation:

- Prior to any future use of the policy and procedure for redundancy, consideration should be given to the feasibility of the development and implementation of a method of corporate monitoring and management of employee performance, skills and competencies. This will be essential in order both to mitigate against corporate risk related to discrimination claims, as well as to enable monitoring of performance across the equality profile of the workforce. This recommendation is linked to that identified within assessment of voluntary severance and early retirement.
- Ensure that explicit guidance on discounting of disability related absence in relation to the procedure is provided to both HR and management staff involved in the process.
- If through negotiation or internal discussion length of service is promoted in terms of weighting within the process, a further equality impact assessment to be conducted on that decision.

4.3.2 Management Structure

The council is focused on front line delivery and has always sought to minimise the costs of supervision and management. This has resulted in one of the leanest management structures of any Scottish council. However the council's arrangements are now being analysed against new models of management structure based on minimising the number of management levels and introducing a minimum span of control. Development of these models should reduce costs and provide flexibility to adapt to new ways of working.

Diversity profiling data related to the current management structure was provided in order to inform the assessment process.

The assessment process identified potential positive impact in relation to the introduction of minimum span of control. If change is managed appropriately, this can increase responsibility and impact of individual employees throughout the organisation. It was identified that this has synergy with the business case for diversity, and minimum span of control and trust coupled with increased diversity of

workforce will likely improve organisational productivity. There is also potential for provision of greater development opportunities for employees under the management structure, which can improve opportunities for women for example given the make-up of our current workforce.

Increase in management span and responsibility will direct management towards people management role as opposed to management of technical areas, which with appropriate direction will support equality and inclusion as general people management activity becomes more ingrained within core business.

Potential negative impact on equality was considered in that existing management diversity may be reduced as a result of reduction of management posts. (This has proven not to be the case however in relation to the senior management structure, which at time of writing is the only area of restructure formally completed). It was also considered that women may face further barriers to promotion within the organisation as a result of reduction in posts and inability to take up promoted posts on flexible basis. (Gender issue due to evidenced predominance of women as majority of unpaid carers in society, and therefore majority of employees on flexible working arrangements).

It was also outlined via the assessment process that greater consideration needs to be given to potential flexibility within management posts. Due to the widening remit of management posts, job share and similar alternative working arrangements have the potential to add value in that a wider range of skills can be accessed for certain roles.

Recommendations:

- Checklist to be devised by HR to provide outline of issues that managers need to take into account prior to final decisions regarding middle management job redesign. This will include consideration of whether posts can be carried out on a flexible basis prior to advertisement or appointment in order to support diversity in selection process.
- Work to realign management posts to take account of the career lines that the redesign may or not provide for succession planning purposes. Role profile management via wider case management process review to take account of this as appropriate.

4.3.3 Recruitment/ New Posts Temporary

Where an existing post becomes vacant it will only be filled where there is a clear and exceptional reason for filling the post. If a post must be filled, then services will require to determine if it is possible to redesign the post to provide the same output at a lower cost (for example through the replacement of the existing post with an entry level post). Where jobs are to be filled they may only be advertised externally where there are no suitable internal candidates and internal redeployment has been considered, but has not proved possible. All external recruitment will be on a temporary basis unless an exceptional case is made to recruit on a permanent basis.

Workforce data in relation to service area turnover rates and relevant diversity profile were provided to inform the assessment process. It was highlighted that there would be no impact on areas that require statutory client/ staff ratios etc. In addition, data highlighted a reasonable spread of vacancies throughout the organisations, without any disproportionate impact on any one service area compared against others.

The assessment process identified a potential negative impact on existing diversity recruitment efforts in terms of the ability of the organisation to improve the diversity of our workforce. Gender impact (which likely most significant) would be mitigated to a

certain extent by the implementation of the ongoing occupational segregation project which the council is currently taking forward with Close the Gap. Specific discussion took place regarding the impact on young people, and the impact of reduced turnover in relation to age diversity.

Recommendations:

- In relation to support for increased diversity within reduced internal promotional opportunities, link to management structure recommendation in terms of ensuring robust review of role profiles. For example, ensuring that qualifications requested for posts etc. is appropriate.
- Recommended that as less likely to improve workforce diversity via recruitment, a robust workforce diversity survey is implemented in order to improve accuracy of current data on diversity make-up. This will enable organisation to recognise reality of diversity situation for medium to longer term recruitment/ promotion activity.

4.3.4 Redeployment

A revised redeployment procedure will be introduced to provide a firm focus on finding suitable alternative work for those displaced due to organisational change and downsizing. Vacancies which occur within the council would be held and only released for recruitment if despite all efforts no redeployment into the post can be secured. Where redeployment is successful, but pay detriment exists, the maximum period of pay protection will be up to a maximum of twelve months (inclusive of full deployment process). While every effort will be made to secure redeployment, due to the potential number of displacements from existing posts there will be occasions on which this is not possible, and in reviewing the policy it will be necessary to consider if termination of employment will result in these instances.

The assessment process identified a potential positive impact in that workforce diversity profile can potentially be considered as part of criteria for redeployment placements. It was also outlined that specific account needs to be taken of reasonable adjustments for redeployment for employee with disabilities.

It was confirmed during the assessment process that role matching will take place simultaneously within an individual's service area as well as throughout the organisation. The matching will be conducted based on substantive terms and conditions. It was confirmed however that this will be supported by discussions with managers, individuals and involvement of Trade Unions in order to get full picture of skills, experiences and backgrounds. This element of the process was identified as critical from an equality perspective in order to avoid devaluing of skills of individuals with diverse experiences and backgrounds.

Recommendations:

- Checklist (similar to that recommended within recruitment assessment) to be devised by HR in order to clarify equality related issues that managers required to take into account, for example reasonable adjustments, flexibility and hours or job design.
- Diversity profiling data of those within redeployment process to be included within corporate equality monitoring report if numbers become significant enough to enable meaningful analysis.

4.3.5 Reduction in Hours

Introduction of arrangements to facilitate staff reducing working hours (moving to part time, term time or seasonal working) or taking additional unpaid leave. These arrangements would be voluntary, but once agreed would form permanent contractual changes. Any arrangements agreed with employees would require to meet the exigencies of service provision. Experience in other councils indicates that the uptake of this type of arrangement is likely to be limited. However it does offer some real benefit to staff who would like to reduce working hours and also assists in reducing the need for compulsory redundancies.

The assessment process identified a positive impact in relation to enabling a particular form of flexible working arrangements for employees who may be willing to take this option. It was raised that it will be important to ensure that this option is seen as culturally acceptable within the organisation. The anticipated low take up as outlined above is likely to be as a result of employees either consciously or subconsciously being concerned about reducing hours due to potential impact on status and perception of individual commitment and the need for the work or post going forward. Organisational leadership regarding attitudes and behaviours in promoting and managing requests from employees will be the key to success of policy implementation. Lack of cultural acceptance has the potential to impact on gender equality as likely to lead to majority take up from women in lower paid posts, and therefore potential negative impact on career development or progression opportunities going forward.

The assessment process identified that alternative arrangements exist in order to facilitate unpaid absence in order to allow for short-term temporary periods of absence. In addition, it was outlined that the policy allows for a trial basis in order to ensure that the new arrangements are to be mutually beneficial for both parties.

Recommendation:

- It was recommended that an opportunity to promote equality and contribute towards wider occupational segregation objectives exists by positively targeting male staff to take up these opportunities (in terms of direct positive impact on work/life balance that this could potentially bring). Male take up is also most likely to create greater efficiencies due to higher salaries and management profile.

4.3.6 Temporary and Fixed Term Posts Review

These contracts are used for a number of business reasons including maternity and long term sickness cover, to undertake projects or to cover transitory peaks in workload or seasonal work. However the benefits, in terms of flexibility, of these types of contract for the employer diminish the longer the employment term accrued by the employee. Under employment law- after long periods of continuous employment, employees assume the same rights as permanent employees. This analysis will identify posts which will not require to be refilled once they become vacant and will also identify potential opportunities for permanent employees who may be displaced under redeployment procedures.

