



Report Title	Safe and Strong Communities
Meeting	Furness Locality Board
Meeting Date	17 th April 2024
Report Author	Alison Meadows, Senior Manager - Safe & Strong Communities
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Virginia Taylor - Sustainable Communities & Localities
Wards Affected	All Furness
PUBLIC. PART EXEMPT, OR FULLY EXEMPT	Public
Appendices (if any)	Appendix 1 - Furness Locality Board Summary Financial Statement

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Safe and Strong Communities report brings together information from across Thriving Communities. It presents the 2024/25 devolved budget with recommendations to agree budget allocations, mechanisms for awarding grants and agree grant recommendations from 2024/25 within the devolved budget.
- 1.2 The report includes updates from thematic workstreams, in line with priorities, highlight issues, actions and risks and provide an update on the devolved budget positions.

2. Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, Furness Locality Board is recommended to:

- 2.1 For the reasons set out in this report, it is recommended that Furness Locality Board:
- 2.2 Note the status of the Furness Locality Board discretionary budgets and the commitments and expenditure to date as in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 Note the updates included in this report including the thematic working groups, partnerships and grant recommendations as outlined.
- 2.4 Allocate £30,000 to Community Grants budget with £20,000 coming from General Provisions Funding and £10,000 coming from 0-19s budget.
- 2.5 Agree the mechanism for awarding Community Grants as described in paragraph 3.5.

- 2.6 Agree the allocation of £47,596 to 0-19s Budget.
- 2.7 Agree the mechanism for awarding 0-19 Grants as described in paragraph 3.5.
- 2.8 Agree the mechanism for awarding 11-19 Universal Service Grants as described in paragraph 3.5.
- 2.9 Agree the mechanism for awarding the DWP (Department of Work and Pensions) Household Support Fund as described in paragraph 3.5.
- 2.10 Agree the mechanism for awarding the Community Planning (Growth Bid) Funding as described in paragraph 3.21.
- 2.11 Agree that decisions on budget allocations and grants from the General Budget, Community Grants, 0-19 Budget, 11-19 Universal Service Grant and the Household Support Fund of up to £5,000 are delegated to the Senior Manager, Safe and Strong Communities, with the agreement of the Chair and Vice Chair of Furness Locality Board and relevant ward member(s). Any approvals for amounts above £5,000 will be brought as a recommendation to the Furness Locality Board for a decision.
- 2.12 Agree the mechanism for awarding the Sustainable, Travel and Transport Fund which is delegated to the Director of Thriving Places with the Chair of the Locality Board for the relevant schemes as outlined in paragraph 3.24.
- 2.13 Agree to allocate Dalton Leisure Centre £4,500 for children's 10p swimming at Dalton Leisure Centre from Priorities Funding as outlined in the report in paragraphs 3.16 to 3.18.
- 2.14 Agree to allocate Dalton Leisure Centre £3,150 for food to support children's 10p swimming at Dalton Leisure Centre from DWP Funding as outlined in the report in paragraphs 3.16 to 3.18.
- 2.15 Agree to allocate Barrow Citizens Advice Bureau £57,060 towards Money Advice Service as outlined in the report in paragraphs 3.29 to 3.32.
- 2.16 Agree to nominate one member to sit on the UKSPF Cultural grants panel as outlined in paragraphs 3.33 to 3.36.

3.0 Information: the Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendations

Thematic Working Groups

- 3.1 Since the Locality Board report on 19th March 2024 all four thematic working groups are meeting weekly. The thematic working groups include Furness Locality Board Members who had elected to sit on the working groups and key external partners who can provide the technical expertise as required.

The Furness Locality Board Plan has been agreed and the priorities for Furness Locality Board are:

Health & Wellbeing – supporting everyone to start well, live well and age well.

Poverty Proofing – supporting our disadvantaged communities to access and increase opportunities.

3.2 At the meeting of 13th February 2024, Cabinet agreed to delegate a further one-off funding this comprised £100,000 for Community Planning (Growth Bid) Funding to Furness Locality Board.

3.3 Cabinet at its meeting on 12th September 2023 approved the community grants scheme and criteria. The community grants are to support constituted non-profit making organisations to apply for grants up to £5,000 that benefit the local area and meet local priorities.

Community Working Group

3.4 The working group has developed an action plan to look at delivering on priorities that are emerging. These are:

- Website and staffing to support the Furness for You Know Your Neighbourhood Project.
- Anti-social behaviour in town centre.
- A key priority for the working group is addressing social isolation with data and community intelligence evidence North Walney and Hawcoat wards experiencing the highest levels.

3.5 It is recommended that grant requests from Community Grants, 0-19s, 11-19s and DWP Household Support Fund are considered through Community Thematic Working Group. This is due to its cross-cutting areas from children and young people to adults including our 3rd sector partners. In addition, many of the funding applications are likely to be Furness wide and this working group has wide geographical representation of elected members as there would be a minimum of one elected member per ward on the working group. This would be in line with the recommendation under 2.9.

Community Grants

3.6 Cabinet at its meeting on 12th September 2023 approved the community grants scheme and criteria. The community grants are to support constituted non-profit making organisations to apply for grants up to £5k that benefit the local area and meet local priorities.

- 3.7 Grants from this fund are awarded to groups who are involved in community-based projects and initiatives that will benefit the local area. The Community Grants Fund is intended to invest in communities to bring about a positive and lasting change for the benefit of the whole community. Projects and/or initiatives will be assessed on their ability to contribute to the achievement of the Westmorland and Furness Council Plan and locally identified community priorities.

