

Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All Wards

**FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:
CABINET
COUNCIL**

**22 November 2010
25 November 2010**

Corporate Equality Strategy

Report of the Director of Human Resources

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report presents a revised corporate equality strategy which sets out how the Council aims to reduce inequality within the city as well as how it will meet its public sector equality duties.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to agree to the revised equality strategy. A separate action plan for its implementation will be brought before Cabinet for approval.

3. REPORT

3.1 The proposed Equality Strategy

- 3.1.1 The attached equality strategy is in two parts:

Part 1	How we propose to reduce inequality within the city
Part 2	How we will meet our public sector equality duties

- 3.1.2 The aim of the strategy is to present an integrated approach that demonstrates our approach to reducing inequality within the city and meeting our public sector equality duties.

- 3.1.3 The proposed approach to reducing inequality within the city is outcome based. The main building blocks described in the attached strategy are:

- Understanding inequality within the city
- Reducing inequality

- Fair and transparent access to services
- Having a representative workforce
- Young people as equality champions.

3.1.4 Our public sector equality duties, as specified in the Equality Act 2010, are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

3.1.5 The chart below sets out how the proposed actions to reduce inequality enable us to meet our public sector equality duties.

	Eliminating discrimination	Advancing equality of opportunity	Promoting good relations
Understanding inequality within the city	X		
Reducing inequality	X	X	X
Fair and transparent access to services	X	X	X
A representative workforce		X	X
Young people as equality champions			X

4.2 The development of the Equality Strategy

4.2.1 Corporate Equality Strategy Group held an away day in November 2009 to consider how best to take forward the Council's equality agenda. The away day involved divisional directors, equality officers, and representatives from the Council's various employee equality groups. Participants identified the priority equality objectives that underpin this strategy.

4.2.2 The previous Government introduced the contents of its proposed Equality Bill during 2009, and the Equality Act was agreed by Parliament in April 2010. Although the Government is currently consulting on the implementation of the public sector duty which will come into force in April 2011, no major changes are anticipated that will alter our approach to meeting these duties.

4.2.3 In addition to consolidating the diverse elements of existing legislation, the Bill and subsequent Act introduced a new socio-economic duty for local authorities, focused on expanding equality impact assessment to socio-economic considerations of proposed services and policies. It is unlikely that the Coalition Government will enact this part of the legislation. However, given the socio-economic profile of the city, the need for considering socio-economic considerations in addition to the protected groups covered

by the legislation (disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) is built into the equality strategy. This element enables the Council to begin to address the implications of the significant budget cuts being proposed by the Coalition Government and their impact on the city's residents.

4.2.4 The Coalition Government's proposed changes to the health service will broaden the Council's responsibility for addressing health inequalities. The Council is working closely with NHS Leicester City to plan and prepare for this transition. The equality strategy and its action plan will be amended to incorporate and reflect these changes as they arise.

4.2.5 The Council is preparing to be validated for the Excellent level of the Equality Framework for Local Government, which will take place in March 2011. As part of the preparations, much work has taken place on specifying our expectations for standard equality practices across all services (an equality scorecard) and working with main project groups to embed equalities within their emerging programmes/practices. The equality strategy incorporates this work.

5. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from the report.

Alison Greenhill, Interim Chief Accountant

5.2 Legal Implications

Any action taken in respect of equalities should be permissible conduct under the Equality Act 2010. Legal advice should be taken where appropriate.

Paul Atreides, Team Leader, Legal Services

5.3 Climate Change Implications

This report does not contain any significant climate change implications and therefore should not have a detrimental effect on the Council's climate change targets.

Helen Lansdown, Senior Environmental Consultant - Sustainable Procurement

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph references within the report
Equal Opportunities	Yes	The report as a whole
Policy	No	
Sustainable and Environmental	No	

Crime and Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	Yes	Indirectly, through the report as a whole
Elderly/People on Low Income	Yes	Part 1, Section 3 of the attached equality strategy
Corporate Parenting	No	
Health Inequalities Impact	No	

7. CONSULTATIONS

Corporate Equality Strategy Group
Strategic Management Board

8. REPORT AUTHOR

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Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	N/A
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)

