

Budget Proposals 2014/15 and 2015/16: Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Reduction in Grant for Action for Children

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Business Unit:	School Improvement	Directorate:	Childrens Services
Date started:	November 2013	Date:	6th February 2014

The council and its partners are facing a significant challenge in the savings it needs to make over the next couple of years. This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been developed as a tool to enable business units to fully consider the impact of their proposals on the community. As a council we need to ensure that we are able to deliver the savings that we need to make while mitigating against any negative or adverse impacts on particular groups across our communities.

This EIA will evidence that the Council have fully considered the impact of the proposed changes and has carried out appropriate consultation on those changes with the key stakeholders. This EIA and the evidence provided within it will allow Councillors to make informed decisions as part of the decision-making process regarding the council's budget.

Executive Lead / Head Sign off:

Executive Lead(s)	Ken Pritchard	Executive Head:	Richard Williams
Date:	6th February 2014	Date:	6th February 2014

Summary from Overall Budget Proposals:

Proposals – Outline	Savings for 2014/15 and 2015/16		Implementation Cost <i>Include brief outline + year incurred</i>	Delivery <i>When will this proposal realise income / savings</i>	Risks / impact of proposals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Potential risks</i> • <i>Impact on community</i> • <i>Knock on impact to other agencies</i> 	Type of decision		
	Income £	Budget reduction £				Internal	Minor	Major
Reduction in the Action for Children Contract by 10% in 2014/15 and 2015/16		200,000	No Implementation Costs	£100,000 01/04/14 £100,000 01/04/15	The Local Authority has an option within the current contract for Children’s Centres (delivered by Action for Children) to reduce the contract value by 10% a year. This proposal may limit the ability of Action for Children to deliver some current services and achieve targets. The potential impact of this two year proposal will be explored through consultation with Action for Children. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken in relation to this proposal.		X	

Section 1: Purpose of the proposal/strategy/decision

No	Question	Details
1.	<p>Clearly set out the proposal and what is the intended outcome.</p>	<p>In 2012 the Local Authority commissioned the delivery of Children Centre services to Action for Children. Services for Torbay's Children's Centres are delivered in Torquay (Echo, Zig Zags, Watcombe, Cockington), Paignton (Parkside, Oldway), Brixham (Furzeham). Children's Centres provide a universal service available to all families with a child aged 0 to 5 years and include services such as stay and play sessions, young Mums to be, parents to be, dad's clubs as well as providing targeted family support for more vulnerable families.</p> <p>This proposal seeks to reduce the contract with Action for Children by 10% in 2014/15 and 10% in 2015/16. This would reduce their contract to £900,000.</p> <p>The Local Authority will work with Action for Children to ensure that any alternations to services have a minimal impact for families who use the services.</p> <p>The original contract awarded to Action for Children in 2011, has a clause which allows the local authority to implement a 10% budget reduction for each year of the assigned contract years.</p>
2.	<p>Who is intended to benefit / who will be affected?</p>	<p>The following groups may be affected by this proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action for Children as the current service provider • Current and potential service users – families with children aged 0 to 5 and expectant parents. • Partner organisations who deliver services from the children centre sites for example, health visitors, Job CentrePlus.

Section 2: Equalities, Consultation and Engagement

Torbay Council has a moral obligation as well as a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, promote good relations and advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

The **Equalities, Consultation and Engagement** section ensures that, as a council, we take into account the Public Sector Equality Duty at an early stage and provide evidence to ensure that we fully consider the impact of our decisions/proposals on the Torbay community.

Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

No	Question	Details
3.	Have you considered the available evidence?	<p>The current children's centre contract covers all aspects of the Department for Educations Core Purpose. As listed below</p> <p>Children's Centres must:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged families, in order to reduce inequalities in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child development and school readiness <p>Supported by improved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parenting aspirations, self esteem and parenting skills Child and family health and life chances. <p>To deliver the core purpose they need to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Assess need across the local community 3. Provide access to universal early years services in the local area including high quality and affordable early years education and childcare 4. Provide targeted evidence based early interventions for families in greatest need, in the context of integrated services 5. Act as a hub for the local community, building social capital and cohesion 6. Share expertise with other early years settings to improve quality. <p>Sector Leaders believe that all children's centre activity should be underpinned by the principles of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Respecting and engaging parents 8. Working in partnership across professional/agency boundaries. <p>Torbay has two designated Childrens Centres. Torquay and Paignton with Brixham. The Children Centres were inspected in 2011 and achieved good inspection grades, these inspections took place under a previous inspection schedule and both centres are due to be re-inspected.</p> <p>The Children Centres and their planned outreach activities are based within areas of deprivation, they provide a universal</p>