0-19s Grants

- 3.8 Activities improve outcomes for children and young people.

Providing access to play, recreational, leisure or outdoor activities, access to care or educational activities.

Providing access to safe and enjoyable places for children and young people to go.

Providing access to holiday, weekend or out of school activities.

Enabling children and young people's involvement and participation e.g. forum, youth council, engagement, empowerment, decision-making.

Supporting children and young people to take part in volunteering or community action.

- 3.9 As part of the Furness Locality Board evaluation and in line with the Locality Board plan; it is proposed that a Looking Back to Look Forward workshop is held. This would enable members to look at projects, priorities, and how funding was targeted in 2023/24. This would then inform 2024/25 projects, priorities and would follow on from the Community Power Session held with New Local.

- 3.10 Through the Community Working Group it has been agreed that an update is provided on the community and 0-19 grants that have been awarded in terms of beneficiaries, additional funding drawn down. This will be fed back through the Community Working Group and part of the Locality Board report in July 2024.

11-19 Universal Services Grants

- 3.11 Universal Services budget is available to provide universal open access services for 11–19-year-olds. It is recommended that the same criteria is applied as the 0-19s grants budget.

Household Support Fund

- 3.12 This enables the Locality Boards for discretionary spend within the HSF criteria to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford energy and water bills, food, and other related essentials. This targeted local support can be used to: support households with the cost of energy, e.g., insulation of hot water tanks, fitting draft excluding to doorways, or replacing inefficient lightbulbs or white goods. Support households with the cost of food and water bills, essential costs related to energy, food and water, and with wider essentials costs. Support housing costs where existing housing support

schemes do not meet this need. Support disabled people and those with caring responsibilities in their area.

3.13 Eligible spend includes:

Energy and water
Food – whether in kind or through vouchers or cash
Essentials linked to energy and water
Wider essentials
Advice services
Housing costs, except for support that recipients can receive through other eligible support
Reasonable administrative costs.

3.14 While there is no requirement for Local Authorities to carry out means testing, DWP will require assurances that this fund is being targeted in an evidenced way to ensure that it is reaching those most in need. DWP has stipulated that local authorities should provide support to a broad cross section of vulnerable households to prevent escalation of problems.

3.15 The fund will be distributed using the existing administration process by the Council's Area Teams who will undertake a rigorous and transparent process, carrying out all of the necessary due diligence to ensure the funding is being distributed to organisations who can evidence that the appropriate financial checks, required documentation and safeguards are in place.

3.16 The Locality Board is due to receive a further £50k Household Support Fund which will be in accordance with that which the relevant Director will sign off on the ODR. The Household Support Fund is to be expended within 6 months. Decisions will be taken by the Locality Board but in times when expediency is required, the Senior Manager, Safe and Strong Communities seeks delegated decision making for grants up to £5K in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair.

The following grant is recommended for approval at the Locality Board.

The criteria for the DWP Household Support Fund is detailed below.

Energy and water
Food – whether in kind or through vouchers or cash
Essentials linked to energy and water
Wider essentials
Advice services
Housing costs, except for support that recipients can receive through other eligible support
Reasonable administrative costs.

Dalton Leisure Centre

3.17 Furness Locality Board has supported both Barrow and Dalton Leisure Centres with the 10p Swimming Initiative during February half-term. The

initiative was also supported across Westmorland and Furness Council through South Lakeland and Eden Locality Boards.

- 3.18 In the Furness locality the funding enabled children to swim for 10p and receive hot food/packed lunch after the swim. The feedback has been extremely positive with full uptake on places offered. People that would not normally access Leisure Centres have taken advantage of the offer. It can be demonstrated there has been an increase in social connections, physical activity and healthy eating.
- 3.19 Members have recently approved the same initiative for May half-term in Barrow Leisure Centre. Members are asked to consider repeating the initiative in May half-term providing the same offer of 10p swim and food in Dalton Leisure Centre. The cost would be the same as during February half-term £7,650 with £4,500 recommended from Priorities funding and £3,150 from DWP funding. This would allow opportunities to undertake further evaluation, additional benefits and opportunities.

Priority Wards Working Group

- 3.20 The working group has developed an action plan to look at delivering on priorities that are emerging such as:
- Health Plan to address health inequalities to support the action plan.
 - Get Ready for Winter – Two events to be held in Central & Hindpool wards joint third-sector and statutory partners to provide residents with practical and holistic support.
 - Football Foundation Playzone – Expression of Interest approved to look at proposal of developing a playzone in the priority wards. Furness
 - The BeWell Events utilising the Harri Bus in supermarket car parks has evidenced the numbers of people who are socially isolated. The main wards of social isolation are North Walney and Hawcoat. This will be picked up through the Community Working Group.
- 3.21 The Community Planning (Growth Bid) Funding is to support priority improvements in communities, making a real and visible difference to the quality of life in local areas. The criteria is as follows:
- The fund is used to support the identified priorities as determined by the Locality Boards through their recent place planning work and captured in their Place Plans.
 - Provides additionality to the delegated funding to the Locality Boards by Council.
 - Supports communities to be strong, cohesive and resilient.
 - Supports communities and individuals at the 'pre-front door' to prevent, reduce and delay the need for commissioned services.

It is recommended that grant requests from the Community Planning (Growth Bid) Funding are considered through the Priority Wards Working Group.