Data analysis of teams and services likely to be affected by the removal of temporary or fixed term posts as well as affected workforce diversity profile provided to inform process. This data provided evidence of a reasonable balance in terms of impact of removal of temporary or fixed term posts in terms of workforce diversity.

The assessment process highlighted the need to ensure objective decision making related to what posts are deemed critical compared against what posts are not providing added value within the new strategic environment. This may mean removing experienced staff from critical posts and replacing with inexperienced permanent employees. This needs to be tempered against ability of organisation to make redundancies of permanent employees while temporary or fixed term employees remain in place and whether this is possible or desirable.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that an additional report on the workforce diversity of temporary and fixed term workers is included in the corporate equality monitoring report as of 2010. This will enable ongoing analysis of impact across each of the equality strand areas.

4.3.7 Voluntary Severance and Early Retirement

The council's discretionary provisions in relation to voluntary severance and early retirement are being reviewed to increase the capacity to enter into voluntary termination packages with employees and to ensure that the terms offered are affordable to the council. Voluntary severance and early retirement take place by mutual agreement between the council and the employee. The Council Executive, on 23 February 2010, in approving the Chief Executive's report on the Contingency Strategy, agreed that a review should be undertaken to identify savings to assist in funding termination costs for staff.

Following a review, proposals were identified that provided for a fund of £10 million. The Staffing Change Fund was formally approved by the Council Executive on 29 June 2010 when the 2009/10 financial outturn was reported to elected members.

The procedure for accessing the Staffing Change Fund is as follows:

- The Head of Finance and Estates is the budget holder for the Staffing Change Fund.
- Following notification of final approval for early retirement or voluntary severance as per the guidance issued by Human Resources on 27 August 2010 (step 9 of the guidance), if Heads of Service wish to access funding from the Staffing Change Fund, they should complete an application form (a copy of which is attached) and submit this to the Head of Finance and Estates.
- Services must wherever possible meet termination costs from their own service budgets (for example from any in year staffing savings delivered in advance of the required phasing in the Contingency Strategy) and, only where this source has been exhausted, should an application be made to the Staffing Change Fund.
- Applications to access the Staffing Change Fund will be considered by the Head of Finance and Estates, who will take account the above factors, and a decision will be communicated within five working days to the Head of Service.
- The commitment and actual spend against the Staffing Change Fund will be monitored on a monthly basis by the Head of Finance and Estates and will be included in the revenue monitoring reports to the Corporate Management Team.

Recommendations:

- Within the principles of the policy, it was recommended that in relation to the need for the council to maintain a “balanced workforce” this is amended to “balanced workforce, including in relation to age diversity”. This will provide explicit acknowledgement of the skills and talents that an age diverse workforce brings to the council.
- CWGE to consider age diversity awareness module as part of ongoing diversity awareness training discussions with HR regarding bite sized training. This will assist objective decision making with regard to management of older and younger people generally.
- Given formal announcement of removal of mandatory retirement age July 2010, the assessment process recommended consideration of feasibility of formal performance management process in order to assist objective justification for retirement purposes.
- Voluntary severance and early retirement diversity profile data to be included in corporate equality monitoring report from 2010 if available.

4.4 PDSP Phase 2 Impact Assessments

Please note that each of the proposals under the heading Phase 2 Impact Assessments arose as a result of elected member involvement and scrutiny of the officer led proposals, and are not detailed within February 2010 Contingency Strategy or May 2010 Tough Choices.

Low relevance proposals resulting from Phase 2 can be viewed at annex 3.

4.4.1 Detailed Community Planning Activities

The Partnership and Resources PDSP requested a breakdown and overview of impact in relation to the proposal to reduce the Community Planning budget. A small part of the overall £35,000 proposed reduction includes removal of current financial support to the Community Race and Disability Equality Community Forums, as well as partnership funding for West Lothian Diversity Week. It was noted that the complete removal of this funding would have a significant impact on the ability of all three initiatives to continue in 2011 forward. However, through the impact assessment process alternative options to continue the same level of financial support for all three initiatives have been identified. This will enable the saving within community planning to take place with no detrimental impact on the ability of the organisation to continue to promote equality.

Recommendation:

- If community planning budget savings are implemented as planned, funding responsibility for the three initiatives outlined above to be transferred to the existing corporate services budget.

4.4.2 Green Transport Strategy – Business Mileage

The strategy outlines the council’s plans for management of financial and environmental impact of employee mileage, highlighting opportunities to reduce this impact and includes plans for revision of the council’s Scheme for Reimbursement of Travel and Subsistence Expenses for council employees.

The assessment process focused on the proposed threshold for inclusion of employees in categories of business vehicle provision – the two options available within the current proposals include: provision of fleet vehicle or use of pool cars. The assessment also considered the impact of the transitional arrangements for removal of the essential car users allowance on protected characteristic groups. Evidence utilised included employee profile data on existing essential car users, as well as currently available data on employee business mileage.

The assessment process identified potential impact in relation to gender, as a result of the fact that a significant majority of those who will not retain essential car users status under the transitional arrangements are lower paid female employees. It was also recognised that this group would likely be disproportionately affected due to the fact that the current arrangements provide for a universal £822 allowance, which has the potential to have a higher financial impact for these individuals and potentially impact upon travel to work and caring responsibilities. It is important to note however that at the time of initial assessment, the proposed threshold for vehicle provision has yet to be determined, and a lower threshold would incorporate a much higher proportion of these individuals than at present. Regardless of the final threshold decision, the assessment process deemed that the overwhelming positive impact from the medium to long term, both from an environmental and financial perspective in relation to these proposals would make the strategy objectively justifiable. In addition, the proposal to remove essential car user status affects just 15-20% of the total council workforce, and is estimated to save between £750,000 and £1,000,000.

A positive impact of the strategy from an equality perspective was highlighted in that a clear threshold will ensure that arbitrary decisions regarding access to fleet vehicles will not be possible. Also, following implementation of transitional arrangements, all employees of the council will be treated fairly in relation to access to business transport and historical inequalities regarding payment of allowances will be removed.

With regard to the impact of the implementation of the strategy on disability equality, the assessment process identified a need to ensure that service managers are provided with clear guidance that reasonable adjustments must be considered in relation to the practical decisions taken regarding allocation of transport options for people with physical disabilities. It was also acknowledged that similar guidance should be reflected within future recruitment guidance for managers.

Practical recommendations related to disability equality were also identified through the assessment process as outlined below.

Recommendations:

- Annual review of threshold for fleet vehicle access to take place in order to ensure this remains appropriate for financial purposes. The equality impact of the new approach is fundamentally based on the need to ensure that the threshold remains relevant, objective and that management ensure no deviation from the proposed policy position.
- Guidance for service managers with regard to implementation of the new arrangement to include specific reference of the need to take reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities into account when reviewing business travel arrangements for staff.
- Pool cars to include a range of seating, fittings, sizes etc in order to accommodate people with different disabilities, as well as to support health and safety risk assessments that will be taken forward for employees using pool cars.

- Confirmation booking emails for pool cars to include standard reminder that employees need to notify the organisation in advance if a particular car or adjustment is required as a result of disability.

4.4.3 Recruitment Advertising

As the council moves into a period of consolidation of staffing establishment and workforce management, there is a reduced requirement for external recruitment advertising. In addition the council has access to a number of new recruitment advertising solutions, such as myjobscotland.com and the Improvement Service jobs portal, which are considerably more cost effective than traditional print advertisements.

The equality impact assessment did not identify any negative impact on equality and diversity. The assessment was deemed medium relevance to equality as a result of positive action in recruitment and the impact on the organisational ability to continue to diversify the workforce. It was however outlined that the reduced budget will not impact on the ability of the organisation to conduct positive action within particular posts or services as they arise.

