

# **Equality impacts of new savings proposals for 2019/20 Annex 3**

## **1. Introduction and legal background**

This report outlines how the impacts of the Council's budget proposals are being considered from an equality perspective. The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual because of certain personal characteristics ('protected characteristics'). The law also requires that equality issues are considered by public bodies as part of decision making, especially where services are reduced or redesigned.

Failure to undertake proportionate Equality Analysis/Equality Impact Assessment could present risks of legal challenge to the Council for failing to pay due regard to its public sector equality duty.

## **2. Actions so far**

Each budget proposal has been set out in a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Proposal template, with the high level intentions outlined. The proposals describe what service redesign is being proposed and identify if there will be impacts on residents and/or service users.

As part of the Council's overall equality analysis process, Directors have been tasked to consider their proposals from an equality perspective. This initial 'screening' process aims to highlight if any of the proposals have the potential to have significant impacts upon service users, and if so, what actions, if any, could be taken to mitigate any unexpected or unintentional impacts. The findings of this initial screening process are contained within this report alongside planned actions.

The finer details of how the proposals will be implemented will follow in due course, and where appropriate comprehensive and detailed Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out as they are taken forward, as set out below. This will help to ensure that opportunities to enhance equality are utilised, and any possible negative impacts or barriers for particular groups are taken account of, and if possible, mitigated.

## **3. Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels- equalities scrutiny process**

Budget proposals were presented to Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels throughout January and commentary from these panels were reported to the Resources PDS Panel on 4<sup>th</sup> February for co-ordination and forwarding to Cabinet on 6<sup>th</sup> February and Full Council on 19<sup>th</sup> February.

PDS panels have been briefed to enable them to scrutinise the proposals from an equalities perspective (see Appendix).

#### **4. Specific savings proposals**

Across the Council, every attempt has been made to achieve efficiencies through service redesign, with minimum reduction in frontline services or disproportionate increases in charges.

In respect to impacts on staff, the Council's Human Resources policies and procedures ensure there is full consultation and consideration of staffing matters and that employment-related equality issues are fully taken into account. Therefore the focus here is largely on impacts upon service delivery and service users.

The following sets out new items contained in the document "2019/20 Budget Savings and Income Generation" proposals appended to the report to Cabinet. These are arranged by portfolio, and refer only to new items (ie those not previously agreed by Council in February 2018), unless significantly amended. Key equalities issues are identified alongside appropriate mitigations and plans for further work identified at this stage. Again, where appropriate, plans for further Equality Analysis/Equality Impact Assessment work are set out.

#### **Portfolio: Economic & Community Regeneration**

- **Heritage Services business plan**

A further £500k has been added to the income generation target agreed at Council in February 2018, which will be achieved through the introduction of dynamic ticket pricing. Heritage Services (and in particular the Roman Baths) are involved in a number of initiatives that proactively promote equality (e.g. ongoing improvements to access for people who have physical mobility problems, those with Autism or Dementia; and the provision of employment experience and job opportunities for young people with learning disabilities through Project Search). The screening process has identified that there will be no reductions in this good practice as a result of this proposal. It also has identified that the new tiered pricing strategy has been devised with accessibility in mind so super off-peak prices are actually lower than the standard rate people were paying before. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment has been completed or is proposed for this budget item

#### **Portfolio: Transport and Environment**

- **Network management – re-design consultations.**

The screening process has identified that impacts on service delivery will be minimal. This service re-design is about ensuring the right staffing resources are in place for future business priorities and ways of working.

Equality Analysis/ Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as appropriate as changes to consultation procedures could have a number of potential equality impacts.

- **Capitalisation of pot hole repairs**

The screening process has identified that there is no change to Council policy as a result of this proposal. Disabled facilities works such as dropped kerbs are funded via the Transport Improvement Grant and are therefore not impacted by these savings proposals.

The team responsible will monitor any effects that arise before, during and after implementation.

### **Portfolio: Development and Neighbourhoods**

- **Parks and Bereavement efficiencies**

The screening process undertaken has identified that there will be direct impacts upon residents and service users. It has been noted that fees and charges will increase but the increase will be uniform to all people who choose to buy these supplies or services from us. It is also noted that there will be some positive impacts through a partnership with Genesis to help operate the Council's plant nursery, with associated health and wellbeing and skills development opportunities.

An Equality Analysis/Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as these proposals are taken forward to ensure maximum opportunities for positive impacts are exploited, the impact of increased fees on our most vulnerable communities are understood, and any possible mitigating actions are identified.