Poverty proofing is a key priority of the Furness Locality Board. This would be in line with the recommendation under 2.10.

- 3.22 Grants up to £5,000 are delegated to the Senior Manager, Safe and Strong Communities, with the agreement of the Chair and Vice Chair of Furness Locality Board and relevant ward member(s). Any approvals for amounts above £5,000 will be brought as a recommendation to the Furness Locality Board for a decision.

Infrastructure, Environment & Connectivity

- 3.23 The Infrastructure, Environment & Connectivity Working Group has developed an action plan to look with key updates and schemes.

In addition to the various highways and sustainable travel and transport schemes being discussed the working group is also looking more strategically at wider assets for Furness to be a destination area and to inform the Local Plan.

Sustainable Travel & Transport Schemes

- 3.24 The criteria for local Sustainable Travel and Transport Fund is to support the development of local sustainable travel and transport schemes, including footpaths and rights of way, cycling, school streets and community transport. The fund will help improve public health and the environment by reducing congestion, air pollution, carbon emissions and supporting healthier lifestyles.

It is recommended that schemes that meet the criteria for the local Sustainable Travel and Transport Fund are considered through the Infrastructure, Environment & Connectivity Working Group.

Education, Skills & Economy

- 3.25 The working group has developed an action plan to look at supporting on priorities that are emerging. These are:
- Welfare and transition across Primary and Secondary Schools.
 - Data evaluation around senior school qualifications, further education retention and young people not in education, employment or training.
 - Long-term sick.
 - Benefits system.

- 3.26 The Working Group has received the above updates and will now look to identify key priorities to take forward.

Informal Briefing Sessions

- 3.27 In addition to the Locality Board meetings and thematic working groups it was agreed there would be informal briefing sessions to receive timely updates

and presentations. There are further informal briefing sessions planned with key partners and directorates.

Below is the list since March Locality Board meeting.

- Update on Barrow Town Hall Customer Service.
- Update on Council Housing Stock Condition Survey Results Damp & Mould Standards.
- Update on Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- Update on Barrow Solar Farm
- Update on Waste Services
- Update on Team Barrow and Barrow Transformation Funding Announcement

Devolved Communities Budget

3.28 The Furness Locality Board budget allocations are detailed in the following table.

The summary account statement for these figures can be seen at Appendix 1

General Provision including Growth Bid Funding	£153,200
0-19 Services	£57,596
11-19 Universal Services	£25,042
Money Advice Service	£57,060
Community Budget Total	£292,898

Money Advice Service

- 3.29 Barrow Citizens Advice provides free, confidential, impartial, independent expert legal advice and support to all regardless of personal circumstance. Their mission is to help build the financial and personal resilience of people living in Barrow Borough district. Their holistic accredited services are delivered face to face, via telephone and email. Their work enables local residents to continue to access free, confidential, impartial legal advice delivered by a team of highly trained, paid advisers/caseworkers.
- 3.30 The service is available between 9am and 4pm, Monday to Friday with access via a dedicated free advice line, secure email and face to face. Their drop in sessions are held on Tuesday and Friday mornings and Thursday afternoons. Appointments (phone and face to face) are booked for ongoing complex matters.
- 3.31 The service helps 3000 individuals with between 15,000 and 20,000 separate issues each year. Their aim is always to support people to learn from their

experience and the advice they provide so they are better able to manage their problems in the future. Experience has shown that despite this approach a third will use the service repeatedly. This is indicative of the serious difficulties people face in navigating the benefits system and managing money. Based on evidence from the last 10 years they would expect to secure over £2.75 million income gains for those helped, with a similar amount of debt either written off or managed. The other main areas people seek advice about are housing problems, family and relationship issues, particularly child access, and employment problems.

- 3.32 Members recently received an informal briefing session from Barrow Citizens Advice Bureau. The Money Advice Service Grant will enable funding for a highly trained Money Advice Caseworker for the year.

UKSPF Cultural Grants Panel.

- 3.33 Two successful funding bids were submitted to the Uk Government Shared Prosperity fund. One application was for £100,000 to deliver grants to improve the events and festivals offer across Westmorland and Furness. Small grants will be offered internally or externally to small organisations requiring funding to improve the quality and functionality of the event festival. The objectives for this fund is to support 10 organisations to improve events and festivals, provide 22 organisations with non-financial support to improve their events and festivals offer, support 10 amenities and facilities and reach 1000 people with the project benefits.
- 3.34 The other successful application was for £200,000 for Arts Culture and Heritage to improve community involvement in existing cultural, creative and heritage organisations, enhance current facilities, increase wheelchair access and footfall. Funding will be offered internally or externally to small organisations requiring funding. The objectives for this fund will be to improve 8 culture or heritage assets, support 7 events, make 50 m2 of land wheelchair accessible support or step free and create 10 facilities. Grants funding in the Barrow area would be used for capital and revenue and grants in Eden and South Lakes would be used for capital only.
- 3.35 A grants panel consisting of Council Officers and one member from each locality is required to make transparent decisions on grant applications. The first virtual panel meeting is scheduled for Summer 2024. It will depend on the number of applications whether both funds are considered in one panel meeting or there are two separate ones.
- 3.36 Members are asked to nominate one member to sit on the Panel which will look at Events and Festivals grant applications and Arts Culture and Heritage applications.

Dalton Borderlands Partnership

- 3.37 The Borderlands Place Programme is a programme of investment to stimulate the repurposing and reinvention of towns and centres across the Borderlands

region to create places that are economically vibrant, resilient to change and that attract a working age population.

