

**Appendix 3  
Equality Impact Assessments  
2019/20 Budget Reduction Proposals  
5<sup>th</sup> February 2019**



**1. Introduction**

This paper provides Members with information to help them fulfil their equality duties; it should be read in conjunction with the Equality Impact Assessments that have been prepared and provided for each budget reduction proposal in advance of the 5th February 2019 Executive meeting.

**2. Public Sector Equality Duties**

The Equality Act 2010 (Section 149) sets out public sector equality duties, which elected Members must consider. Members will recall that the general duties are to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Advancing equality of opportunity involves, in particular, having due regard to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

**3. Due Regard**

'Due regard' is the regard that is appropriate, in all the particular circumstances. Members must also pay regard to any countervailing factors. The weight to be given to the countervailing factors is a matter for Members. There is no requirement to take certain steps or to achieve certain results. The duty is only to have due regard to the need to take the relevant steps.

**4. Protected characteristics**

These general equality duties cover the following protected characteristics:

- age

- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- and marriage and civil partnership. (This protected characteristic applies only to general duty 1.)

In addition to these areas (protected by the general duties) council EIAs also consider the impact on people on a low income.

## **5. Considering the equality duties**

When considering the equality duties listed above in 2, thought must be given to the following areas:

- Meeting different needs includes, for example, taking steps to take account of disabled people's needs.
- Fostering good relations includes having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- Compliance with the general equality duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.
- The general equality duty also applies to other organisations that carry out services on behalf of the Council.

## **6 2019/20 Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)**

As Members are aware, to aid understanding and the consideration of these important equality duties, managers complete EIAs for each proposed budget reduction.

Members have been provided with information to highlight any potential disproportionate impact on any diverse group for each budget reduction proposal for 2019/20. This report includes an overall analysis of the cumulative impact on specific groups.

Initial EIAs have been undertaken for budget proposals for 2019/20. The potential impact on equalities groups has been assessed as:

- High (H)
- Medium (M)
- Low (L)
- None – If there are no identified impacts on any protected group

Taking account mitigating action that is planned or in place, most of the savings are considered to have no, low, or in some cases a positive impact on service users. If the

impact has been assessed as potentially being 'medium' or 'high' on service users, then a detailed Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is included within this report.

Where the proposals are not yet developed to a stage to allow a more detailed Equality Impact Assessment to be completed, such as the parking review (DE5), Marketing and Communications (CSD9) and the recommissioning of Supporting People (accommodation based) contracts (PCA6), more in depth consultation and data analysis will take place if the proposals are taken forward. The results from this will be reflected in a revised Equality Impact Assessment as the proposals are developed in more detail.

Detailed EIAs include the following important information:

- An assessment of the relevance of the budget proposal to the general equality duties and the protected characteristics.
- Collection and analysis of equality information to ensure equality issues can be fully explored and considered.
- Plans for and results of consultation and engagement with the people affected by proposed changes, to further understand the equality implications of the proposals. (Any consultation and engagement activity will be proportionate to the significance of equality issues to the budget decision)

## 7 Diversity in North Somerset

EIAs include information about the users of services wherever possible. It may also be helpful for Members to reflect on the diversity profile of North Somerset.

The Office of National Statistics in their mid-year estimates 2016 indicate that North Somerset has a population of 211,500 people

**Age** – Of those, 47,100 are under the age of 19, 114,700 are between the age of 20 and 64, 49,700 are older people; those aged 65 and over. There are around 7,000 people in North Somerset who are over the age of 85.

The 2011 Census identified:

**Disability** - Disabled people make up 19.2% of the North Somerset population, 38,740 people. This compares to 17.9% of the population nationally.

**Sex** – There are slightly more females (51.4%) than males (48.6%) in North Somerset. This is in line with the national figures; (50.8% female and 49.2% male)

**Race** – Black and minority ethnic population make up 2.7% of North Somerset's population compared to 4.6% of the South West area and 14.0% nationally.

An additional 3.2% of people in North Somerset are from White Other Groups, which include Irish, European and other White groups. This compares to 5.4% nationally.

**Religion and Belief** - 61% of the population indicate that they are a Christian, with 30% indicating they have no religion, those with a religion other than Christianity make up 1.5% of the population. Nationally the profile is: 59.3% Christianity, 25.1% no religion and 8.4% other religions.