Corporate Equality Strategy 2010 - 2013

Leicester City Council

Part 1: Reducing inequality

1. How well are we doing in 'driving out inequality'?

- 1.1 'Driving out inequality' is one of the values underpinning One Leicester, the city's sustainable community strategy.
- 1.2 Leicester is ranked as the 20th most deprived city in the country according to the Government's indices of multiple deprivation. Its level of deprivation has worsened over time. In the Centre for Cities Outlook for 2010 report, Leicester was ranked 58th out of 63 cities in terms of the level of inequality within cities, as measured by differences between claimant count rates for different areas of the city.
- 1.3 This measure of inequality focuses on differential economic outcomes: those who are dependent on the state for benefits and those who are not. Unequal economic outcomes are only one area of inequality. The Equality and Human Rights Commission in their 2007 Equality Review also listed these 'equality gaps': unequal educational attainment, unequal health outcomes, unequal housing conditions, and unequal experiences of the criminal justice system. These equality gaps are reflected in the issues addressed through the delivery plans of the Strategic Theme Groups within the One Leicester strategy and expected customer outcomes measured through a series of National Indicators (these are listed in Appendix 1).
- 1.4 The key aim of this strategy is to assist the Council in assessing whether or not it is being successful in 'driving out inequality'. It sets out what needs to be monitored and measured in order to determine whether the differential outcomes arising from the equality gaps identified above are being reduced as a result of the strategic service delivery plans of the Council.

2. Adopting an equalities perspective in measuring inequality

- 2.1 Our statutory equality duty is to: eliminate discrimination, promote equal opportunities, and promote good relations between different groups of people. At present these duties are limited to race, disability and gender equality but as of 1st October 2010, the wider range of protected characteristics presented within the Equality Act 2010 comes into effect. These protected characteristics include gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation as well as race, disability and sex (gender). Meeting this equality duty shapes the way we consider need (particularly in regard to people with each of the shared protected characteristics), and ensure their access to and take up of the range of services we provide. Measuring National Indicator performance outcomes, again on the basis of specific protected characteristics, enables us to assess the success of our planned interventions in bringing about desired reductions in inequality.
- 2.2 The Council has introduced strategic commissioning as an evidence based approach to strategic and service planning which separates the outcomes to be achieved from the services to be provided. Commissioning statements have been produced by the

Strategic Theme Groups and these reflect how each Group has analysed their customer needs and priorities and set out delivery plans for meeting them. This commissioning process provides three main sources of information that will inform the assessment of whether inequality is being reduced:

- (a) Needs assessments of Strategic Theme Group users and potential users: the type and volume of need within the city, by people with a shared protected characteristic
- (b) Monitoring of current service users: profile of who is receiving what service, by people with a shared protected characteristic
- (c) Monitoring of service user outcomes: profile of who has benefited from services aimed at achieving priority outcomes, and who has not benefited from services they have received, by people with a shared protected characteristic (based on outcome related National Indicators).

2.3 This information provides the basis for ongoing assessment over time.

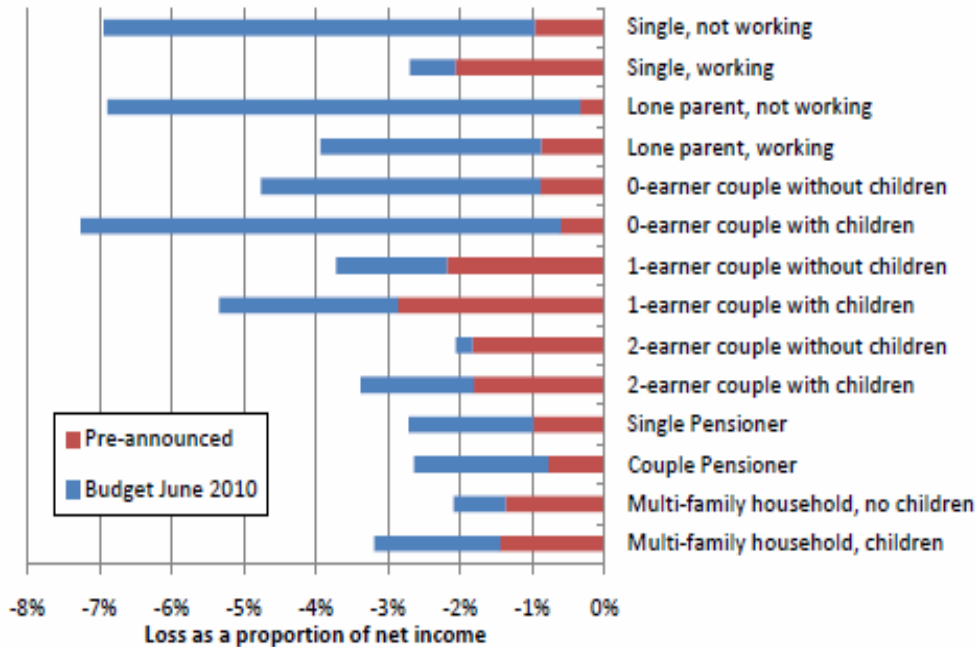
3. Factoring in the Coalition Government's budget implications