- 3.38 The Town Team has taken place following two working groups of Highstreet Enhancement and Active Travel. Additional businesses have joined the Highstreet Enhancement working group and are now representing the Town Team providing stronger business representation.
- 3.39 The Locality Board at its meeting on 19th March 2024 agreed to validate the two Project Initiation Documents to be worked up and taken forward to develop into business cases.

Town & Parish Councils

- 3.40 In order to ensure a joined-up approach between the Furness Locality Board and the town and parish councils' regular meetings have been programmed in with the Parish Clerks, the Chair, Vice-Chair of the Locality Board and Area Manager. This enables updates to be provided to the Parish Clerks on the key priorities being taken forward as a Locality Board.
- 3.41 There have been three meetings where issues have been raised and able to be picked up to be addressed. A parish councillor has also attended and this would be undertaken on a rotating basis. There has also been HIAMS training undertaken with parish and town councillors following this being identified.

Furness Local Resilience Forum

- 3.42 The Furness Local Resilience Forum is a multi-agency partnership that looks to work in partnership to improve the quality of life of local communities. It brings together the organisations supporting communities in the Furness locality through sharing information from relevant local partnerships and the work of organisations.
- 3.43 It identifies the support local communities need and seek how to support organisations to meet these needs and provides mechanisms to escalate issues through the appropriate channels/structures.
- 3.44 At recent meetings it has received a number of updates from organisations such as Furness for You and the Community Connector Role and Andy's Man Club.

Asylum & Refugees Partnership

- 3.45 The Asylum & Refugees Partnership continues to meet to ensure that asylum seekers and refugees are supported with key areas of concern being addressed. As numbers of asylum seekers decreases in the hotels the focus is now to focus on support with dispersal.

4.0 Link to Council Plan Priorities: (People, Climate, Communities, Economy and Culture, Customers, Workforce)

4.1 The Westmorland and Furness vision, included in the Council Plan 2023 – 2027, determines that it will be ‘A great place to live, work and thrive’ and that the communities will be at the very heart of all that it does. The three Locality Boards provide a mechanism through which the council can ensure strong local leadership and effective local representation, to work closely with communities and partners to enable them to shape their areas and to thrive.

5.0 Consultation Outcomes

5.1 No consultation outcomes required.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

6.1 Members may choose to either agree the recommendations as presented or suggest alternative proposals.

7.0 Reasons for the Recommendations

7.1 Members choosing to agree the grant mechanisms enables processes to be in place to agree current and future recommendations in order projects can proceed and ensures Locality Board budgets are targeted to support.

8.0 Climate and Biodiversity Implications

8.1 No Climate and Biodiversity implications.

9.0 Legal and Governance Implications

9.1 In accordance with the Constitution, the Locality Board will undertake to allocate funding grants within the terms of a Community Grants Scheme developed by the Cabinet. To allocate discretionary budgets, make decisions and develop activities in supporting locality working, projects and activities within the terms of any scheme that may be developed by the Cabinet.

9.3 Cabinet guidance was agreed by Shadow Cabinet on 24 February 2023 which proposed guidance on the use of the Locality Boards revenue budget allocation and criteria. This included Highways revenue, general Budget, 0-19 Budget 11-19 Universal Services allocation and money advice.

9.4 The Locality Board is empowered in accordance with the Constitution to agree and keep under review the implementation of Local Sustainable Transport schemes for the area. Local Sustainable transport schemes could include footpaths and rights of way, cycling and walking improvements,

school streets, community transport support. The fund will help improve public health and the environment by reducing congestion, air pollution, carbon emissions and supporting healthier lifestyles.

9.5 The Director of Thriving Communities is responsible for poverty and food inclusion, community power and and grant programme commissioning under 3.23 of the Scheme of Delegation found in Part 2 Section 6 of the Constitution. The Director is responsible for agreeing the allocation of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Household Support Fund (HSF), for Locality Boards to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford energy and water bills, food, and other related essentials.

9.6 The report refers to funding that has become available via a successful UKSPF application. The grant panel will need to have regard to any UKSPF requirements associated with the funding. The Council may distribute grants in accordance with agreed criteria to ensure consistency and transparency across the process. Due weight must be given in terms of equalities duties and fairness. Should the council distribute funds not in accordance with these principles, then it could be at risk of legal challenge.

9.7 Grant awards will be made subject to appropriate terms and conditions and with regard to the Council's Finance Procedure Rules and any UKSPF terms and conditions. Officers will liaise with Legal Services in the preparation of appropriate grant funding terms and conditions and with regard to Subsidy Control compliance.

9.8 The Council is under a legal obligation to comply with the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Decisions of the Council may be challenged by judicial review if the subsidy control rules are not followed or not followed completely. Grants or other measures may be suspended, and orders for damages or recovery of any unlawful subsidy made. The Council may suffer reputational damage if an unlawful subsidy is made.

9.9 Any Members appointed to the grants panel should seek legal advice from the Monitoring Officer where there is any concern that a situation may arise where there might be a problem with an interest arising from their involvement with an applicant.

10.0 Human Resources Implications

10.1 There are no human resources implications resulting from this report.

11.0 Financial Implications

11.1 The Locality Board budget is detailed in this report and Appendix 1.

11.2 Should recommendation 2.13 be agreed, £4,500 will be committed from the General Provision, leaving £148,700 available for future allocation.