**Sexual Orientation** – data available is very limited however the Census indicates that 0.1% of households are within same sex civil partnerships. This is the same figure nationally.

**Deprivation** - The latest English Indices of Deprivation (September 2015) indicates that North Somerset as a district has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest inequality (as measured by the range in national ranking between the most and least deprived Local Super Output Areas (LSOAs) across England). North Somerset had 5 LSOAs within the most deprived 5% in England, all within South or Central wards of Weston-super-Mare. There were 11 LSOAs within the least deprived 5% in England and these were spread across the district.

## **8. Consultation on the 2019/20 EAs**

Equality Impact Assessments were shared with Members during the budget scrutiny session on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and made public through the council's website on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018. Members were encouraged to review and comment on the EIAs.

A Stakeholder discussion group was held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019 to share information about the 'medium' or 'high' impact EIAs and to seek feedback on the issues raised.

The discussion group included representatives from:

- Citizens Advice North Somerset
- Senior Community Links
- Vision North Somerset
- Disability Access Group
- UNISON
- Elected members

Any further comments received on the EIAs prior to Members considering the Council's budget at their meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> February 2019, will also be shared with Members.

### **8.1 Results from consultation**

During the Stakeholder discussion group helpful, constructive comments were received. A number of concerns were raised on the 3 EIAs discussed, these included:

#### **PCPH1 – Substance Misuse Service**

- Concerns about the increased use of volunteers and the need to ensure that those volunteers are adequately trained and supported during their support for others
- Cumulative reductions in the service, making it more difficult for some groups of service users to fully engage in the support offered

#### **PCC4 – Residential Step-Down**

- Concerns about the council's ability to recruit appropriate foster carers
- The importance of consultation with young people and their families to ensure a successful transition
- Acknowledgement that the project is aiming to have a positive impact on young people

#### **PCC5 – Children's social care staffing**

- Impact on remaining staff within the team, and the team's capacity to respond to any increased need for the service
- Concerns regarding any increased waiting times for service users
- The council's ability to retain staff with the loss of the dedicated principal social worker post

The consultation responses have been included in and have influenced the development of mitigating actions identified in the EIA's.

The Stakeholder group noted positively the smaller number (than in previous years) of EIAs that were presented as being a 'high' or 'medium' risk but were also keen to acknowledge that the cumulative impact of public sector savings over the last 10 years on some vulnerable people if they use a number of council services, for example social care, children's centres, public transport, services from voluntary groups is likely to have made it more difficult to access necessary support.

The table below (8.3) provides a summary of the areas initially assessed as a 'high' or 'medium' impact and the mitigating actions being taken to reduce the level of potential impact wherever possible.

## **8.2 Potential 'high' or 'medium' impact assessments and mitigating actions**

Wherever appropriate, budget reductions have been achieved through the continuation of prior year proposals, exploring innovative and different ways of working such as merging smaller teams, linking revenues with capital resources and capital investments and generally working smarter and more efficiently, before front line service reductions are considered; therefore, limiting the impact on equality groups.

However, there is an acknowledgement that with far less public money available some individuals will be affected by the council's budget reduction proposals. As a result of the completion of EIAs there are 3 areas that have been identified as potential 'high' or 'medium' impact. This level of impact could be either because of the nature of the changes that are proposed or the groups of people who currently receive a service.

### 8.3 Initial EIAs that identified a potential 'high' or 'medium' impact

Budget Reference	Service Area	Reason for being included as high/medium impact	Initial service user impact	Mitigating Actions	Impact after mitigating actions
<b>PCC4</b>	Children's placement savings - Residential Step-Down Project	- The largest proportion of children entering the care system are from families on a low income.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An enhanced package of support for foster carers</li> <li>- Decisions regarding placements will be taken with the consent of child and with support from key family members</li> <li>- Ongoing consultation with children to understand the strengths of the programme and areas for further support</li> </ul>	Low
<b>PCC5</b>	Staffing reductions in social care teams	- The percentage of children who access support are more likely to be disabled, from BME groups and from families who are on a low income.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children and families who require services will be assessed to ensure the council continues to work with those most in need</li> <li>- Recruitment of 12 ASYES (newly qualified social workers) to build the capacity in teams</li> <li>- Continued use of Early Help Scheme so that universal and targeted services continue to support families.</li> </ul>	Medium
<b>PCPH1</b>	Public Health - Substance Misuse service efficiencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Large proportion of service users are not in employment and many live in areas of high deprivation.</li> <li>- Potential for a reduced ability to provide home visits and increased use of group work making it challenging to access services for some disabled people.</li> </ul>	Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing work with provider to ensure the reduction is applied with the lowest risk to service users</li> <li>- Greater use of group work</li> <li>- An increase in the use of volunteers</li> </ul>	Low