4.4.4 Review of Subscriptions

All subscriptions across the council were reviewed, following submission of a business case by relevant officers, in order to identify subscriptions that continue to add value for the organisation going forward. The impact assessment process highlighted the positive impact on equality from this review, in that the business case for all equality and diversity related subscriptions were accepted and the relevant services retained.

4.4.5 Staff Training Budgets

To ensure that the council is getting the best value possible from the excellent internal training resources available, it is proposed to move away from externally based training events. It is vital that the council continues to develop employees and this proposal will allow the work on staff development to continue but at a lower cost.

It is not anticipated that this reduction will impact on staff access to quality training solutions as the proposal is about making better use of the depth of knowledge and expertise retained in house together with introducing new training tools such as e-training. Within Education, priority would be given to maintaining provision of continuing professional development for teachers.

As a result of the focus of the proposal on the alternative methods to provision of training in future, the assessment process did not identify any negative impact on equality, particularly given that the budgetary reductions reflect an across the board percentage reduction. However, it was recognised that work underneath this proposal, in terms of how training will be offered, may have equality implications and will require future equality impact assessment as appropriate.

Strategic Data, Research and Evidence	
Evidence	Source
West Lothian Health Improvement Team – Consultation Response to Tough Choices (June 2010)	West Lothian Health Improvement Team
Gender Perspectives on the Global Economic Crisis (February 2010)	Oxfam
Report of Scotland's Independent Budget Review Panel (July 2010)	Scottish Government
Scottish Women's Budget Group Response to Finance Committee Inquiry into Budget Strategy Phase (April 2010)	Scottish Women's Budget Group
Scottish Women's Budget Group Response to Independent Budget Review Panel (May 2010)	Scottish Women's Budget Group
Gender and Efficiencies: Public Sector Research Summary for West Lothian Council (February 2010)	Prof. Kirsten Rummery, Stirling University
The Public Sector and Financial Decisions: An Action Note for Public Authorities (March 2009)	Equality and Human Rights Commission
Scotland's Public Finances: Preparing for the Future (November 2009)	Audit Commission
Shaping Equality and Fairness After the Recession (March 2010)	Equality Forum
Equality Impacts of the Current Recession (November 2009)	Warwick Institute for Employment Research, Warwick University
Race and Recession (May 2009)	Applied Research Centre (US)
Monitoring the Impact of the Recession on Various Demographic Groups (June 2009)	Equality and Human rights Commission/ Department for Work and Pensions
Immigration in the UK: The Recession and Beyond (March 2009)	Equality and Human Rights Commission
The Recession and LGBT Communities (December 2009)	The Bilerico Project (US)
Black Workers and the Recession (April 2009)	TUC

Strategic Data, Research and Evidence (continued)

Evidence	Source
Are Women Bearing the Brunt of the Recession? (March 2009)	Fawcett Society
Cuts and the Impact on Equality (November 2010)	Unison
Recession and Recovery: What do they mean for childcare? (November 2010)	Institute for Fiscal Studies
Scottish Draft Budget 2011-12 (November 2010)	Scottish Government
Using the Equality Duties to Make Fair Financial Decisions (September 2010)	Equality and Human Rights Commission
Counting the Cost: The impact of financial decisions in Scottish Local Government (August 2010)	Equality and Human Rights Commission

**WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL CONTINGENCY STRATEGY
FUNCTIONS AND POLICIES DEEMED LOW RELEVANCE TO EQUALITY**

Each of the proposals within the Contingency Strategy were subject to a relevance assessment in order to prioritise those initiatives deemed most likely to impact negatively or positively on the promotion of equality. The table below outlines each of the proposals deemed to have low relevance to the promotion of equality. The council equality relevance framework was utilised to ensure a consistent approach to the relevance process. All proposals within the strategy deemed medium or high relevance to equality have gone through a full impact assessment. 21 proposals were assessed at low relevance. Additional proposals within the Tough Choices consultation document that have been deemed low relevance to equality are also included within this annex.

Consultation

The council equality relevance framework was applied to each of the proposals within the Contingency Strategy. This was conducted internally via a combination of appropriate policy lead officers and service representatives on the council Corporate Working Group on Equality. The full relevance assessment process was scrutinised at a full meeting of the Corporate Working Group on Equality in June 2010.

All policies and functions deemed low relevance to equality at this stage would not be subject to further assessment activity going forward. In order to ensure that our internal decision making process was as robust as possible, the low relevance assessment proposals were provided for consultation with both our internal Employee Equality Networks and our Community Equality Forums. Feedback from this consultation led to 9 of the proposals being up or down graded in relevance to equality.

Contingency Strategy Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality

CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Internal Efficiencies	Shared Services	Graeme Struthers, Head of Corporate Support Services/ Kenneth Ribbons, Internal Audit Manager/ Tom Henderson, Procurement Manager/ Dave Pringle, Roads Services Manager	Low	It was highlighted that this is a longer-term initiative that does not have clear aims in terms of potential areas for shared service to date; therefore assessment cannot be taken forward at this stage. Policy leads advised of need to inform Corporate Working Group on Equality of further developments where relevance assessment will be reconsidered
	Partnership (systems thinking – business improvement)	Graeme Struthers, Head of Corporate Services	Low	This covers review of inter-agency work via “systems thinking” with partners in the Civic Centre. Identified projects including licensing, sex offender management, child protection, adult protection, and criminal justice aimed at increasing links with partners to provide enhanced focus on customers/ communities, and bring process efficiencies while ensuring added value work. No short/ medium term impact on council staff post compliment
Service Proposals	Customer Service – Reducing the opening hours of the customer service centre	Susan Gordon, Community Planning Officer	Low	Reduced hours unlikely to impact disproportionately on any particular group within the community

Contingency Strategy Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality (continued)

CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Service Proposals	Education – Review of swimming provision in conjunction with West Lothian Leisure	Andrew Sneddon, Strategic Customer and Information Manager	Low	Affects whole population equally – explained that provision of PE within schools will not be affected by this proposal. Confirmed that no impact on West Lothian specialist schools providing education for children with disabilities
	Education – Nursery Nurses to replace 50% of existing teachers	Andrew Sneddon, Strategic Customer and Information Manager	Low	Affects whole population equally. Staffing implications part of corporate monitoring processes and workforce management assessment activity
	Education – Saving of Cluster Resource Group general funding through the implementation of the Integrated Assessment Framework	Andrew Sneddon, Strategic Customer and Information Manager	Low	Individual support will in future be provided on a multi-agency basis for pupils with additional support needs based on a more targeted assessment of need and life stages planning. Children with disability will still receive support as required by Additional Support for Learning Act
	Education – Free fruit and bread; Free School Milk P1-7 – align with provision of free school meals; School Milk – provide on cost recovery basis	Andrew Sneddon, Strategic Customer and Information Manager	Low	All school pupils affected. Affects whole population equally from an equality perspective

Contingency Strategy Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality (continued)

CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Service Proposals	Education – Development of new model of provision – Pupil Support Workers	Andrew Sneddon, Strategic Customer and Information Manager	Low	All school pupils impacted. Affects whole population equally (Pupil Support Workers who support pupils with additional support for learning needs are not affected). Staffing implications part of corporate monitoring processes and workforce management assessment activity
	Education – Secondary school teacher pupil ratios Increased to 1:17 and capacity review of pre-school establishments	Andrew Sneddon, Strategic Customer and Information Manager	Low	All school pupils impacted. Affects whole population equally. Staffing implications part of corporate monitoring processes and workforce management assessment activity
	Arts Sports and Communities – Charging for instrumental music tuition	Susan Gordon, Community Planning Officer	Low	Proposal affects whole population equally. Assessment of ethnic origin, disability, gender of pupils currently receiving tuition conducted for assurance
	Environment and Public Protection – Reducing the frequency of grass cutting, pruning and weed control in open spaces	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	Affects whole population equally. Unlikely to impact disproportionately on any particular group within the community. Disability Forum agreed low providing public paths are prioritised. To be actioned