11.3 Should recommendation 2.14 be agreed, £3,150 will be allocated from the DWP funding allocation of £50,000, leaving £46,850 available for future allocation.

11.4 The financial implications for Barrow Locality Board's share of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund of £100,000 and the Arts, Culture and Heritage funding of £200,000 will be reflected in future reports.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty, Armed Forces Veterans, Care Experienced, Rurality, and Socio-Economic Inequalities implications)

12.1 There are no equality and diversity implications resulting from this report.

13.0 Risk Implications

13.1 If recommendations are not supported processes are not in place to enable grants to be committed to projects.

14.0 Background Documents

14.1 This report has been compiled based on previous decisions by Westmorland and Furness Council as outlined in the report.

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Proforma

1 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Proforma

An EqIA is a tool to assess whether a decision, policy, service or function pays 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

This Duty requires public bodies to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

The Equality Duty covers the following **9 protected characteristics**:

Age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership. In addition, this EqIA process includes; **care experience, rurality, socio-economic status** and the **armed forces community**.

The EqIA process has two stages:

- **Screening EqIA:** This checks whether a decision, policy, service or function pays due regard to the Equality Duty; to provide any high-level advice or take immediate action; to determine if a full EqIA is required.
- **Full EqIA:** Sometimes called Equality Analysis, this looks at a decision, policy, service or function with supporting data, information, research and evidence from consultation/engagement. The EIA covers the nine protected characteristics as well as rurality, socio-economic status, care experience and armed forces personnel/ veterans. A full EqIA includes an action plan.

Where an EqIA relates to a Council Member Decision it should be included as an appendix to the committee report.

2 Equality Impact Assessment – Screening

1) Decision/Policy/Service/Function

State title and whether it is a decision/policy/service/function.

2) Background and summary of Equality Advice

State the purpose/ relevance of the decision/policy/strategy/function to equality and highlight any equality impacts

3) Consultation

List any relevant consultations and consultees (completed and pending):

4) Equality screening

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Age				
Disability				
Gender reassignment				
Marriage or civil partnership				
Pregnancy or maternity				

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Race				
Religion or belief				
Sex				
Sexual orientation				
Care Experience				
People in rural areas				
Socio-economic status				
Armed-forces personnel/veterans				
General (other considerations)				

5) Full EqIA required (evidence of substantial impact)?

Yes

No

3 Full Equality Impact Assessment template

3.1 Section 1: About the Decision, Policy, Service or Function

Name and relevance of Decision/Policy/Service/Function being assessed to the PSED	
Job Title of Officer completing EIA	
Department/service area	
Telephone number and email contact	
Date of Assessment	
Objectives of decision/policy/service/	

function. Which objectives relate to the PSED?	
Key stakeholders and consultees	

3.2 Section 2: Information Gathering

What **relevant** information, evidence, data and research have you used to build up a picture of the likely impacts of your decision/policy/service/function on the protected characteristic and other groups listed below.

Information source	Location of information (give a link here if applicable)	What does the data/information tell us?

Add rows as necessary.

3.3 Section 3: Assessment of impact

From the information above identify the impacts on each of the groups below of your proposal.

Equality group	Positive (tick)	Adverse (tick)	Neutral (tick)	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
Age					
Disability					
Gender reassignment					
Marriage and civil partnership status					
Pregnancy and maternity					
Race					
Religion and/or belief					
Sex					

Sexual orientation					
Care Experience					
People in rural areas					
Socio-economic status					
Armed-forces personnel/veterans					

3.4 Section 4: Action Planning

What is the negative/adverse impact or area for further action	Actions proposed to reduce/eliminate the negative impact	Who will lead on the actions?	Resource implications/ resources required	When? (target completion date)	Monitoring Arrangements

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Add rows as necessary.

3.5 Section 5. Outcome of Equality Impact Assessment (tick appropriate box)

No major change needed - the analysis shows the policy is robust and evidence shows no potential for discrimination.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adjust the policy/service/function - alternatives have been considered and steps taken to remove barriers or to better advance equality.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete the action plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adverse impact(s) identified but continue - this will need a justification or reason. Complete the action plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.6 Section 6. Review

Date of next review of the Equality Impact Assessment	Who will carry out this review?



Westmorland
& Furness
Council

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA)

Guidance Notes

Version:	1.1
Last Updated:	Amended November 2023
Last update by:	Ellie Greenwood

4 Contents

Equality Impact Assessments - Guidance Notes	3
1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)?	5
3.0 What is the scope of an EqIA?	5
4.0 What are the requirements of EqIA?	6
5.0 Stage 1 of the EqIA process: Screening EqIAs	6
6.0 Stage 2 of the EqIA process: Full EqIA (where required)	7
7.0 Who is responsible for carrying out an EqIA?	10
8.0 Further information, help and advice	11
9.0 Rural proofing:	11
10.0 Socio economic status	14
Glossary: Definitions of Protected Characteristics	15

Equality Impact Assessments - Guidance Notes

These guidance notes explain what an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is and why, when and how we need to do one. Please use these notes when completing your EqIA.

An EqIA is a tool to assess whether a decision, policy, service or function pays 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires public bodies to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

1.0 Introduction

Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 offers protection from different types of discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of a range of people's characteristics. These 'protected characteristics' are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The council also considers:

- care experience
- People in rural areas

- Socio-economic status
- Armed forces personnel/ veterans

By integrating consideration of equality and good relations into our day-to-day business we can demonstrate that we are paying “due regard” to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

This is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty and applies to public authorities.