## 9 Positive Impacts

It should be noted that 7 of the 2019/20 budget proposals have identified a positive impact on equality groups. Improvements and innovations in delivering services has resulted in improved outcomes for service users, the method of delivery may have changed but positive outcomes are being achieved, examples of these include:

- Meeting the increased need for quality childcare provision across North Somerset (PCC1)
- Piloting the use of digital solutions for frail, elderly people as a part a digitally enabled care offer to complement the traditional care package. (PCA8)
- Increasing the opportunities for the Shared Lives Scheme to be offered as an alternative to residential care, by increasing the number of carers recruited, and; expanding into other client groups including people with poor mental health and older people. (PCA5)
- The safe diversion of children from care as a result of the Edge of Care Intervention and Prevention Service. (PCC3)

## 10 Impact on North Somerset Council staff

The approach to managing workforce reductions has been developed in the context of a significant reduction in funding of public services. A number of budget proposals contain staffing restructures, these include: Finance and Procurement (CSD11), D&E Directorate restructure (DE4), Staffing reductions in Social Care (PCC5).

Initiatives to mitigate the impact on staff include:

- Holding posts vacant or filling vacancies on a temporary or fixed term basis, wherever possible and ending temporary arrangements before considering redundancies
- Offering redeployment and retraining opportunities to 'at risk' staff, wherever possible.

Given the scale of budget reductions, unfortunately some job losses are inevitable. However the council's stated policy is to avoid compulsory redundancy whenever possible.

If workforce changes are required, we will commence consultation at the earliest possible opportunity, irrespective of the number of employees involved.

### 10.1 Diversity across Council Workforce

As some budget reduction proposals may have an impact on the council's workforce. It may also be helpful for Members to be aware of the overall profile of the workforce, which is shown below:

The Council currently employs around 1,260 people outside of schools.

**Age** - the age profile of the non-school workforce is shown in the table:

Age Range	Percentage
16 - 20	1.0%
21 - 30	10.3%
31 - 40	21.8%

<b>41 - 50</b>	27.5%
<b>51 - 65</b>	37.6%
<b>Over 65</b>	1.7%

**Gender** – 74% of the non-school workforce are female.

**Ethnicity** – 89.7% of the non-school workforce are from English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British Groups. The remaining 10.3% are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and 'Other White' groups. (Figures based on the number of staff who have declared their ethnicity on iTrent)

**Disability** – 10.9% of council staff have declared that they have a disability. (Figures based on the number of staff who have declared if they have a disability on iTrent)

**Gender re-assignment, Sexual orientation & Religion or belief** - there is insufficient data currently held to accurately report on the workforce profile in relation to these areas

## **11. Cumulative Impact of Budget Reduction Proposals**

### **11.1 Introduction**

Creating a picture of how people are being affected by the Council's budget reductions and proposed future changes to services is difficult and complex. People are different in terms of their needs and expectations; people's interaction with public services and dependence upon public services vary.

However, the publication of all Equality Impact Assessments at the same time and altogether in one place (in this report and on the council's web-site), in advance of Council considering the 2019/20 budget, should help Members gain an overall picture of the impact of the proposed changes.

In addition, this report identifies areas where protected groups are potentially affected by a combination of budget reductions.

Analysis of the EIAs for the 43 budget reduction proposals show the following potential impact on equality groups (after any mitigating actions have been implemented):

- 29 assessments (67%) indicate that there should be 'no' impact on equality groups through the implementation of the budget reduction proposals
- 12 assessments (28%) indicate that there could be a 'low' impact on some equality groups through the implementation of the budget reduction proposal
- 2\* assessments (5%) indicate that there could be a 'medium' or 'high' impact on some equality groups through the implementation of the budget proposal.