Contingency Strategy Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality (continued)

CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Service Proposals	Environment and Public Protection – Increasing the Neighbourhood Environment Teams (NETs) response time for complaints	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	Affects whole population equally. Unlikely to impact disproportionately on any particular group within the community. Confirmed no change to discriminatory graffiti response time
	Environment and Public Protection – Stopping the provision of hanging baskets and annual bedding plants	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	Affects whole population equally. Unlikely to impact disproportionately on any particular group within the community. Disability Forum suggestion of positive impact for people with visual impairments in relation to reduced accidents
	Environment and Public Protection – Reducing the number of Environmental Wardens	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	Affects whole population equally. Unlikely to impact disproportionately on any particular group within the community
	Environment and Public Protection – Increasing commercial waste collection charges	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	Affects all commercial waste customers. Unlikely to impact disproportionately on any particular group within the community
	Environment and Public Protection – Stopping the additional works we do to help prepare for gala days	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	Affects each community within a gala day area. Effect on each community may differ depending on ability to pay but no significant equality issues

Contingency Strategy Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality (continued)

CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Service Proposals	Environment and Public Protection – Charging communities for festive lighting	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	Affects each community individually. Effect on each community may differ depending on ability to pay but no significant equality issue
	Environment and Public Protection – Charging developers for new street signs and for provision of bins	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	Affects Developers (will be built into contracts and planning permission for developers)
	Environment and Public Protection – Introducing charges for the pest control service	Steve Field, Head of Planning and Economic Development	Low	There is no equality issues directly associated with this though less mobile persons may not be able to do more basic pest control than non disabled persons and may therefore be disproportionately affected. Charging exceptions could be made for disabled and older customers. Will remain low unless no exemptions to be put in place
	Environment and Public Protection – Discontinuing the out of hours noise service	Steve Field, Head of Planning and Economic Development	Low	Affects whole population equally. Unlikely to impact disproportionately on any particular group within the community

Contingency Strategy Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality (continued)

CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Service Proposals	Environment and Public Protection – Withdrawing support for Operation Opal and Westdrive	Steve Field, Head of Planning and Economic Development	Low	This is a council contribution of £3k per annum to L&B Police initiative. Although Operation Opal is targeted at new drivers and therefore disproportionately at young people, the initiative is likely to continue (subject to confirmation)
	Health Improvement – Choose Life staffing reduction and Health Issues in the Community	Linda Middlemist, Service Development Officer	Low	The potential reduction in volume of service provision as a result of implementation will not adversely or disproportionately impact on any particular equality group within the community
	Social Policy – Health and Care proposals	Linda Middlemist, Service Development Officer	Low	Proposals impact on learning and development support previously required for Social Policy employees for workforce management purposes. No impact on any particular equality group
	Social Policy – Providing light lunches rather than full meals at day centres	Linda Middlemist, Service Development Officer	Low	Provided any special dietary requirements can be catered for (including religious needs), which is the case currently and will continue, this should not disadvantage any particular equality groups disproportionately
	Social Policy – Reduce Local Action Fund	Linda Middlemist, Service Development Officer	Low	To be reviewed following further identification of proposal details

Contingency Strategy Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality (continued)

CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Service Proposals	Property Management and Development – Reduce statutory advertising	Siobhan Izzard, Finance and Estates	Low	The proposal will have no impact on the delivery of service to customers, and no significant change for staff
	Property Management and Development – Increased rental income	Siobhan Izzard, Finance and Estates	Low	Proposal is to review rental income streams for businesses
	Support HR Services – Printing and stationery budget reduction	Chris Keenan, HR Adviser	Low	No impact on service delivery
	Support Business Support – Reduction in medical fees budget	Chris Keenan, HR Adviser	Low	Any savings achieved will be as a result of contract review and negotiations. No change for occupational health clients
	Support Business Support – Reduction in sundry supplies budget	Chris Keenan, HR Adviser	Low	No impact on service delivery
	Corporate – IT Services	John MacEachern, Solicitor	Low	All efficiencies will not impact on business support or service delivery
	Chief Executive Office	Graeme Struthers, Head of Corporate Services	Low	No service delivery impact
	Finance Services	Siobhan Izzard, Finance and Estates	Low	No service impact

Contingency Strategy Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality (continued)

CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Service Proposals	Education – Capacity review of pre-school establishments	Andrew Sneddon, Strategic Customer and Information Manager	Low	This proposal relates to applying supply of pre-school places more closely to demand. The proposal will not impact disproportionately in relation to equality
	Education – Management time reduced for deputy head teachers	Andrew Sneddon, Strategic Customer and Information Manager	Low	The proposal will lead to deputy head teachers delivering more teaching and spending less time on management. Service delivery for pupils will be unaffected
	Education – Management time reduced for principal teachers	Andrew Sneddon, Strategic Customer and Information Manager	Low	The proposal will lead to principal teachers delivering more teaching and spending less time on management. Service delivery for pupils will be unaffected
	Education – Reduction in sundry supplies for business support managers	Andrew Sneddon, Strategic Customer and Information Manager	Low	No impact on service delivery
	Education – Property maintenance 5% reduction	Andrew Sneddon, Strategic Customer and Information Manager	Low	No impact on service delivery
	Sport – Restructure of sports development service	Susan Gordon, Community Planning Officer	Low	Proposal relates to integration of sports development and outdoor education services. Work ongoing, and limited level of impact on relation to services provided by either service area

Contingency Strategy Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality (continued)

CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Service Proposals	Children and Families – Scottish Pre-School Association – withdraw from existing agreement	Linda Middlemist, Service Development Officer	Low	The development post has had little effect in delivering parent and toddler groups in specified areas of West Lothian, therefore no impact on current level of service provision
	Children and Families – Pro rata reduction to housing support services	Linda Middlemist, Service Development Officer	Low	Proposed efficiency related to renegotiation of existing contracts. Client experience and service standards unaffected
	Children and Families – Who Cares? Scotland – End current contract	Linda Middlemist, Service Development Officer	Low	The national campaign will remain in place. Lack of local contract will have no impact on client service provision
	Criminal Justice – Increase income from Criminal Justice Authority and for Drug Testing payments	Linda Middlemist, Service Development Officer	Low	Proposal relates to redesign of funding arrangements for West Lothian in relation to drug test provision. No impact on service delivery
	Social Policy Commissioning and contracts – reduce contracts/ commission and planning staff and renegotiate Bield Care Homes contract	Linda Middlemist, Service Development Officer	Low	No impact on service delivery due to maximisation of contract efficiency and value for money
	Social Policy Information Team CHCP integrated management	Linda Middlemist, Service Development Officer	Low	Efficiencies through increased partnership working between health and Social Policy. No direct service impact or implications

Contingency Strategy Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality (continued)

CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Service Proposals	Social Policy Occupational Therapy Team Staffing	Linda Middlemist, Service Development Officer	Low	Efficiencies achieved through use of electronic assessment tool. No service delivery impact anticipated
	Facilities Management	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	Proposals anticipated to have varying degrees of impact on service, but no proposals deemed to have a disproportionate impact on equality
	NETs and Land – Reduce grounds maintenance standards at closed cemeteries	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	This relates to 9 cemeteries or church yards which no longer take new burials (some have not had a burial for over 50 years) and therefore are the least visited of our cemeteries. Access paths will be maintained in the cemeteries so visitors can still gain access
	Operational Services – 5% general vehicle efficiency utilisation saving	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	No impact on service delivery
	Roads Services – Additional efficiency proposals	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	No proposals with disproportionate impact on equality
	Waste Services – Additional efficiency proposals	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	No proposals with disproportionate impact on equality
	Fleet – Servicing and Maintenance	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	No proposals with disproportionate impact on equality