3.1 The new Coalition Government has stated its intention of making £34 billion in public spending cuts over the next four years. Initial impact assessments of the budget proposals have been undertaken by the Fawcett Society and the Institute for Fiscal Studies, as well as by Horton and Reed on behalf of the TUC.

3.2 The Fawcett Society's paper, 'A Gender Impact Assessment of the Coalition Government Budget, June 2010' identified women as being most adversely affected by the proposals. They estimate that 72% of cuts will be met from women's income as opposed to 28% from men's, because the greatest proportion of cuts will be to benefits that more women than men rely on, compared to the proposed changes to the tax system that will benefit far more men than women. They have identified low income mothers as the main losers, with women from black and minority ethnic households hardest hit, as nationally 40% live in poor households. They also estimate that women will be more disproportionately affected by cuts to public services as they tend to rely on public services more than men, and will most likely also pick up any shortfall in reduced state services. Initiatives to control the public sector wage bill also impact more on women because they make up 65% of the public sector workforce.

3.3 The Institute for Fiscal Studies' August assessment of the distributional effect of tax and benefit reforms to be introduced between 2010 and 2014 indicated disproportional impacts on different types of households (see chart below). The households hardest hit are: 0 earner couples with children, lone parents not working, singles not working, and 1 earner couples with children.

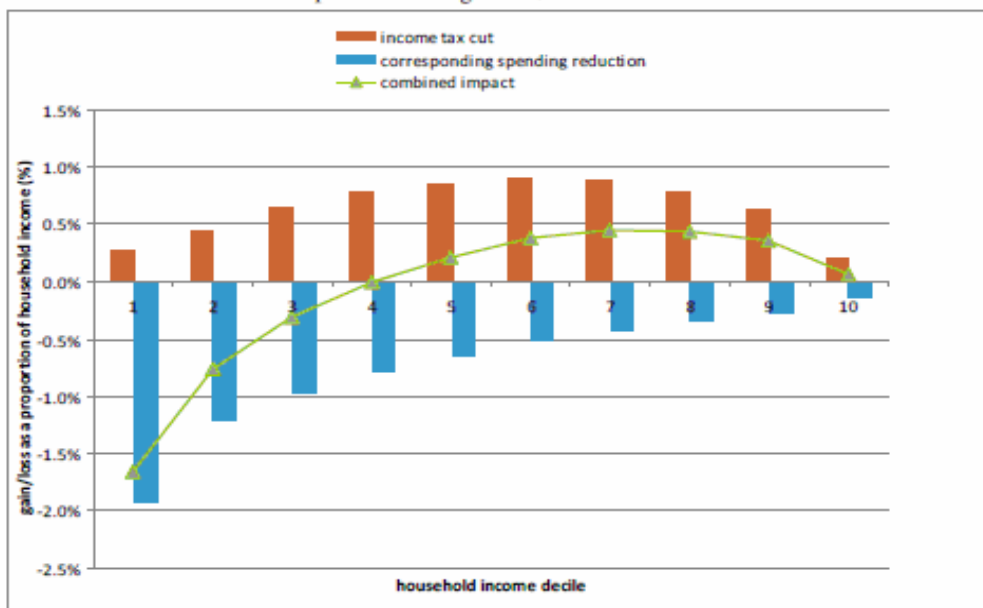
Figure 4.1: The effect of all tax and benefit reforms to be introduced between June 2010 and April 2014 by household type



Source: Institute for Fiscal Studies, Briefing Note BN108

3.4 Horton and Reed’s analysis of the impact of the June budget, ‘Don’t forget the spending cuts!’, focus on their analysis of its impact on public services. They estimate that the average annual cut in public spending per household will be £1,344 for the poorest tenth of households compared to £1,135 for the richest tenth of households. They view is that a lot of public spending is ‘pro-poor’ with poorer households receiving a greater value of services to meet their extra welfare needs. Cuts in public spending on major areas of welfare (such as education or social housing) will tend to hit the poor the hardest. The graph below illustrates their assessment of the distributional impact of the proposed tax cuts and the impact of the proposed spending reductions in public services.