- **Various budget line savings across new cash limit**

The screening process has identified that these savings present no significant risk to the current level of provision of frontline services in Building Control & Public Protection. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment has been completed or is proposed for this budget item.

- **Determine permitted Development Applications**

The screening process has identified that the impact upon residents/service users will be minimal, affecting about 21 applications a year. Approximately 80% of customers are already employing a planning agent to facilitate the process of preparing and submitting a planning application. In these cases an application has already been submitted and paid for, so the customer (or an agent) is expecting a decision. Applications for accessibility improvements for disabled service users are free and will therefore be unaffected by this

change. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment has been completed or is proposed for this budget item.

- **Bath Casino income share – income from the casino.**

This item refers to the planned contractual income stream arising from a previous decision. No new actions or implications are required. The screening process has identified no impacts on service users. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment has been completed or is proposed for this budget item.

- **S106 Planning Obligations Compliance Advice Service**

The screening process has identified no adverse impacts upon customers as a result of this proposal. Customers request this service during property purchase via their solicitors and are therefore already employing solicitors for advice as part of the conveyancing process. Currently, the Council advises solicitors to commission their own legal/planning advisors as we do not provide the service. However, solicitors have advised that they would like the Council to provide this service. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment has been completed or is proposed for this budget item.

- **Core Service redesign**

Highway, Traffic, Transportation, Waste, Parks, Cemeteries and Crematorium, Leisure services will be redesigned in consultation with internal/external partners and in accordance with the council's operating model. The screening process undertaken has not yet identifies specific impacts there will be upon residents or service users.

Work on the new service delivery model will be developed over the next 6 months, with a view to implementation in Autumn 2019. Equality Analysis/Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken alongside the development of the new model.

### **Portfolio: Children and Young people**

- **Children's Equipment**

The Council is required to ensure that Children with SEND have their needs accessed and met. The budget for Children's Community Equipment has been set at £28,000 over the past 3 years, but spend and the projected spend for the past 2 years has been £100,000. It is proposed to use £90,000 of additional Disabled Facilities Grant funding to cover the cost pressure for 2019/20. Plans for the following year will need to be developed

The proposal does not highlight any negative equality impacts. This will be funded from additional once-off Disabled Facilities Grant and will not impact on application of the core Disabled Facilities Grant.

**Portfolio: Transformation and Customer Services**

- **Centralisation of Training**

No specific equality impacts have been highlighted as a result of the screening, and none are anticipated. The centralised process will ensure that access to development is consistent and equitable across all departments and development is aligned to individual, departmental and organisational priorities. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment has been completed or is proposed for this budget item.

- **De Minimis level of work for the Chairman’s Office**

This involves a reduction in the Chair’s involvement in events, and a focus on ‘local or national significant events (planned or unplanned)’. Following an initial screening process, an Equality Analysis has been undertaken.

Develop criteria on events and identify alternative ways in which the Council can continue to engage with the hard to reach and vulnerable groups that are the focus of many of the events and celebrations organised by the Chair’s office.

- **Service redesign – digital business improvement.**

This proposal could have a number of impacts on residents in respect of equality issues and access to services

An Equality Analysis/Equality Impact Assessment will be completed when full details of the changes are known.

**Portfolio: Finance and efficiency**

- **Procurement savings**

This will involve a review of all contractual and non-contractual spend. The screening process has identified that procurement activity carries with it important responsibilities – and opportunities – in relation to equality.

The Council is reviewing all contracts will undertake Equality Analysis/Equality Impact Assessment as part of each review.

- **Reduction in pension requirement**

The screening process undertaken has identified no impacts on residents or service users within the MTFP proposal template. The proposal identifies this as a natural reduction that has not required any new action or decision. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment has been completed or is proposed for this budget item.

- **Salary turnover savings:**

The saving will be achieved through each director managing vacancies within their staffing budget. A salary turnover saving target was agreed at Council in February 2018 and this is an additional sum. The arrangements already exclude specific staff that impact on service users especially the most vulnerable. It will also be moved to a Directorate target to enable the individual Director to assess the impact on his/her team. The saving also equates to less than 1% of payroll

An Equality Analysis/Equality Impact Assessment will be completed for this particular proposal in order to ensure that the criteria Directors use to make their decisions give full consideration to potential impacts upon staff who are affected by posts remaining vacant, and also upon service users, especially the most vulnerable.