\* In addition, the Substance Misuse service efficiencies within the overall Public Health budget proposal (PCPH1) has been assessed as having a potential 'medium' impact on equality groups. As a result, a detailed EIA has been completed for this element of the Public Health budget proposal and is presented with this report.

## 11.2 Budget proposals where ‘No’ Impact is expected on equality groups

The 29 assessments which indicate that there will be ‘no’ impact on equality groups account for approximately £8.3 million (77%) of the total savings proposals for 2019/20.

Examples of the type of savings proposal which would have ‘no’ impact on any equality group include:

- Changes to the nature of funding for services, e.g. partnership working with health colleagues, or acknowledging changes to government funding such as the Improved Better Care Fund
- Acknowledging income generated as a part of the budget, e.g. increase in numbers of people using the planning service
- Use of reserves to enable phasing or carefully managed implementation of a future service change

## 11.3 Budget proposals where a ‘Low’ Impact is expected on equality groups

The 12 assessments which indicate that there could be a ‘low’ impact on equality groups account for approximately £1.7m (16%) of the total savings proposals for 2019/20.

Examples of the savings that are likely to have a ‘low’ impact on equality groups include:

- Increased efficiency through contracts in areas such as Supporting People, Care and Repair and Sexual Health
- Reductions to reflect lower demand for services such as concessionary fares, internal printing and paper costs as a result in improvements in technology
- Staffing restructures in areas such as public health and early years

## 11.4 Budget proposals where a ‘High’ or ‘Medium’ impact is expected on equality groups

The assessments which indicate that the implementation of a budget proposal could be a ‘high’ or ‘medium’ impact on equality groups account for approximately £780,000 (7%) of the total savings proposals for 2019/20.

Whilst the ‘pooling’ of items in the preparation of the 2018/19 savings proposals does not enable a direct comparison of the percentage of savings proposals with this year’s budget, there is a substantial reduction from 40% in 2018/19 to 7% in 2019/20 of budget proposals that were assessed as having a ‘high’ or ‘medium’ impact on equality groups.

It is also positive to note that a number of proposals that were high lighted as having a potential ‘high’ or ‘medium’ impact on equality groups in 2018/19, where budget savings have continued, have been assessed this year as having a ‘low’ and, in one case, a positive impact on equality groups:

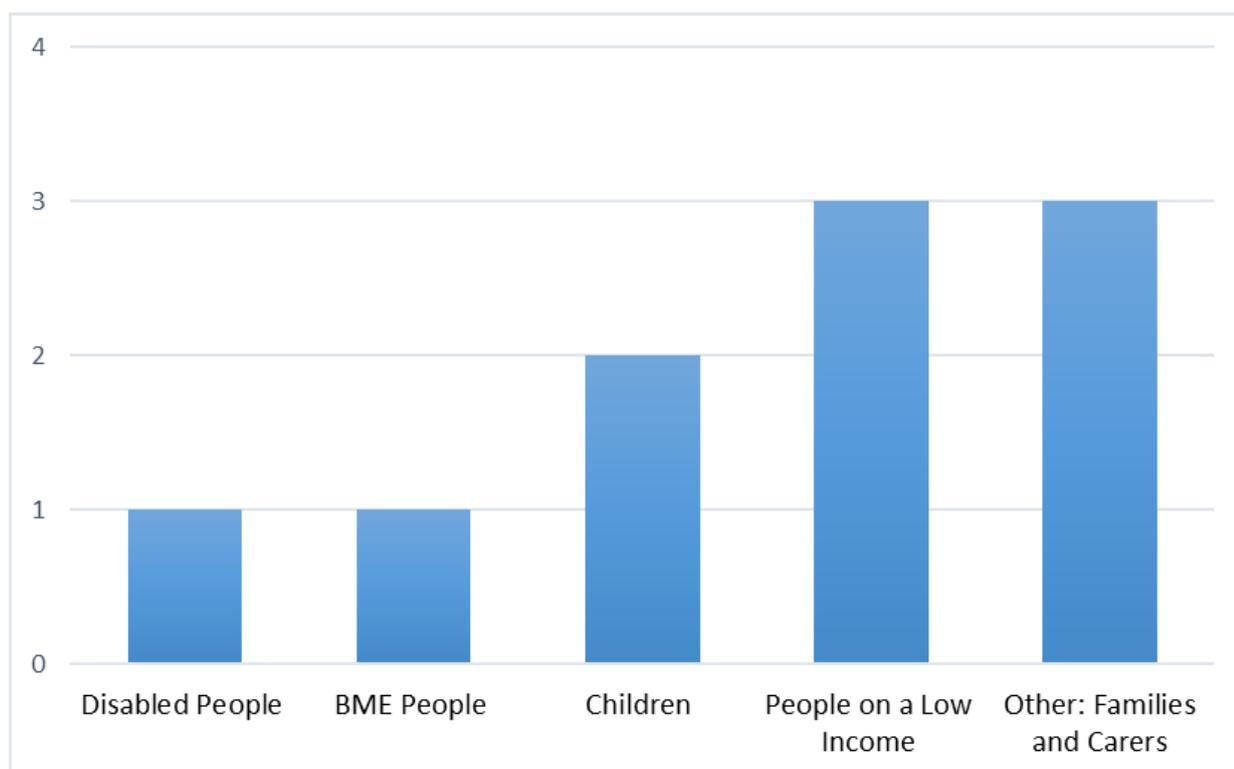
2019/20 budget reference	Service Area	Impact level on 2019/20
PCA2	Re-commissioning of Care and Repair Services	No
PCC2	Children’s Centres	Low
PCC3	Children’s placement savings – Social Impact Bond	Positive