GRAPH 2: Net distributional impact of the budget's £3.7 billion income tax cut



Source: Horton & Reed, 'Don't Forget the Spending Cuts!'

3.5 The above three sets of analysis set out an overall picture of who is likely to be most adversely affected by the Government's budget proposals. Aside from the specific reference to gender differentials, the other main impacts are measured by household type and household income decile, The addition of this type of analysis should be included in the Council's assessment of inequality within the city, given the significant impact of the budget proposals on city residents, particularly those most economically vulnerable. Quantitative and qualitative assessment of the impact of the budget proposals on local residents, particularly for those groups highlighted in the external impact analysis above, should be undertaken on a regular basis to inform potential increases in inequality.

4. Identifying our equality priorities

4.1 Members of Corporate Equality Strategy Group and representatives from the Council's employee groups held an away day in November 2009 to identify what they felt were the Council's equality priorities. They identified four main equality objectives for the organisation:

1. To reduce inequality within the city by targeting services that address economic, health and social problems experienced by disadvantaged and vulnerable residents, and monitoring their participation in those services.
2. To promote fair and transparent access to services and remove any barriers to resident participation in those services.
3. To demonstrate, through workforce recruitment and development of staff based on merit, that our workforce reflects the diverse nature of the city.
4. To support young people to be champions of equality and diversity, reflecting their demographic importance in shaping Leicester's future.

Targeting services that reduce inequality

- 4.2 This strategy aims to be outcome focused, with that outcome being the reduction of inequality facing residents in the city. To be successful, Council staff **commissioning** services must be clear as to how this outcome can be accomplished within their specification of service provision, and which residents must be targeted for support in order to reduce the social and health impacts of economic inequality. The identification of resident needs, the analysis of their service take-up and the analysis of customer performance outcomes will enable us to determine which services reduce inequality.
- 4.3 In addition to this targeted action, the **procurement** process can play a complementary role to reducing inequality by specifying social benefits within the specification of services to be delivered by the Council's supply chain. Specifying desired social outcomes such as the employment of local residents particularly in deprived areas of the city and the use of local businesses to provide services, contributes to the economic viability of the city, and the infrastructure required to reduce economic inequality. At present, the specification of social benefits within invitations to tender does not systematically take place, resulting in significant 'missed opportunities' to reducing inequality. A change in practice is recommended in order to achieve these outcomes by directly engaging the economic community to exercise its corporate social responsibility in reducing inequality.

Fair and transparent access to services

- 4.4 The Council has been undertaking **Equality Impact Assessments** for a number of years now. Many of the early EIAs focused on service access, ensuring that any barriers to customers accessing that service were removed. However, service provision is a dynamic process, with customers changing, their access requirements changing and the method of service delivery changing to keep up with service models in the private sector that our customers now expect. There must be ongoing review of the effectiveness of customer access to services, building on our knowledge of what they want and need to access the services we provide. Their broader access needs to the landscape of the city must also be considered, through inclusive design principles. We have these skills in place and have excellent examples of service practice to learn from. We must be consistent across all front facing services in their application, ensuring that we remain customer focused.
- 4.5 As a service provider, we make decisions that affect people's lives. We must ensure that we are fair and transparent in our decision making, providing information that people need, in an accessible way. And we must ensure that as a service provider, we treat people with dignity and respect, ensuring that we are aware of and acknowledge their human rights. Our **customer care** must incorporate these principles.

