

## Item 9 - Question Time

### To the Leader of the Council

“What steps have you taken to mitigate the impact that your recent budget will have on people with protected characteristics which are defined in the 2010 Equality Act?”

### Response to Ms K Currie

The Public Sector Equality Duty, contained within the 2010 Equality Act, requires that public bodies must give due regard to equality in carrying out all their activities. Scottish specific duties require named public bodies to consider the impact policy decisions may have on people with protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act.

Accordingly, as part of the development of budget proposals, the impact of each proposal is considered. Screening is undertaken to understand any potential impact upon groups identified by the protected characteristics. Part of this screening considers what, if any, mitigation may be in place in relation to the proposal to reduce or negate any negative impact. Where appropriate, a full equality impact assessment is then undertaken which explores the potential impact in more detail, along with setting out any mitigation. As part of Highland Council's process, we also screen for rural and poverty impacts. In many cases, the potential impacts cross-cut across equality, rural and poverty strands.

Considering any potential impacts arising from proposals, forms part of the formulation of overall proposals. Not all proposals will progress, and during the 2018/19 budget setting process not all proposals did go forward, and the identification of potential impacts assists to inform these decisions.

For the 2018/19 budget, the detailed budget templates specifically identified potential impacts, including which groups may be impacted. Mitigation, where in place, was also identified. This ensured that all decisions taken were in cognisance of any potential impacts.