- **Diversification and longer term investment – treasury management**

The proposal relates to investments within the Council's Treasury Management Strategy. The screening process undertaken has identified no impacts upon residents or service users. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment has been completed or is proposed for this budget item.

## **5. Cumulative impacts**

Budget proposals have the potential to impact on people across the full range of protected characteristics. In addition, whilst considerations of socio-economic status are not a requirement of the Equality Act public sector duty, the "narrowing the gap" agenda is an important focus for the Council and its partners. The Council's new priorities of protecting them most vulnerable, nurturing residents' health, safety and wellbeing and providing ways for everyone in the community to reach their full potential will continue to influence the roll out of the budget proposals. It will be important to ensure that all the equality impacts are considered alongside each other as further details are developed (and within any consultation), in order to identify the cumulative impacts. These impacts will be assessed and managed through the Council's relevant programme and project management and other governance processes.

## **6. Next Steps**

For each proposal that is taken forward, the following should be considered, as appropriate in the light of the issues identified in section 4. This will ensure that equality issues continue to be considered during planning, development and implementation stages.

- a. **Full Equality Impact Assessments/equality analysis** should be carried out on proposals where the screening process, as identified above, have

revealed likely impacts upon particular groups of people due to their protected characteristics. This will ensure that the Council can demonstrate it has taken due regard to equality issues and has thoroughly considered how to uphold the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Council's Equality Impact Assessment template can be found on the Council's [EIA web pages](#), and support is available from the Equality Team in carrying out the assessments. Completed EIAs will be published on this web page.

- b. **Inclusive consultation.** Where consultation is arranged as part of taking any of these proposals forward, it is vital that a diverse range of people are encouraged to take part. This will help highlight any additional equality impacts that may need to be addressed and mitigated where possible. A variety of methods should be used to access consultees. The Equality Team can advise on this and on how to access participants from groups representing different equality strands. The [Independent Equality Advisory Group](#) can also be used as a consultative body, and will provide further guidance on likely impacts, and ways of mitigating these.
- c. **Clear and transparent communication.** Wherever it is planned to introduce changes, it is important to ensure that the communication and publicity strategies are accessible to disabled people (for example, people with visual impairment or learning disability) and those for whom English is an additional language. The Council has commissioned Oncall Interpreting services to assist with [Interpreting and Translation](#) where necessary.
- d. **Incorporating equality issues within commissioning specifications.** Where proposals include commissioning or recommissioning external providers, detailed equality requirements should be built into contract specifications. This will ensure that best practice relating to equality in delivery of services is continued and improved upon when delivered by external partners.
- e. **Workforce training and development.** A number of the budget proposals are dependent upon the ability of officers to recognise opportunities to advance equality (for example, by targeting services towards those who are most vulnerable); or to find ways of mitigating any potential barriers people might face (for example, helping people access alternative local support). It is also important that officers are aware of, and sensitive to, the particular needs of different groups of people. Equality training is available as part of the Corporate Training programme and bespoke training can be arranged by the Council's Equality Team.
- f. **Ongoing monitoring.** Where services are subject to redesign, equality monitoring should be carried out to help identify if the service is operating as

intended, if it is reaching and meeting the needs of our most vulnerable communities; and if there are any unforeseen impacts that need to be addressed. See the Council's sample [equalities monitoring template](#) for the data categories that should be used.



## **Annex 3 - Appendix 1.**

### **Briefing note for PDS panel members on equality in financial decision making**

#### **Background**

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual because of certain personal characteristics ('protected characteristics').

The law also requires that equality issues are considered by public bodies as part of decision making, especially where services are reduced or redesigned. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires us to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people.

The questions below are intended to assist PDS panels to scrutinise the proposals (within their remit) from an equalities perspective.

#### **A). For each new draft proposal to be put before Cabinet in February 2019:**

- Are panel members clear that this proposal has been considered from an equalities perspective?
- Do we know what the impact will be on the most vulnerable people?
- Are there any potential unintended impacts or "knock-on" effects consequences - e.g. on partners, residents or other services?
- Have we consulted people and listened to what they have told us about this?
- During the implementation of the proposal – how will we continue to check for unintended effects on particular groups of people?
- Will there be room for discretion if during the implementation we discover that the change of service disproportionately disadvantages some people?
- Considering all the proposals together, what will the cumulative impact be, and will adverse impacts fall disproportionately on specific groups?

#### **B). For any budget items agreed by Council in February 2018**

- What have we learnt about equality impacts, following the implementation of last years' proposals?