Having “due regard” involves having due regard in particular to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encourage persons from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

There are different types of discrimination:

- Direct - where a person from a protected group is discriminated against
- Indirect - where a situation or practice may lead to discrimination
- By association - where a person suffers discrimination because they are associated with an individual who has a protected characteristic

Care Experience

Care Experience refers to any person who is/has experience of child protection or children’s social services at any point in their lives. This includes current children in care, current care leavers and adults aged over 24 who no longer receive support from children’s social care.

Rurality

Rurality tests whether a decision/policy/service/function consider whether there is likely to be a different impact in rural areas because of differing circumstances or needs. Access to services and transport are two important considerations for example.

Socio-economic status

Socio-economic status tests whether a decision/policy/service/function consider whether there is likely to be a differential impact on people from a particular income group, especially if lower income households are more likely to be adversely impacted.

Armed forces personnel/veterans

The Armed Forces Duty requires councils to consider the needs of Armed Forces Personnel/Veterans in relation to School Admissions, Public Health and Housing. By including them as a locally adopted protected characteristics the Duty will be extended to cover all functions of the Council.

2.0 What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)?

An EqIA is an assessment tool to test for 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

An EqIA helps test the activities of the council by identifying any unmet needs and making sure that we do not discriminate. It includes looking for opportunities to promote equality, as well as for negative or adverse impacts that can be removed or reduced.

3.0 What is the scope of an EqIA?

The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to all activities carried out by the council.

The table below sets out the scope of an EqIA in terms of decisions, policies, services and functions.

	Scope
Decisions	All executive decisions by Members and Officers including non-key decisions
Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Authority's Constitution and Policy Framework – including the Council Plan, Mid-Term Financial Plan and Workforce Plan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key strategic documents that are not in the Policy Framework • Changes to existing policy
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key service changes • Service operational systems, policies and procedures • Grants, contracts, partnerships or other arrangements for the external provision of services
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support functions including employment, finance, IT • Central functions such as policy, performance, communications and procurement • All other function areas of the Council

4.0 What are the requirements of EqIA?

Requirements: To meet the test of 'due regard' an EqIA must be:

- An integral part of any decision or policy making process.
- Completed by an officer with a technical knowledge of the decision, policy, service or function.
- Transparent and publicly available i.e. on committee agendas where an EqIA is informing a decision.
- Able to demonstrate due thought when considering whether there is an impact on a particular protected characteristic.
- Able to evidence based on service data, public statistics, consultation, research or expert policy advice – if required.

5.0 Stage 1 of the EqIA process: Screening EqIAs

There are two stages to the EqIA process – Screening EqIAs, which is a preliminary step, and a Full EqIA which is only required if the Screening EqIA points to evidence of substantial impacts on one or more protected characteristic.

Screening EqIA: This is a high level EqIA that tests the relevance of the Public Sector Equality Duty to any decision, policy, service or function. The aim is to check for actual/potential impacts on a particular protected characteristic and if there is impact to determine:

- Whether the impact can be addressed by a change to policy that can be carried out immediately; in which case the Screening EqIA should set out the change required without needing a Full EqIA;
- Whether there is evidence of substantial impact that requires a full EqIA.

Each Screening EqIA should be completed using the Screening EqIA template.

In deciding whether there is evidence or potential evidence of substantial impact the following checklist can be applied. Does the decision, policy, service or function:

- Have an impact on the public?

- Will it have an impact on service users, communities or employees or partners? Consider this in terms of the numbers of people affected and the likely extent of the impact.
- Does it potentially affect different groups of people differently?
- Does it involve changes to accessibility – i.e. physical access, access to information?
- Does it include making decisions based on someone's individual characteristics, circumstances or needs?
- Is there a history or long - established pattern of unequal outcomes? (and do I have enough evidence to prove otherwise?)
- Is it likely to have a significant impact on someone's life or wellbeing?

Screening EqlAs apply to:

- All executive decisions;
- Major policy, financial or service changes;
- Overall services

A Full EqlA not required?

- Where there has been no change to policies, services or functions
- Where a relevant Screening EqlA has not identified any impacts.
- Where the Screening EqlA has identified impacts that can be easily resolved.

6.0 Stage 2 of the EqlA process: Full EqlA (where required)

A Full EqlA is carried out where there is a reasonable concern that a decision, policy, service or function may have a substantial impact on one or more protected characteristics. The steps of a Full EqlA are as follows:

- Step 1: About the decision, policy, service or function
- Step 2: Gathering information
- Step 3: Assessing the impacts
- Step 4: Action planning
- Step 5: Review

Each Full EqIA should be carried out and recorded using the Full EqIA template

The steps below relate to the sections on the EIA template:

Step 1 About the Decision, Policy, Service or Function

Identify the aims and objectives including who is affected; the purpose and beneficiaries; how it fits with the council's corporate priorities and strategic actions.

Step 2 Gathering relevant information, evidence, data and research

If you are making changes to an existing policy or service, you should use data collected about its previous performance which shows whether uptake or satisfaction has been higher or lower for any particular group and if there have been any particular positive or negative effects. You can also use data from other sources.

If it is a new policy or service, where you do not have any specific information about it and its impacts on different groups, you can use information from other sources.

You can use both qualitative and quantitative data. It is important that your EIA is evidence based.