Contingency Strategy Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality (continued)

CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Service Proposals	Transportation – Additional efficiency proposals	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	No proposals with impact on equality
	EHTS – Restrict food composition sampling to reactive	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	No impact on people through service change
	Economic Development	Susan Gordon, Community Planning Officer	Low	Service rationalisation and redesign will not impact disproportionately on equality
	Economic Development – Access to Employment Closure of Whitburn Office	Susan Gordon, Community Planning Officer	Low	Service unaffected. Service now delivered within Library Building, 100 yards from former office
	Older People Services – Various (SP30/ 31/ 33)	Linda Middlemist, Service Development Officer	Low	Impact on service delivery will be minimal, and there will be no disproportionate impact in relation to equality
	Education – Determined to Succeed Funding	Andrew Sneddon, Strategic Customer and Information Manager	Low	Efficiency will not have any impact on service provision
	Area Services, Advice Shop – No further development of Financial Advice Packs	Susan Gordon, Community Planning Officer	Low	Limited life project which has achieved aims and objectives in delivering advice packs to schools. No forward impact as a result.
	Area Services, Advice Shop – Remove support to Credit Union Forum development	Susan Gordon, Community Planning Officer	Low	Forum will continue, however maintenance of development post dependant on business analysis. No equality issues

Phase 2 PDSP Tough Choices Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality				
CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Phase 2 Proposals and Actions	Councillors Pay Award	Chris Keenan, HR Adviser	Low	The Councillor Pay Award is determined at national level and therefore no impact with regard to council policy
	Members Support Budget	Graeme Struthers, Head of Corporate Services	Low	The saving proposals within the members support budget will result from an across the board removal of spend on catering, newspapers and tea and coffee. No impact on equality in relation to any protected characteristic
	Council Catering Budgets	Siobhan Izzard, Finance and Estates	Low	The removal of hospitality related council catering budgets affects all council services, in that all catering funds will be removed in all areas and circumstances. As clear exceptions have been made for essential catering provision such as schools, older people homes etc this policy is not deemed to have a detrimental impact on any of the protected characteristic groups

Phase 2 PDSP Tough Choices Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality (continued)

CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Phase 2 Proposals and Actions	Schools PPP Contracts	Andrew Sneddon, Strategic Customer and Information Manager	Low	The review of PPP contracts will have no direct equality relevance. Any potential indirect consequence will be mitigated by the steps taken by the Council to protect particular groups, i.e. no reduction in ALN budgets. Any change to PPP contracts will be implemented within the Council and Service equality policies
	Instrumental Music – Alternative Proposals	Susan Gordon, Community Planning Officer	Low	Alternative proposals yet to be confirmed
	Older People's Homes – Alternative Proposals	Linda Middlemist, Service Development Officer	Low	Alternative proposals yet to be confirmed
	Gala Day Bunting/ Service Reduction	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	These proposals will impact on the communities of West Lothian equally, and there will be no disproportionate impact from equality perspective
	Festive Lighting – Alternative Proposals	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	Alternative proposals yet to be confirmed
	Winter Maintenance – Alternative Proposals	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	Alternative proposals yet to be confirmed
	Bulky Uplift Charge – Alternative Proposals	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	Alternative proposals yet to be confirmed

Phase 2 PDSP Tough Choices Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality (continued)

CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Phase 2 Proposals and Actions	Withdrawal of non-statutory transport for fare paying pupils – alternative proposals	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	Alternative proposals yet to be confirmed. All current proposals and PDSP papers do not amend original assessment findings and recommendations
	Reduce free travel distance to statutory minimum for all pupils – alternative proposals	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	Alternative proposals yet to be confirmed. All current proposals and PDSP papers do not amend original assessment findings and recommendations
	Mobile Registration	Susan Gordon, Community Planning Officer	Low	The detailed reports requested on financial implications will not amend the original proposals related to mobile registration and therefore no impact on equality identified
	Payment Methods for Libraries/ CIS Offices	Susan Gordon, Community Planning Officer	Low	Detailed reports on financial payments within CIS/ library services will not amend the original proposals related to related to efficiencies within CIS/ library provision and therefore no additional impact on equality identified

Phase 2 PDSP Tough Choices Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality (continued)

CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Phase 2 Proposals and Actions	Internal Mail and Deans Depot	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	This action does not amend the original proposal, which was identified as low relevance due lack of customer negative impact from systems thinking review. Any employment issues will be addressed through the workforce management procedures assessed through the Tough Choices Equal Chances Programme separately
	Review of West Calder Fitness Centre Proposal	Susan Gordon, Community Planning Officer	Low	Review does not amend original high level Contingency Strategy assessment in relation to rationalisation of community premises
	Consideration of Swimming Options	Susan Gordon, Community Planning Officer	Low	Proposals at present do not amend high level Contingency Strategy assessment in relation to rationalisation of swimming pools
	Report on Garden Maintenance	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	This action does not amend the original proposal, no additional assessment required as a result of this action
	Bulky Uplifts and Voluntary Sector	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	This action does not amend the original proposal, no additional assessment required as a result of this action

Phase 2 PDSP Tough Choices Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality (continued)

CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Phase 2 Proposals and Actions	Building Cleaning Contracts	Siobhan Izzard, Finance and Estates	Low	This action relates to negotiation of contract and does not amend the intention and direction of the original proposal. No equality implications in relation to this action
	Winter Salt Storage	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	No equality implications in relation to this action
	Verge Advertising	Steve Field, Head of Planning and Economic Development	Low	No equality implications in relation to this action
	Vehicle Testing and the Voluntary Sector	Daniel Matonti, Performance Officer	Low	This action will not impact upon particular groups within the community in a positive or negative way. Any amendment to the approach to vehicle testing will apply across the board. No alternative arrangements will be required for any particular group within the community
	Fairer Scotland Fund – Reduction of 1 Community Nurse	Susan Gordon, Community Planning Officer	Low	The post is currently filled via secondment, working on a whole population drug and alcohol use reduction communication campaign. The end of the secondment will take place at the end of the project. No impact on equality
	Members Disbursement Fund	Siobhan Izzard, Finance and Estates	Low	Regardless of previous spending commitment, the budgets are discretionary and council officers have no control over spending decisions

Phase 2 PDSP Tough Choices Policies and Functions – Low Relevance to Equality (continued)

CWGE Sub-Group	Policy or Function	Policy Lead	Relevance	Rationale Summary
Phase 2 Proposals and Actions	Spend to save	Siobhan Izzard, Finance and Estates	Low	Head of Service applications to utilise the spend to save budget have been narrowly focused on technological solutions and upgrades in order to improve process efficiency. The removal of the budget is therefore unlikely to impact upon equality. It should also be noted that application to the fund has reduced recently as a result of the ongoing modernisation initiatives

EQUALITY RELEVANCE ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

1. Policy details	
Policy Title	
Policy Lead Officer	
Date Relevance Assessment Conducted	
2. Discretion?	
YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Which groups of people do you think will be, or potentially can be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? (Please ✓ below as appropriate)	
People from black and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women and men (boys and girls)	<input type="checkbox"/>
People with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Older people, children and young people	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lesbian, gay and bisexual people (including transgender people)	<input type="checkbox"/>
People of different religions or beliefs	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will, or may potentially:	
General Duties	Level of impact (high , medium or low)
Eliminate discrimination faced by particular groups	
Impact upon the promotion of equality of opportunity between particular groups	
Impact upon good relations between particular groups	
Promote positive attitudes towards different groups	
Increase participation of particular groups in public life	
Overall relevance to equality	
5. Equality impact assessment required? (All high and medium policies MUST be impact assessed)	
YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
6. Decision rationale	

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

1. Policy details	
Policy Title	
Policy Lead Officer	
Others Involved	
Date Assessment Completed	
2. Results of equality relevance process	
3. Aims of the policy	
4. What data, research or other evidence has been used to inform this assessment?	
5. Details of consultation and involvement	
6. Impact of policy on particular groups	
6.1. Disability equality	
6.2. Race Equality	
6.3. Gender equality	

6.4. Age equality
6.5. Religion or belief equality
6.6. Sexual orientation equality
6.7. Transgender equality
6.8. Crosscutting equality (multiple discrimination)
7. Consultation and involvement feedback
8. Monitoring and review arrangements
9. Publication of assessment results
10. Recommendations and implementation
Equality Impact Assessment Completed

CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT FEEDBACK

Below provides a record of consultation and involvement feedback from across each of the equality protected characteristic communications as appropriate. The record includes additional comments through consultation and involvement, and not those that have already been reflected directly within the main findings of the report.

