

North Ayrshire Council Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment Summary Form

This form provides a summary of the equality impact assessment conducted in the title heading under item 1. The full assessment form is available on request by emailing the main contact below.

This impact assessment process includes the requirements under Equality Legislation to assess the main activities of the Council against the nine protected characteristics and socio-economic inequalities under the Fairer Scotland Duty; the assessment covers the Rights of Children as per the United Nations Rights of the Child and ask us to consider the implications for our island communities under the Island Proofing section.

1. Policy/Strategy or Programme Details

1.a Policy Title

Council Plan 2023 - 2028

1.b Policy Lead Officer

Isla Hardy, Team Manager, Policy and Performance

1.c Contact Email

islahardy@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

1.d Others Involved

Andrew Hale, Health Improvement and Equalities Officer

2. Summary of Policy Aims

Our Council Plan is the main strategy for our Council. The priorities within it are identified by working closely with our communities across North Ayrshire. As a result, it can be viewed as 'our contract' with our communities, with a focus on the effective delivery of these priorities.

Our Council Plan is core to our statutory performance reporting outlined in The Publication of Information (Standards of Performance) Direction 2021 (known as 'Direction 2021') outlined by the Accounts Commission under the Local Government Act 1992. Our plan provides a mechanism to demonstrate Best Value, a statutory duty set out in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2023.

3. Key Equality Related issues arising from the assessment

3.a Summary of Impacts on Equality Protected Groups

The Council Plan outlines our priorities for the delivery of all of our services for the next five years. As such, it impacts on all residents of North Ayrshire, with the focus on improving the lives of the people of North Ayrshire.

Age - Positive. Addressing child poverty, improving educational attainment, developing the young workforce and supporting care experienced young people are strong themes. Wellness and wellbeing, democratic participation, homes for life, accessible public services for example cover all age groups, with a particular focus on avoiding digital exclusion - 'accessible public services, both digitally and locally, ensuring a 'no wrong door' approach'

Disability - Positive. As above and in addition we will be maximising the access to and uptake of benefits, entitlements and financial advice, well maintained and accessible places and provide care and support for those in need.

Gender Reassignment - Positive. Though there are no specific actions relating to gender reassignment, actions such as 'Ensuring that wellbeing is at the heart of local life and opportunities, with a focus on tackling inequalities' and 'Ensuring an inclusive, fair, rights-based and asset-based approach in our work' are expected to support all our residents.

Pregnancy and Maternity - Positive. Addressing child poverty, improving educational attainment, developing the young workforce and supporting care experienced young people are strong themes. 'Ensuring that wellbeing is at the heart of local life and

opportunities, with a focus on tackling inequalities’ and ‘Ensuring an inclusive, fair, rights-based and asset-based approach in our work’ as well as ‘accessible public services, both digitally and locally, ensuring a ‘no wrong door’ approach’ are key actions within our Council Plan.

Race/ethnicity - Positive. ‘Ensuring that wellbeing is at the heart of local life and opportunities, with a focus on tackling inequalities’ and ‘Ensuring an inclusive, fair, rights-based and asset-based approach in our work’ as well as ‘accessible public services, both digitally and locally, ensuring a ‘no wrong door’ approach’. We are actively welcoming and supporting asylum seekers and refugees affected by the war in Ukraine.

Religion/Belief - Positive. ‘Ensuring that wellbeing is at the heart of local life and opportunities, with a focus on tackling inequalities’ and ‘Ensuring an inclusive, fair, rights-based and asset-based approach in our work’ as well as ‘accessible public services, both digitally and locally, ensuring a ‘no wrong door’ approach’.

Sex - Positive ‘Ensuring that wellbeing is at the heart of local life and opportunities, with a focus on tackling inequalities’ and ‘Ensuring an inclusive, fair, rights-based and asset-based approach in our work’. The Council provides support to a range of organisations, including around employability programmes and violence against women support.

Sexual Orientation – The Council supports various programmes, including support for young LGBT people through connected communities and the rights respecting schools programme.

Marriage and Civil Partnership – The Council provides the Registrars Service that is available to all North Ayrshire Council residents.

3.b Summary of Children’s Rights and Wellbeing indicators

Approximately 21,891 children and young people aged up to 16 years or 34,984 children and young people aged up to 24 years. Data for those aged up to 18 years is not currently available. (ONS 2021)

Positive - As a child centred Council, the development of our Council Plan has the wellbeing of children at its core. Areas from addressing child poverty, improving educational attainment, participation, climate action, housing that meets their needs, through to effective governance of our Council will impact positively on our children and young people.

No negative impacts on the rights of our children can be identified. It is recommended that CRIAs take place for every new policy under the Council Plan, using the Council Plan to identify any interlinked areas.

3.c Summary of Fairer Scotland Duty/Socio-Economic Impact

Outcome – positive

Low income/income poverty

Addressing child poverty and the cost of living are central to our Wellbeing priority (please see details above).