A representative workforce

- 4.6 The Council is a major local employer and 57% of its workforce live in the city. Of the staff living in the city, 39.3% of them live in the city's four most deprived areas. The importance of the Council as an employer in contributing to the employment and development of local people, particularly those in our most disadvantaged communities, cannot be under-estimated. Leicester is one of the country's most diverse cities, and serves a wide variety of communities. Service users want to be served by people who understand their needs, and by people they can relate to. Therefore, it is vital that our

workforce reflects the community we serve. However, we must be a fair employer and be **inclusive** in the recruitment and development of our employees, reflecting what is socially expected from a public sector workforce in matching the demographic profile of the city. The challenge of providing services in a post-recession world is great, and the Council must ensure that it has the right person, with the right skills, for the right job.

Young people as equality champions

- 4.7 This equality and diversity strategy, for the most part, is inward focused in order to ensure that the organisation is clear as to its equality responsibilities and how it can meet them and also contribute to the reduction of inequality. This is about influencing organisational behaviour and practice. In order for this strategy to be effective, it also must take into account how it fits in with the 'outside world'. The Council does work with a number of different organisational partners to pursue a shared approach to equalities. But again, these partnership arrangements are very much organisationally focused. At present there is little direct engagement with the community itself on a shared vision for equality within the city.
- 4.8 Leicester is unique in the country in one particular aspect of its demographic profile: the proportion of young people and children (it is a much 'younger' city than the average), and the majority coming from a non-white ethnic background. Our young people are the city's key future assets and it is crucial that the Council takes part in raising their aspirations and expectations for their future economic livelihood. There are engagement mechanisms in place to tap into the views of young people and find out their long-term aspirations and expectations. Schools are responsible for meeting public sector equality duties and the Council is working with them on their implementation. But the equality agenda, for and by young people is undeveloped. The Council should take this opportunity to explore with young people the equality ideals they wish to see instilled within life in the city, and the long term equality outcomes they wish to see in place, to shape a long term equality vision to accompany the 25 year long term vision of One Leicester.

5. The corporate equality offer

- 5.1 The Council at present does have dedicated equality officers supporting the organisation – but this provision is based on the old departmental structure, serviced by four service equality officers and two equality assistants, with a separate two person team overseeing corporate working. Within the new divisional structure, there is no 'standard' **equality offer** across all divisions, and limited corporate capacity to undertake the monitoring and scrutiny required to quality assure practice across the organisation. Therefore, as part of the Strategic Support Services review, a review of current equality arrangements is taking place to review strategic and operational equality support and realign available staffing resources accordingly.

Part 2: meeting our public sector equality duties

1. Background

- 1.1 Until April 2011, the Council has legal responsibility to demonstrate that they are taking action on race, disability and gender equality in their policy-making, the delivery of services and employment of their staff. The aim is to deliver better outcomes for people of different racial groups, disabled people, and men and women, including transsexual men and women. These duties require the Council to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, actively promote equality, and promote good relations between different groups.
- 1.2 After April 2011, the public sector equality duty as specified within the Equality Act 2010 comes into effect. The single duty still relates to the three duties identified above, but is extended across additional 'protected characteristics': gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion and belief and pregnancy and maternity – in addition to race, disability and gender/sex. This section of the Equality Strategy sets out how the Council intends to meet its public sector equality duty across all protected characteristics.

2. The Council's commitment to equality

- 2.1 Leicester City Council is committed to equality of opportunity, elimination of discrimination, and promotion of good relations between all people regardless of age, disability, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, or trade union membership.
- 2.2 We aim to be responsive and open, and to demonstrate both quality and equality to our citizens, to our service users and to our employees. It is our aim to ensure that people can fully participate in and benefit from the social, cultural, economic and environmental quality of life the city offers its users.
- 2.3 We are committed to promoting equality in respect of:
 - **Our role as service provider** - providing a range of facilities and services meeting the differing needs of local people.
 - **Our role as employer** - ensuring fair recruitment, having a representative workforce, and providing a working environment that is safe, accessible and free from harassment and discrimination.
 - **Our role as community leaders** - through our democratically elected Members, working with communities and partners in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors to improve the quality of life for the people of Leicester.