Example sources of information:

- Consultation and focus group data with residents and customers - this can be information from previous consultations or a consultation can be carried out as part of the EqIA.
- Targeted engagement with organisations representing people who share a protected characteristic.
- Websites that hold publicly available information such as the Cumbria Intelligence Observatory www.cumbriaobservatory.org.uk
- Benchmarking data with other similar organisations or comparable local authorities
- Relevant think tanks that specialise in policy advocacy for people who share a protected characteristic (see Appendix)
- Complaints and compliments-customer satisfaction and staff surveys
- Service monitoring/take up information
- Regional and national research including academic research
- Central government or national data; information from the most recent Census

- Feedback and anecdotal evidence from frontline employees and partner organisations

Gaps in data and knowledge

There may be little or no actual data available, especially in relation to religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, and gender re-assignment. Practically, this may not be possible to source immediately and it may be necessary to make a decision about how and when you will be able to carry out work to improve your knowledge about a specific community or group, e.g. by carrying out focused consultation with a specific community. This can form part of your EqIA action plan.

Step 3 Assessing the Impacts: Understanding the effects of the decision, policy, service or function

Take each one of the protected characteristic groups and predict the likely impact on people from these groups.

What do we mean by impacts?

1. A positive impact - where the impact could be beneficial to one or more equality target groups. This benefit may be differential, where the positive impact on one particular group of individuals or equality target group is likely to be greater than on another.
2. A negative or adverse impact - where the impact could disadvantage one or more equality target group. This disadvantage may be differential, in other words the negative impact on one particular group of individuals or equality target group is likely to be greater than on another.

You are also looking for:

- Differential impact - people experiencing the same service differently is OK as long as it meets their needs. Ask yourself “Does this affect different groups of people differently?”
- Unmet needs or requirements – and whether these can be proportionally addressed.
- Unlawful discrimination.

Promoting equality

EIA's should also highlight opportunities for promoting equality. The following are practical ways to show that opportunities for promoting equality were considered:

- Ways to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by some groups
- Ways to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- Ways to encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or other activities if their participation is disproportionately low.
- Ways to promote good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Step 4 Action Planning - Identify actions to prevent inequality and promote equality

Actions should be ‘SMART’ - specific, measurable, accountable (with named responsibilities), realistic and with defined timescales.

When considering whether there is mitigating action which could be taken, you may wish to consider the following questions for example:

- Are there different ways of delivering the service?
- Could the service be promoted better with groups who are under-represented in your service?
- Could procedures be improved to make it easier for customers to access and use your services?
- Providing information in different formats;
- Speak to service users and staff or analyse previous comments/complaints/suggestions
- Find out what other authorities have done about this issue
- Form a working group in your department to share ideas and expertise
- Ask other partners

Step 5 Outcome of your EIA

Based on the information collected and the likely impacts identified, what is the outcome of your EIA? Tick the appropriate box on the template.

- **No major change needed** - the analysis shows the policy is robust and evidence shows no potential for discrimination
- **Adjust the policy/function/service** - alternatives have been considered and steps taken to remove barriers or to better advance equality. Complete the action plan
- **Adverse impact(s) identified, but continue** - this will need a justification or reason. Complete the action plan

Step 6 Review

It is important to monitor the impacts that your EqIA has highlighted and to evaluate whether the actions in the EqIA action plan have been implemented and are effective.

Where actions have not been effective, they should be revisited and revised accordingly. It is a good idea to review your EqIA 12 months after the function that was originally being assessed has become implemented.

It is good practice to build the findings of your EqIA into service plans, objectives and targets.

7.0 Who is responsible for carrying out an EqIA?

- Your EIA is owned at service level with officers from within the service that is being analysed taking responsibility for the data gathering, the analysis, the authoring and the action planning. These officers will have the relevant expertise, knowledge and experience of their service.
- It is the responsibility of the service to use the outcome of the EIA to help to shape the service/inform the policy appropriately. The lead person would usually be the named officer on the relevant report being taken through the decision-making process.

8.0 Further information, help and advice

Please contact the policy and performance team, currently:

ellie.greenwood@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

9.0 Rural proofing:

The term 'rural proofing' is used to define a systematic approach which identifies any notable rural differentials likely to impact on service effectiveness and outcomes. The objective is to ensure equitable outcomes for service users who live in rural areas.

Rural settlements in England are usually defined for statistical purposes as those with a population of less than 10,000. This includes small towns, villages, hamlets and isolated farms or dwellings. However, it is recognised that somewhat larger towns often play an important role as service and employment centres for their rural hinterland.

- **Demographics:** There are proportionately more elderly people and fewer younger people in rural populations compared with urban ones.
- **Access to services:** The combination of distance, transport links and low population density in rural areas can lead to challenges in accessing and providing services.
- **Service infrastructure:** Lower levels of infrastructure such as low broadband speeds and variable mobile coverage can be a barrier for rural businesses and limit the growth in rural productivity.
- **Employment:** The variety of employment opportunities, the availability of people with the right skills, and access to training can be lower in rural areas.

Rural residents should not be beyond a certain distance to services, should not bear a cost for rural dwelling, and should have easy access to services.

Principles of rural proofing (ACRE):

- Demonstrate leadership by producing a comprehensive rural strategy
- Ensure fair funding which takes proper account of rural costs
- Invest in rural infrastructure that is fit for the future
- Adapt and mitigate for climate change
- Create the conditions for a prosperous rural economy
- Design services so they meet rural needs
- Deliver services as locally as possible
- Support the key contribution of the voluntary and community sector
- Devolve decision-making powers closer to communities

1) Will your decision affect any other services in a rural area?