No	Question	Details
		<p>service that is available to all families with a child under the age of 5 (approximately 6,690 children across Torbay). In addition to the universal services the Children Centre provides targeted family support to children under the age of 5. The children's centres currently reach 34% of all children living in Torbay within each quarter of the year.</p>
4.	<p>How have you consulted on the proposal?</p>	<p>In November 2013 the Local Authority informed the Action for Children of the proposal to implement the 10% budget reduction (£100K) listed in the contract. In December 2013 Action for Children conducted their internal budget review and setting process. This involved the senior leadership team of Torbay Children's Centres and the Regional Manager of Action for Children. In January 2014 the Children's Centre Manager met with the School Service Manager (Local Authority) to outline the proposed budget savings and the impact on service users and the delivery model</p> <p>The budget reductions outlined will not impact on the number of services that are universally available to families. All groups that are currently provided will continue.</p> <p>As a result of these findings no public consultation has been undertaken.</p> <p>See Appendix 1 for results of the general budget consultation</p>
5.	<p>Outline the key findings</p>	<p>In January 2014 the Local Authority met with the Centre Leader to hear the impact on services for 2014 – 2015. The impact is summarised below:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budget reduction will predominately be created from staff reductions. In 2013 Action for Children recruited to fixed term contracts, in March 2014 and August 2014 six posts are due to terminate resulting in a £73,000 saving. • The reduced staffing will inevitably reduce Action for Children's capacity to deliver service provision beyond that which has been scheduled. • The termination of a Family Support Worker (30 hours) will impact upon the Children's Centre deliver of threshold two (child's journey) group interventions. • Other savings will be found from casual hours, volunteers expenses, provision of external training, reduction in cleaning hours in all centres, reduction in stationary, printing and equipment. • In addition Action for Children propose to review the services purchased such as IT support and occupied service charges. These will be subject to consultation and approval by Action for Children's national team. <p>The savings declared by Action for Children will not impact on the number of services that are universally available to families. All groups that are currently provided will continue. At each group there may be a reduced amount of staff but these will remain at safe levels for families and workers.</p>
6.	<p>What amendments may be required as a result of</p>	<p>The Local Authority do not propose to alter the budget reductions set out as part of the contract award. To mitigate the risks to identified staff it has been agreed that Action for Children will need to continue to invest in the volunteering</p>

No	Question	Details
	the consultation?	<p>programme offered and this will be run on a frequent basis to ensure a strong bank of volunteers are available to support the running of groups.</p> <p>Through income generation Action for Children propose to find a solution to the reduction of the Family Support Worker. This position will be offered on a fixed term contract and will form part of bid writing opportunities that become available for joint programmes of work. The Local Authority will also consider (after due consultation with clients) a proposed change to the universal services provided to ensure more targeted services take priority.</p>

Positive and Negative Equality Impacts

No	Question	Details		
7.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups			
		Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral Impact
	Older or younger people			The budget reductions outlined will not impact on the number of services that are universally available to families. All groups that are currently provided will continue.
	People with caring responsibilities			The budget reductions outlined will not impact on the number of services that are universally available to families. All groups that are currently provided will continue.
	People with a disability			No differential impact identified at this stage
	Women or men			The budget reductions outlined will not impact on the number of services that are universally available to families. All groups that are currently provided will

No	Question	Details	
			continue.
	People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME)		No differential impact identified at this stage
	Religion or belief (including lack of belief)		No differential impact identified at this stage
	People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual		No differential impact identified at this stage
	People who are transgendered		No differential impact identified at this stage
	People who are in a marriage or civil partnership		No differential impact identified at this stage
	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave		The budget reductions outlined will not impact on the number of services that are universally available to families. All groups that are currently provided will continue.
	Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)		The budget reductions outlined will not impact on the number of services that are universally available to families. All groups that are currently provided will continue.
	Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)		The budget reductions outlined will not impact on the number of services that are universally available to families. All groups that are currently provided will continue.
8a.	Cumulative Impacts – Council wide (proposed changes)	There are no other proposals by the Council which will impact upon the services provided by Action for Children.	

No	Question	Details
	elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	
8b.	Cumulative Impacts – Other public services (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	There are no known public sector proposals which will impact upon the services provided by Action for Children.

Section 3: Mitigating action

No	Action	Details
9.	Summarise any negative impacts and how these will be managed?	The budget reductions outlined will not impact on the number of services that are universally available to families. All groups that are currently provided will continue.

Section 4: Monitoring

No	Action	Details
10.	Outline plans to monitor the actual impact of your proposals	The Council will continue to work closely with Action for Children to monitor the impact of the proposals.

Section 5: Recommended course of action

No	Action	Outcome	Tick ✓	Reasons/justification for recommended action
11.	State a recommended course of action	<i>Outcome 1: No major change required - EIA has not identified any potential for adverse impact in relation to equalities and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken</i>	X	The budget reductions outlined will not impact on the number of services that are universally available to families. All groups that are currently provided will continue. There is therefore no adverse impact in relation to equalities.

	<p>Outcome 2: Adjustments to remove barriers – <i>Action to remove the barriers identified in relation to equalities have been taken or actions identified to better promote equality</i></p>		
	<p>Outcome 3: Continue with proposal - <i>Despite having identified some <u>potential</u> for adverse impact / missed opportunities in relation to equalities or to promote equality. Full justification required, especially in relation to equalities, in line with the duty to have ‘due regard’.</i></p>		
	<p>Outcome 4: Stop and rethink – <i>EIA has identified actual or potential unlawful discrimination in relation to equalities or adverse impact has been identified</i></p>		

Appendix 1

General Budget consultation

Torbay Council’s Consultation Team undertook a general Budget consultation using a survey which was made available to the public. This included a question specifically relating to the proposal, the results are collated as follows.

Q6c) Reduction to the Action for Children Contract- do you support this proposal? If no please tell us why you do not support this proposal.

The proposal is to reduce the contract for Children's Centres (delivered by Action for Children) by 10% a year. This is expected to save £200,000 over two years.

Do you support this proposal?	Number	Percent
Yes	250	61.1
No	113	27.6
No response	46	11.0
Total	409	100.0

Of the 46 respondents who selected 'No' they do not support the proposal, 34 respondents made comments related to the proposal. These have been summarised into themes below:

Category	Examples of comments– where respondents said 'No' above
Will impact on vulnerable people	<i>"I feel the cut is against a vulnerable sector of the community and these centres are very important to the people who use them."</i>
Vital support to children	<i>"We are a deprived area with huge social issues, children need support and services to develop."</i>
Less cut/no cut	<i>"A cut of 100k pa seems extreme and I suspect will de-stabilise valued services"</i> <i>"Reducing inequalities in child development and school readiness' is the purpose of a children centre. A 5% cut would be drastic enough."</i>