The areas listed in the table below were identified through an initial assessment as anticipating a 'high' or 'medium' impact on equality groups (prior to mitigating actions) and where detailed EIAs are presented with this report.

Budget Reference	Budget proposal	Saving	Detailed EIA included
<b>PCPH1</b>	Substance misuse efficiency savings	£45,000	<b>Page 40 P&amp;C Adults and Public Health</b>
<b>PCC4</b>	Children's placement savings – Residential Step Down Project	£500,000	<b>Page 14 P&amp;C Children's Services</b>
<b>PCC5</b>	Staffing reductions in children's social care teams	£235,000	<b>Page 28 P&amp;C Children's Services</b>
<b>The total value of the proposals amounts to:</b>		<b>£780,000</b>	

## 11.5 Impacts on Equality Groups

11.5.1 The chart below highlights the cumulative impact on equality groups for the above proposals



(NB. Each EIA may identify multiple impacts, e.g. disability and ethnicity, therefore the total exceeds 3)

## **11.5.2 Families and Carers**

Services provided for Families and Carers will potentially be affected by the changes proposed in the 3 high-lighted EIAs. The services highlighted not only provide support for service users but also their wider family, reductions in these services could impact upon their well-being and the help they receive to support others during a complex and difficult time.

## **11.5.3 People on a low income**

Services for people on a low income are potentially impacted by the 3 highlighted EIAs. Generally, people from households with a low income are more likely to be users of a wide range of council services including public transport, adult and children's social care, children's centres etc. The 3 high-lighted EIAs all indicate that a large proportion of their service users are from households in this group.

## **11.5.4 Young people**

Potential impacts on children and young people have been identified through 2 of the highlighted EIAs. The nature of these services means that most noticeably the impacts are on vulnerable children who are in receipt of social care support.

In the case of the Residential Step-Down Project it is planned for this to be a positive impact, but the EIA rightly highlights the potential risks of the placement being unsuccessful.

## **11.6 Mitigating actions**

The EIAs all set out a series of mitigating actions to ensure that wherever possible the impact of these proposals is reduced so that the most vulnerable people in North Somerset continue to receive appropriate support and to enable the council to continue to provide services to those most in need.

## **11.7 Consequences of reductions of funding to the Voluntary and Community sector**

A small number of EIAs indicate that there may be an impact on the Voluntary and Community sector, where this is the case, dialogue is ongoing with those groups regarding the implementation of the proposals.

## **12. Monitoring the Impacts of the budget reduction proposals**

Within each EIA there is detailed information about the mitigating actions that are being taken to ensure that any impact is reduced where possible. The budget proposals are regularly monitored by the Corporate Management Team, the Executive, and Policy & Scrutiny Panels.

Actions arising from the EIAs are also reviewed by the Equality Scheme Implementation Group (ESIG).