West Lothian Disability Equality Community Forum

Representatives of the Disability Forum were directly involved in the vast majority of the impact assessment panels in relation to Internal Efficiencies and Service Proposals. The Forum's views have therefore been taken directly into account within the findings and recommendations of the assessment panels within the report.

In general terms, the Disability Forum considered the Corporate Report to be objective, evidence based and reasonable given the timescales and available information to conduct robust assessment. The Forum also felt that the full Tough Choices Equal Chances Programme had been well managed and was an extremely useful piece of work.

The Forum were keen to stress the importance of ensuring that the findings and recommendations are utilised fully to support the decision-making process of the council in relation to Tough Choices.

A number of specific questions and observations were raised on the report by individual members. These are outlined below:

- As a proposed efficiency, it was recommended that the Worksmart Programme takes into account the home location of staff such as trading standards staff, and that they are allocated jobs close to their own neighbourhoods to reduce transport and travel time and costs;
- It was suggested that feedback be given with regard to rationalisation of CIS offices/libraries in relation to the issues faced regarding appropriate equality impact assessment of the Carmondean library, before major rationalisation takes place; and
- It was suggested that it will be important for the Forum to have sight of the proposed evaluation tool for bus route rationalisation, given the significant impact of public transport identified within the report and through involvement of people with disabilities.
- It was suggested as an efficiency by one member of the group that the council employs a traffic warden to police disabled parking bay usage under new parking legislation. It was felt this has the potential to raise significant revenue as well as support culture change within the community.
- The Forum suggested that user engagement and involvement in any outsourcing or additional contracting with the private sector in relation to social care will assist to mitigate against any practical concerns people with disabilities may have with the chance process.

Contingency Strategy Gender Consultation Event

The meeting note below provides an outline of the discussions and issues raised by those in attendance at the West Lothian Council Contingency Strategy consultation event. The session involved representatives from a wide range of gender focused organisations from across

Scotland, and considered the Tough Choices Equal Chances Programme for the council's strategy from a gender equality perspective.

Workforce

Recruitment/ new posts temporary

Question was raised as to the implication of temporary contracts and the ability for people to access pension rights and opportunities. It was felt that clarification of this within the impact assessment would be important as it may also have longer-term financial implications and outcomes for women, who predominately accept this type of work for flexibility purposes.

A significant discussion took place regarding the position of performance management within the organisation. An ongoing STUC project was highlighted which is collecting evidence from within the public sector that formal performance management systems are in a number of circumstances being misused by managers to unjustifiably control employees as opposed to supporting and developing. This is emphasised when looking at the gender perspective, as the impact of flexible working and caring responsibility disproportionately influences performance discussions, regardless of central HR process direction or facilitation. An example of a gendered competency framework was highlighted at Women's Aid, which had just implemented this structure as part of wider job evaluation review.

Redeployment

It was felt that the key issue with a redeployment process is to ensure that from end to end, the process is adhered to and appropriate equality monitoring data and analysis is conducted on a regular basis. It was suggested that experience from other organisations shows that redeployment processes being with a well intentioned, well thought out structure, but the reality in practice for too many individuals is manipulated by managers in order to protect service/ team interests. The equality data on who does or does not get redeployed for that reason is essential.

For all of the policy areas, specific and detailed equality awareness tailored for HR professionals is critical to the success of implementing these processes with the principle of equality built in.

Consideration needs to be ensured of the wider skills and experiences that employees will have in the process, rather than simply using job evaluation/ job role descriptions. This is particularly important from a gender perspective due to the predominance of women in traditionally low paid under valued areas of employment, where there is likely to be a divergence of skills and experiences.

As well as the general development benefits for the workforce, earn-as-you-learn schemes were identified as a good method of preparing employees for the deployment process. They were seen as particularly beneficial from a gender perspective as it takes away the potential negative work/life balance impact of college study etc. for women.

Review of Temporary and Fixed Term Posts

In relation to the position of making new posts temporary, an indirect issue was raised in relation to the fact that a reliance of a major employer in an area, as West Lothian Council is, on temporary and fixed term posts is likely to impact negatively on the local economy, in terms of consumer spending and commitment to the local area.

It was raised at this point that the development of the Contingency Strategy did not seem at this stage to link strategically to either the Single Outcome Agreement or the new lifestages approach, in that financial reduction proposals so far were service based and not based on strategic objectives. It was recognised however that this may be addressed as more concrete proposals are developed and community feedback from Tough Choices is integrated into the decision making process.

Reductions in Hours

The findings and recommendations outlined within the internal assessment process were deemed to be relevant and appropriate.

Management Structure

The key concern outlined by the group was the reduction of promotion opportunities that a flatter management structure will bring. Although this impacts on all groups, it was identified as a key concern from a gender perspective due to current make-up of the council's workforce, and the potential detrimental impact this will have on the ongoing occupational segregation project with Close the Gap.

Concern was also raised regarding the implications of the proposal from a cultural perspective. It was felt that there could be a reduction in genuine development opportunities, and that development will be in the form of workloads. Employee engagement is likely to reduce as a result. The gender implication here is that women are likely to be harder hit due to time out of the workplace, working reduced hours etc.

Voluntary Severance and Early Retirement

Recent research was highlighted by the group which is showing that a significant number of women over 50 are either being forced into retirement when they do not want to, or cannot afford to leave organisations despite the under-valuing of posts (such as administration) under organisational restructuring. This is gendered due to pension gap that women face as a result of earlier work/ life balance decisions.

Internal Efficiencies

Worksmart West Lothian

Overall the proposal was seen as positive from a gender perspective. It was however recommended that overall savings should be seen as a benefit and that in instances where an immediate saving may not be identified, the engagement and productivity impacts need to be taken into account. This will help to enable work/ life balance issues to be appropriately supported during implementation of the scheme – need to take the longer term economic viewpoint.

Culturally, it was felt that flexible working arrangements generally can have a visibility impact for women. As less men take on flexible opportunities it can lead to a form of “presenteeism” where men are predominantly seen as committed as they are constantly visible in the office and available for access by management, networking opportunities etc. This can be managed and avoided if the organisation is culturally mature for flexible working implementation.

Civic Centre Administration Rationalisation

Although not related to gender, the general view expressed by the group, taken from research and similar experiences from elsewhere, suggested that the proposal is likely to lead to a short

to medium term reduction in productivity and that customer service standards will reduce. This will result due to lack of expertise and context for taking forward a number of administrative tasks for such a diverse organisation.

From a gender perspective, due to numbers of women involved the proposal was seen as likely to be de-motivating for employees, as the process implies their work is low skilled, generic and adds little value to the organisation. The suggested benefits of greater opportunities for flexible working within the pulled resource were recognised, but it was highlighted that the employees in the section were unlikely to be in a position to gain promotion or to utilise untapped talent to the benefit of the organisation.

Building Rationalisation

The group felt that the integration of service proposals related to transport and policy and practice related to redeployment required to be integrated with the building rationalisation programme in order to ensure women are not disproportionately affected due to caring responsibilities.