3. Principles

Freedom from unfair discrimination, harassment and victimisation

3.1 The Council is committed to eliminating discrimination across all protected characteristics, as well as prohibiting harassment and victimisation and will work with its employees, elected Councillors and local residents to ensure the following:

- That service users, Council staff, members of the public and elected Councillors are entitled to be treated with respect and not to be subjected to discriminatory remarks or behaviour, harassment or victimisation (if they do make a complaint).
- That any discriminatory remarks or behaviour, or harassment or victimisation by Council employees towards other employees or towards service users will be treated as a disciplinary offence.
- That the Council's service provision will not discriminate against any member of the public in need of its services on the basis of their protected characteristics, and will ensure that there is fair access to services on the basis of need. The Council will also ensure fair treatment to those accessing and receiving its services by their providers, whether they be Council employees or external contractors.
- That service users, members of the public and employees who have experienced overt discrimination, such as hate crime, are encouraged to report such incidents and directed to a reporting centre or online reporting site.

3.2 In order to ensure that its policies and practices do not deliberately or inadvertently discriminate against anyone with protected characteristics, or create an adverse impact on them, the Council undertakes Equality Impact Assessments of its proposed decisions.

Advancing equality of opportunity

3.3 The Council, through its commissioning process, proactively seeks to understand the needs of its residents. For those residents who experience unequal outcomes that significantly impact on their quality of life in the city, the Council will seek to reduce inequality through the provision of services and achievement of improved personal outcomes. The Council will ensure the following:

- That it engages with local residents, through service user forums, ward and neighbourhood meetings, and consultation sessions in order to understand their needs and receive feedback on the quality/effectiveness of its services in meeting those needs.
- That the information it provides on its services is accessible and suitable to the needs of the individual seeking that information.
- That its design and delivery of services takes into account the social, cultural, and religious needs of its users, and from a diversity perspective, are 'fit for purpose'.
- That it monitors service take up by people with protected characteristics, to ensure that those needing services have access to them and the benefits they provide.
- That it monitors customer outcomes by protected characteristics, to ensure that those identified as experiencing unequal outcomes are benefiting from service provision and that their quality of life has improved.

- That it monitors the representativeness of its workforce in terms of the diversity of the communities across the city that it serves.
- That it is an equitable and fair employer.

Fostering good relations between people and communities

- 3.4 The Council is committed to community cohesion. Community cohesion means that communities from different backgrounds in the city get on well together. To be able to do this, communities need to feel secure and have a sense of belonging (in their neighbourhood and the city as a whole). They also need to feel that they have been treated fairly as other communities.
- 3.5 They also need to mix with other communities to develop respect and understanding for people from different backgrounds, to appreciate their differences and learn about things they have in common. Community Cohesion is about the relationships between any different community: for example, settled communities and new arrivals, young people and older people, straight communities and gay communities, affluent and poor, and so on. If these things are not in place, some communities can be stereotyped by others, and myths and misunderstandings can develop. At its worst, weak community cohesion can lead to significant tensions between communities, and sometimes even hatred. The Council will work towards:
- Ensuring that different communities do not live segregated lives.
 - Ensuring that economic, social and language barriers facing new arrivals do not prevent them from integrating within the wider community.
 - Ensuring that young people as a whole are not stigmatised because of the activities of a few.
 - Ensuring that its employees have been trained, where appropriate, in diversity awareness and community cohesion to enable them to achieve the above outcomes.
- 3.6 The Council has put together a Community Cohesion Commissioning Plan to indicate how it will deliver the above community cohesion priorities and outcomes.

National Indicators measuring customer outcomes

One Leicester Theme	Description	Indicator Number
Invest in Our Children	Stay safe	NI59
	Be healthy	NI50, NI56, NI57
	- emotional health	
	- physical health	
	Enjoy and achieve	NI72, NI73, NI75, NI87
	- readiness for school	
- KS2 attainment		
- Attendance at school		
- KS4 attainment		
Make a positive contribution	NI110	
Achieve economic wellbeing	NI117	
Parents satisfaction with schools	Local indicator	
Creating Thriving Safe Communities	Cohesion	NI1, NI5
	Crime	NI16, NI20, BCS indicator
Improving Wellbeing and Health	Affordable housing	NI155
	Mortality	NI120
	Alcohol and smoking harm	NI39, NI123
	Teenage pregnancy	NI112
Participation in sport	NI8	
Independent living for older people	NI139	
Investing in Skills and Enterprise	Employment	NI152, NI153
	Adult education and training	NI163, NI165
	Business growth	NI172
Planning for People not Cars	Housing growth	NI154
	Traffic congestions	NI167
	Road safety	NI148
Reducing our Carbon Footprint	Carbon emissions	NI186
	Landfill	NI193