Think about all the services the Council provides, plus services offered by public and private bodies such as health authorities and transport providers.

- Consider if you could work together with others to provide a better service all-round.
- Could there be alternative shared funding available?
- Could you integrate the services and cut overheads?
- Could your service help support other rural services such as the village Post Office, village shop or pub?

2) Could you deliver the policy or service you are suggesting through existing service outlets?

Think about the different outlets there are: fire stations, mobile libraries, the local pub, health centres etc.

- Talk to the County Council's Neighbourhood Development Officer who could be a source of valuable local knowledge.
- Discuss the options for jointly delivering a package of services with partners.
- Look at cutting overheads and finding joint funding.

- Consider how you could help support vulnerable rural services such as Post Offices and village shops.
- Think how you are going to deliver your services to isolated users.
- If you need to set up a new network of provision, how much will it cost?
- Will the provision cover the whole area?

3) Will there be an extra cost to delivering your policy or service to rural areas?

Think about the additional miles providers may need to travel, or how people will get to the service you are trying to offer.

- Consider developing a 'sparsity factor' to address this.
- Look at the potential for joint provision to share costs.
- If national funding allocation fails to recognise this issue talk to your Corporate Director and the Policy Unit to see if the Council can lobby on the issue nationally and regionally.

4) Will your decision affect travel needs or the cost of travel for rural communities?

Think about how far you might be asking people to travel and whether or not the road or rail network can support this.

- Look at the possibility of providing a mobile service, offering internet access or co-ordinating transport provision.

5) Does your policy rely on communication of information to clients?

Think about the various ways that information can be shared with people.

- Look at the cost implications of getting the message out to isolated areas.
- Consider using existing networks such as Post Offices, village halls, parish and town councils to reduce costs in rural areas.

6) Will you deliver your policy or service through a third-party?

Think about where such organisations are based and if delivering services in a rural area will be a problem for them.

- Consider if the organisation shares our commitment to thinking rural, or perhaps set them specific targets for delivery in rural areas.
- Some organisations can access extra funds for especially innovative projects.

- Consider whether or not rural organisations have the capacity to deliver the service and consider appropriate support for capacity building before implementation.

7) Does your policy or service rely on an infrastructure that may put rural communities at a disadvantage - is the framework there in rural areas?

Think about what already exists in these areas in terms of information systems, utilities etc; and consider the realities of what this will mean for your decision.

- Could there be an impact on the availability of or access to infrastructure in rural areas (e.g., transport, broadband and mobile)?
- Use the planning system to encourage provision and encourage demand to make the service viable.
- Provide alternative means of accessing the service.

8) Will your decision have an impact on rural businesses and the economy?

- Can extra employment be generated for local people through the policy?

9) Will your decision target disadvantaged residents?

Think about where those classed as disadvantaged live and how disadvantage is defined.

- Will your policy or service pick up those classed as disadvantaged living in rural areas?
- You may need to use smaller area statistics to demonstrate need.
- Think about targeting population groups rather than geographical areas if possible.

References:

[Rural and community development charity for Cumbria - Action with Communities in Cumbria, Penrith, Cumbria \(cumbriaaction.org.uk\)](http://cumbriaaction.org.uk)

[Rural proofing \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[The-Rural-Coalition-A-Better-Future.pdf \(acre.org.uk\)](http://acre.org.uk)

10.0 Socio economic status

Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Westmorland and Furness, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services.

When making decisions the council must reduce inequalities of outcome, which result from socio-economic disadvantage.

Consider these additional groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families.
 - Pensioners.
 - Looked after children.
 - Homeless people.
 - Students.
 - Single adult households.
 - People living in the most deprived areas in Westmorland and Furness.
 - People with low literacy and numeracy.
 - People who have experienced the asylum system.
 - People misusing substances.
 - People of all ages leaving a care setting.
 - People involved in the criminal justice system.
- a. What evidence do you have about socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome relating to this decision?
- b. Have you engaged with those affected by the decision?
- c. How can the proposal be improved so it reduces inequalities of outcome as a result of socio economic disadvantage?

Glossary: Definitions of Protected Characteristics

Age: This refers to a person having a particular age or being within an age group.

Disability: A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Includes: Physical/sensory disability; Mental Health; Learning disability.

Sex: This refers to a person being either male or female.

Gender reassignment: This means proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone a process to reassign your sex. A person does not need to have undergone medical treatment or surgery in order to be protected from gender reassignment discrimination. Transgender: Anyone whose gender identity is not the same as the sex recorded on their original birth certificate. Gender identity is a term used by some to describe someone's sense of their gender.

Marriage and civil partnership: Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex and heterosexual couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

Pregnancy and maternity: Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race: It refers to a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins. Includes, Asian, Black and White minority ethnic groups inc. Eastern Europeans, Irish people and Gypsy Travellers.

Religion or belief: "Religion" means any religion, including a reference to a lack of religion. "Belief" includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (for example, Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way

you live for it to be included in the definition. The category includes, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and non-religious beliefs such as Humanism.

Sexual orientation: This is whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Rurality: Differential impact on people in rural areas (see section 10 above).

Socio-economic status: Differential impact on people due to household or personal income (see section 11 above).

[Protected characteristics | Equality and Human Rights Commission](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com)
([equalityhumanrights.com](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com))