The population within North Ayrshire is falling and is expected to decrease by a further 1.7% between 2021 and 2026. North Ayrshire has an aging population, with the number of residents aged under 65 years expected to reduce for both school age and working age populations by 2028. The current dependency rate, a ratio that compares the number of people aged 16-65 years to other age groups, is expected to increase from the current rate of 65.6% to 77.2% by 2031, meaning on average a person will have more dependents. This can impact on the financial security of individuals.

In North Ayrshire, 29% of children live in poverty (after housing costs) and 28% of households are in fuel poverty. We recognise every figure relates to a family or an individual we serve, therefore addressing poverty is central to our Wellbeing priority.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) ranks areas within Scotland on a number of categories including access, crime, education, employment, health, housing and income. The most recent ranking took place in 2020. Using the population figures from 2021, 40.9% of our residents live in the most deprived areas (SIMD Quintile 1), with 9.7% in the least deprived areas (SIMD Quintile 5). Key actions within our Council Plan are:

- Maximising access to and uptake of benefits, entitlements and financial advice.
- Ensuring that supports are available in communities to alleviate cost-of-living pressures through community hubs and networks.

Area Deprivation

Addressing child poverty and the cost of living are central to our Wellbeing priority (please see details above). The needs of our island communities are included within our Council Plan through supporting the Island Plans. Accessibility of places where people want to live, visit and work is included. Specifically, in terms of transport 'Exploration of models and the development of pilot schemes to increase access to and use of public/community transport' is included in the plan

3.d Summary of Island Proofing

The Islands Act 2018 introduced a duty on local authorities to have regard to island communities and to consider the particular needs and circumstances of island communities when exercising our functions and making decisions. The authority requires to consider whether there is likely to be a significant difference in effect on the island communities compared to those other mainland communities. If there are likely to be differences, the authority requires to describe what that significantly different effect will be and assess how any policy, strategy or service can be delivered in such a manner to improve or mitigate the outcomes for island communities. This has been added to the process of assessing the Council Plan and includes a range of issues such as access to services, digital connectivity, employment and access to education; transport and access to goods and services. See area deprivation above

3.e Other

No Impact

4. Impacts on the Three Key Needs of the Equality Duty

The Council Plan aim is 'A North Ayrshire that is fair for all', with the mission being 'working to improve the lives of our people in North Ayrshire. Most specifically, our priority 'Wellbeing' focusses on tackling inequalities, specifically addressing child poverty and the cost of living and improving outcomes for our care-experienced young people. Our 'A Sustainable Council' and 'Communities and Local Democracy' priorities focus on using lived experience to inform policy by 'ensuring an inclusive, fair, rights-based and asset-based approach in our work' as well as the creation of a participation and engagement framework to ensure all residents participate in decisions that affect them.

It is important to note our Council Plan will be delivered through other strategies that sit below it, each with their own EIA and CRIA. However, it would be expected the Council Plan would be used as a method to identify any related / compounding areas.

In addition, the priorities of the Council Plan directly drive the advancing of equality and opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not through advancing equity of opportunity. For example, through our supported employment and training programmes through to our own internal employment and recruitment methods (such as SeeMe CVs - video CVs to support candidates with additional support needs).

Participation and advocating for the rights of our residents is central to ensuring good relations between individuals with differing protected characteristics. This includes promoting awareness of the particular issues people face and reducing barriers to ensure equity of opportunity.

5. Mitigation of any identified impacts

The Council plan is an overarching strategic document, the impact of the plan on the population of North Ayrshire will be positive and no negative impacts have been identified.

6. Summary of any engagement or consultation processes where applicable

Since August 2022 we have held a series of mini-enquiries directed by our Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board to discuss and inform our approach to addressing Child Poverty. These events have included public, private and third sector partners, alongside representatives from our communities, enabling honest conversations about challenges and how they could be addressed.

During January 2023 we conducted an engagement exercise for our Council Plan alongside our Budget for 2023-24. This included a survey as well as six in person Locality Sessions hosted by our Leader of the Council, Depute Leader, Chief Executive and Chief Officers. Discussions were facilitated by specialist Engagement Officers at each event, ensuring everyone had the opportunity to state their points of view. We offered British Sign Language interpreters on request at events, induction hearing loops and information in alternative languages. The survey attracted 1,400 responses and 37 community organisations took part in the Locality Sessions in total.

Our online survey was supported by our frontline services to ensure no one was digitally excluded. 1,400 residents responded, providing equality data which showed we had engaged with a wide range of age groups, people with a disability and sexual orientations.

In April 2023, our draft priorities were shared with our Modern Apprentices (aged 16 to 24 years) for their comments. They confirmed the priorities are 'the most important and crucial' to them.

7. Recommendations and Outcome from the assessment

No major alterations to the proposal, which should go ahead as planned. The ECRIA (and socio-economic impact) demonstrates the policy is robust and there is no possible discrimination or adverse impact. All opportunities to promote equality have been taken.

The Council Plan will be managed by the Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections Team, with quarterly progress reports provided to the ELT and six monthly progress reports provided to Cabinet and the Audit and Scrutiny Committee before being published on our website. Performance management will be based on our Performance Management Framework and the results will be published on the Council's website.

8. Head of Service

Aileen Craig

9. Date of Assessment

15 June 2023