Lifestages

One general comment was made in relation to the cost of targeting services or benefits, if this is conducted via means testing. It was outlined that research showed that means testing benefits can in many circumstances cost more than the original universal service, simply due to administrative implications. It was felt that each proposal to do so needed a cost/ benefit analysis in its own right.

Service Proposals

The group identified three priority areas for analysis: Homelessness, Transport and Arts Sports Communities.

Homelessness

It was felt by the group that reduction in resources for homelessness could have severe gender impacts and data with regards to the gender and age of service users was needed.

It was mentioned that where possible, on a case by case basis, potential savings on services could be made by keeping women who are experiencing domestic abuse safe in their own homes rather than provide refuge accommodation (- this may be implemented only when this is deemed appropriate and suitable to the individual needs of women).

The importance of a housing allocation policy that ensures a suitable environment and meets women's essential needs in terms of accessibility, proximity to health care and other services was also mentioned as an important factor.

Improved tenancy support and public transport links to support services were also identified as paramount.

The Life-stages worker was also mentioned as having a key role in overseeing and ensuring consistency, efficiency, and coordination of services and identifying gaps.

Transport

The group agreed that transport would have very serious gender implications. If services are going to be centralised, the need for efficient transport links will be even greater. Those on low incomes will be the most affected.

Reducing subsidy on certain routes could limit women in abusive relationships' ability to access and engage with services and support networks.

The group stressed the need for data on service users (gender, age) mapped against available routes, gaps in services, deprivation areas, and purpose of travelling.

The group also highlighted the issue of transport companies' routes often reflecting the labour market demand with most links being clustered around peak working times, 9am and 5pm, thus heavily impacting on women working part-time with caring responsibilities and on low incomes.

Moreover, they mentioned that in order to measure the impact of the withdrawal of support of PassPlus and Carlink further information on the gender and age of service users is needed.

Arts, Sports, Communities

In general, the group stated that more data is needed with regards to the gender and age of service users and providers as this is likely to be highly gendered.

The group agreed that the centralisation/rationalisation of services will have a severe impact on women, on low incomes, experiencing gender based abuse, with no accessible transport. It was suggested that "hub-tight" services could help mitigate this.

The group also highlighted that a recent SWC Consultation looking at the impact of the recession on women shows increasing concern across Scotland with regards to cuts to voluntary organisations, which provide gender specific services and crucial support to women experiencing gender based violence.

The group also suggested to adopt– where appropriate- a more "ad hoc" responsive approach to some services (for example, if some small libraries are currently providing vital access to the internet for some users, particularly in certain rural areas, internet could be provided within homes instead).

Employee Equality Networks Comments (Various)

Recruitment – Recommend additional support is offered to under represented groups where redeployment is a consideration, to include support to seek employment out with the council if redeployment is unsuccessful. Recommend an independent organisation gathers information regarding numbers for workforce diversity. In order to gather accurate figures and reassure on issues of confidentiality for employee.

Public Transportation – I believe cuts will impact disproportionately on people with learning disabilities also.

Having read the document I do not see any glaring omissions, complicated piece of work congratulations in recording it

This is an excellent piece of work. Well done.

Individual Member of Public Representing Disability Equality

My first comment is that on all the above documents there has been an extensive in depth scrutiny on all their expenditures and efficiency levels. They have all been protective to essential services as much as they possibly could and still keeping within the disability laws, equality laws and health and safety laws. I very much appreciate their efforts and diligence in all their work. Also, I am aware that these cutbacks were not the West Lothian Councils fault and they have been honourable in their deliberations and actions.

Social Policy

3.2 Specialist Services - Keeping the budget levels for Social Care Emergency Team and Children and Young People Team is very commendable. The approximate 10% reductions on the other two sections are understandable and acceptable.

3.3 Looked After Children - Residential Care, Youth Justice and Family Support Team and Adoption external in keeping their budget levels is a sound commitment and essential – excellent. My comment on Through/ Aftercare Team is I would suggest that they should hold enrolment service days with private funding.

3.4 Field Work Services - I strongly disagree to the reduction in budgets on the Disability Team and Child Protection. Children's disabilities can cause them abuse from parents and carers due to impatience and lack of understanding of the Childs disability.

3.5 Physical Disabilities - The 10% cut on Assessment and Care Management Services is deplorable and should be a 15% increase in budget. It is really sad that the Deaf/deaf blind/blind do not receive the support; I presume it is because those making the decisions are not Deaf/deaf blind/blind. On the Community Based Care and Support Services where do the cuts affect?

3.7 Mental Health - A supportive suggestion I impart is that those with addictions who are not in employment should assist the council with litter collection and footpath cleaning free of payment. This I believe would help the individuals and the Council costs on litter clearance.

3.8 Older People - The provision of care home placements including respite and day care support services have shown sizeable cuts, what effects will it have in this case? It should also be remembered that older people have quite commonly have severe physical disabilities as well as sensory disabilities.

SP17 Adults – Specialist Domiciliary Care - I am anxious to point out that the comment stated "a number of service users may have to wait for provision of service" Some disabilities are serious and waiting is no option.

SP27 - I would suggest that this cutback is ill conceived as this service is provided in sheltered housing and ensures those clients at least get one full meal per week. Please re-think.

SP36 Criminal Justice - Why the reluctance to comply with National performance requirements and also what other impacts does this decision have. The work input of this report is well appreciated.

Education

2.2 - The necessity to reduce senior management time such as Deputy Head Teachers and Principal Teachers non-class contact time in Primary Schools is an excellent suggestion.

ED8 - Any reduction on education attainment does not seem sensible at all. It would be appropriate for an EIA with more detailed information.

Environment

EN 34 - Removing footway treatment by mini tractor would cause severe repercussions for disabled people. I assume also this would be a health & Safety hazard. This would mean more fracture accidents, more hospital resources, and also more caring services due to the loss of confidence and increased disability.

Culture and Leisure

3.3 - Community Provision at Secondary Schools – more information is required for an understanding of what services will be cut. It could be a cut back for disabled people who use the courses and facilities on offer.

CW2 - Disabled children should have this resource free as this is a great asset to them.

Quality of Life Survey Feedback

Respondents were asked how important they feel services provided within West Lothian are with regards to their quality of life. Factors which were perceived as being most important included:

1. Access to health facilities (81% stating ‘very important’)
2. Good quality education (77%)
3. Good quality roads (65%)

However, factors which were perceived as being less important were:

1. Access to public transport (44% stating ‘very important’)
2. Good quality leisure facilities (41%)
3. Having cultural facilities nearby (31%)

Q2 How important are the following things to your overall quality of life?			
	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important
Access to health facilities	81%	19%	1%
Good quality education	77%	19%	4%
Good quality roads	65%	34%	1%
Clean streets	64%	35%	1%
The ease with which you can travel to work	63%	34%	3%
Having an attractive town or village	51%	45%	3%
Attractive well maintained open spaces	48%	48%	4%
Access to public transport	44%	41%	15%

Good quality leisure facilities	41%	51%	8%
Having cultural facilities nearby	31%	58%	11%

Analysis by Multi Member Ward

The table below shows the proportion of respondents rating each of these services as 'very important' for each multi member ward.

Service priorities by multi member ward (% stating 'very important')										
	WLC	A'dale & B'ridge	L'gow	W'burn B'burn	& Liv'ston South	B'burn Uphall & W'burgh	Liv'ston & North	F'house E. Breich Valley	Liv'ston & Calder	E. Bathgate
Base (approx)	1930	145	245	232	279	218	222	174	225	190
Access to public transport	44%	49%	42%	48%	39%	49%	37%	49%	45%	38%
Access to health facilities	81%	79%	77%	83%	78%	83%	82%	82%	80%	85%
Attractive well maintained open spaces	48%	41%	45%	50%	58%	44%	57%	47%	41%	43%
Good quality education	77%	82%	75%	76%	82%	75%	78%	84%	72%	73%
Clean streets	64%	60%	57%	70%	71%	64%	70%	62%	58%	61%
Having an attractive town or village	52%	49%	53%	54%	54%	50%	54%	55%	45%	48%
Having cultural facilities	31%	26%	30%	27%	38%	28%	39%	28%	29%	30%
Good quality leisure facilities	41%	40%	36%	38%	47%	36%	48%	47%	34%	43%
Good quality roads	65%	66%	57%	68%	68%	64%	67%	68%	64%	64%
The ease with which you can travel to work	63%	58%	61%	67%	63%	65%	65%	64%	63%	59%

This analysis reveals a number of interesting findings:

- Respondents living in Broxuburn, Uphall and Winchburgh ward, Fauldhouse and Breich Valley ward and Armadale and Blackridge ward are significantly more likely to consider access to public transport as 'very important (49%) than those living in Livingston North (37%) and Bathgate (38%).
- Respondents living in Livingston South (58%) and Livingston North (57%) are significantly more likely to find attractive well maintained open spaces as very important than those living in Armadale and Blackridge (41%) and East Livingston and East Calder (41%).
- Clean streets appears to be more of a priority for residents living in Livingston South (71%), Livingston North (70%) and Whitburn and Blackburn, and less of a priority for those living in Linlithgow (57%) and East Livingston and East Calder (58%).
- More respondents living in Livingston North (48%), Fauldhouse and Breich Valley (47%) and Livingston South (47%) rated leisure facilities as 'very important' than respondents living in East Livingston and East Calder (34%).
- Good quality roads appear to be significantly less of an issue in Linlithgow (57%) than all other areas (between 64 and 68%).

Analysis by Age

Analysis by age of respondent reveals that the top priority for respondents aged 44 or under is for good quality education. However, for respondents aged 45 and over, the top priority changes to access to health facilities.

Service priorities by age (% stating 'very important')						
	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-59	60-74	75+
Base (approx)	187	211	376	586	447	122
Access to public transport	65%	42%	32%	34%	54%	61%
Access to health facilities	75%	75%	71%	82%	90%	89%
Attractive well maintained open spaces	41%	53%	50%	46%	49%	51%
Good quality education	83%	76%	84%	71%	76%	81%
Clean streets	52%	67%	65%	60%	69%	75%
Having an attractive town or village	37%	52%	48%	51%	57%	65%
Having cultural facilities	35%	41%	31%	27%	30%	33%
Good quality leisure facilities	52%	54%	47%	36%	34%	32%
Good quality roads	54%	61%	61%	66%	71%	75%
The ease with which you can travel to work	62%	68%	63%	63%	61%	63%

Analysis by Gender

The top priority for respondents regardless of gender is for access to health facilities; however this is slightly more of a priority for females (84%) than males (77%). All services are considered as more important for females than males, and most significantly so regarding clean streets which is considered very important by 71% of females compared to 56% of males.

Service priorities by gender (% stating 'very important')		
	Female	Male
Base	1,021	909
Access to public transport	48%	39%
Access to health facilities	84%	77%
Attractive well maintained open spaces	53%	42%
Good quality education	82%	72%
Clean streets	71%	56%
Having an attractive town or village	55%	48%
Having cultural facilities	36%	26%
Good quality leisure facilities	44%	37%
Good quality roads	68%	61%
The ease with which you can travel to work	68%	58%

Analysis by Ethnicity

Analysis by ethnicity reveals that service priorities vary only slightly three percentage points at the most in terms of 'clean streets' which are more important for respondents of white British ethnic origin (64%) than respondents of other ethnicities (61%).

Service priorities by ethnicity (% stating 'very important')		
	White British	Non White British
Base (approx)	1,842	77
Access to public transport	44%	45%
Access to health facilities	81%	81%
Attractive well maintained open spaces	48%	50%
Good quality education	77%	78%
Clean streets	64%	61%
Having an attractive town or village	51%	50%
Having cultural facilities	31%	30%
Good quality leisure facilities	41%	44%
Good quality roads	65%	63%
The ease with which you can travel to work	63%	62%

Analysis by Disability

Significantly more respondents who stated they had some form of health problem or disability previously in the full survey stated that access to health facilities was 'very important' (91%) compared to 78% of respondents who do not have a problem with their health.

Service priorities by disability status (Q25) (% stating 'very important')		
	Have a disability	Do not have a disability
Base (approx)	319	1,604
Access to public transport	55%	41%
Access to health facilities	91%	78%
Attractive well maintained open spaces	49%	48%
Good quality education	72%	78%
Clean streets	68%	63%
Having an attractive town or village	58%	50%
Having cultural facilities	34%	30%
Good quality leisure facilities	40%	41%
Good quality roads	70%	64%
The ease with which you can travel to work	60%	64%

Analysis by Religion

In terms of religion or faith, care must be taken when reviewing the results for minority faiths or religions as the base numbers are very small therefore findings cannot be viewed as statistically robust. However, it is interesting to note that for those who are not Christian or have no religion, there is a lesser importance placed upon 'having cultural facilities' than there is for those respondents who are Muslim, Pagan or Jewish.

Service priorities by religion (% stating 'very important')										
	Church of Scotland	No religion	Roman Catholic	Other Christian	Other	Muslim	Buddhist	Pagan	Jewish	Prefer not to say
Base (approx)	593	472	190	137	22	10	5	4	3	57
Access to public transport	43%	44%	51%	48%	55%	30%	20%	75%	33%	46%
Access to health facilities	83%	74%	87%	82%	83%	80%	80%	75%	100%	86%
Attractive well maintained open spaces	47%	47%	44%	54%	70%	60%	25%	50%	100%	56%
Good quality education	77%	76%	81%	74%	90%	90%	75%	50%	100%	67%
Clean streets	67%	57%	66%	66%	61%	70%	60%	50%	100%	75%
Having an attractive town or village	56%	45%	56%	58%	48%	40%	40%	25%	67%	61%
Having cultural facilities	28%	31%	36%	35%	48%	50%	-	50%	67%	28%
Good quality leisure facilities	39%	39%	48%	46%	52%	60%	40%	50%	33%	36%
Good quality roads	70%	57%	64%	72%	74%	70%	20%	50%	100%	72%
The ease with which you can travel to work	62%	61%	61%	65%	61%	60%	25%	100%	100%	75%

Analysis by Sexuality

Again, analysis by sexuality of the respondent must be viewed as indicative rather than statistically robust due to the small numbers involved. The table below indicates the % of respondents who stated each of these services are 'very important'.

Service priorities by Sexuality (% stating 'very important')						
	Heterosexual/straight	Gay woman/lesbian	Gay man	Bi-sexual	Other	Prefer not to say
Base (approx)	1,425	6	4	7	6	36
Access to public transport	45%	17%	50%	14%	67%	47%
Access to health facilities	81%	83%	100%	63%	83%	89%
Attractive well maintained open spaces	48%	33%	25%	75%	67%	63%
Good quality education	77%	67%	25%	43%	60%	69%
Clean streets	64%	33%	25%	75%	50%	72%
Having an attractive town or village	52%	33%	25%	63%	50%	66%
Having cultural facilities	32%	17%	25%	57%	17%	27%
Good quality leisure facilities	42%	50%	50%	38%	40%	29%
Good quality roads	65%	33%	50%	88%	33%	82%
The ease with which you can travel to work	62%	-	50%	75%	80%	69%

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALN	Additional Learning Needs
CIS	Customer Information Service
COSLA	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
CWGE	Corporate Working Group on Equality
EDRM	Electronic Document and Records Management
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
EHTS	Environmental Health and Trading Standards
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment
HR	Human Resources
IT	Information Technology
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDSP	Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel
PE	Physical Education
PPP	Public Private Partnership
SOLACE	Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
STUC	Scottish Trades Union Congress
TUC	Trades Union Congress
WLC	West Lothian Council

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