

## 2025/26 Budget Equality Impact Assessment

### 1. The Project

|                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Directorate:</b>   | Place                  |
| <b>Theme or area:</b> | Placemaking and Growth |
| <b>Lead Officer:</b>  | Jenny Ford             |
| <b>Date:</b>          | 2 December 2024        |

| Budget Reference | Budget Proposal   | 2025/26<br>Budget<br>reduction<br>(£) | 2026/27<br>Budget<br>reduction<br>(£) | 2027/28<br>Budget<br>reduction<br>(£) |
|------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| PD28             | Review the Placemaking & Growth team management and structure | £102,000                              | £278,000                              | £29,000                               |

#### Description of the project:

To review the structures of the Placemaking & Growth Teams and associated workstreams and delivery. This will include trying to mitigate impacts by increasing income generation and modelling different ways of delivery, but reductions in management/staffing numbers are likely to be necessary.

#### Summary of changes:

The focus of the review will be the Economy, Weston Placemaking, Heritage & Design and Climate Emergency Teams.

In Year 1 (2025/26), the savings are expected to be delivered through a combination of:

- Maximising income through Planning Performance Agreements, grant funding and implementation of events review outcomes.
- Deleting posts currently being held vacant.
- Reduction in management resource (linked to Organisational Design review).
- Exploring options for shared services, or for alternative resource to be provided through regional partnerships.

For years 2 and 3, the main proposals under consideration relate to mergers of teams and/or further reductions in management. This may also include consideration of whether all or parts of the teams may need to move to sit within another directorate or section of directorate.

These changes must also be seen in the light of a number of grants and fixed-term roles potentially coming to an end in the 2025/26 year, further impacting on resource and the ability of the teams' to meet priorities.

In particular, if national grants for employment and skills support and UKSPF are discontinued and not replaced with an alternative source of grant, the impact on disadvantaged communities in terms of the support we can offer will be significantly reduced and we will not be able to compensate/make alternative provision from within the reduced teams. This is more of an issue for years 2 and 3, as some national funding has now been confirmed for year 1, although less than previously.

Some elements of the proposals are impacted by the proposed Organisational Design review, in particular the management savings.

Over the three years, the reduction in resource will increasingly impact on the ability of the teams to deliver services in relation to economy, placemaking and heritage. There will be limited or no scope to provide additional resource to other corporate priorities including the climate emergency.

We will seek to mitigate the reductions as far as possible through income generation, grant applications and increased working with partners particularly Town and Parish Councils, but it is unlikely that the reductions can be wholly avoided.

**Are any of the proposals within this theme a continuation of a previous medium-term financial plan saving?**

No

**If yes, please insert reference number and year of assessment?**

| <b>Budget Proposal</b> | <b>Year of assessment</b> | <b>Budget Reference</b> |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
|                        |                           |                         |

**If yes, please describe what steps you have taken to review the equality impacts from previous years?**

## 2. Customer equality impact summary

**Will the changes proposed in this project have a disproportionate impact (or bias) for any of these groups?**

Insert X into one box per row, for impact level and type.

H = High, M = Medium, L = Low, N = None

+ = Positive, - = Negative

Year 1:

| Protected or significant group   | Impact Level |   |   |   | Impact type |   |
|--|--------------|---|---|---|-------------|---|
|  | H            | M | L | N | +           | - |
| Disabled people (Including the consideration of neurodiversity)  |              |   | X |   |             | X |
| People from different ethnic groups  |              |   | X |   |             | X |
| Men or women (including those who are pregnant or on maternity leave)  |              |   | X |   |             | X |
| People who are LGBTQ+  |              |   | X | X |             |   |
| People on a low income   |              |   | X |   |             | X |
| People in particular age groups  |              |   | X |   |             | X |
| People in particular faith groups  |              |   |   | X |             |   |
| People who are married or in a civil partnership   |              |   |   | X |             |   |
| People who are undergoing gender reassignment  |              |   | X |   |             |   |
| Other significant groups, for example:<br>Armed Forces Community, care experienced young people, carers, parents.<br>Please specify: |              |   |   |   |             |   |

## 3. Explanation of customer impact

In year 1, direct impacts for communities and staff should be relatively manageable. We will seek first to generate additional income and make efficiencies (such as through events

review), and to focus those reductions required on areas that, whilst beneficial overall, have a less immediate impact on our communities, such as inward investment, also exploring whether they can be funded or delivered through partners.

The impacts will accumulate over the MTFP period. Significant elements of work of the Weston Placemaking, Economy and Heritage and Design Teams are focused on (i) geographies recognised as areas of multiple deprivation; (ii) individuals and communities from equalities groups, including those set out in the bullet points below. Examples include:

- Employment and skills support, e.g. activity to support people back into work and training, which includes targeting of specific groups such as those with physical or mental health issues, women returning to the labour market after having children, refugees who do not speak English as their first language, younger people who are looking for apprenticeships, and older people re-training to meet the re-structuring of the market (amongst others).
- Placemaking activity focused on South and Central wards in Weston-super-Mare, which includes work to improve economic prosperity, housing, community safety, and health and wellbeing.
- Leadership of development and housing agendas by the Assistant Director / Head of Placemaking & Growth, which includes a focus on the delivery of affordable and specialist and supported housing which particularly benefit those with low income and health needs.
- Inability to increase support to Climate Emergency activity: climate impacts have been modelled as having a disproportionate impact on those living in our most disadvantaged communities.

On delivery of the full savings in years 2 & 3, alongside potential cuts to national grants and the expected end of reserve-funded posts, the council would need to significantly reduce and in some cases cease its activity across a range of its programmes.

These impacts will be fully explored in future years.

**Please describe how you will communicate these changes to those impacted.**

Staff will be informed and consulted as per council policies.

Conversations with partners and key stakeholders have commenced and will continue over the next 12 months, with a view to identifying alternative delivery/funding models and other mitigations.

In terms of services users, communication will be bespoke to the activities and programmes in question. For any that impact on equalities groups, we will give particular thought to a proactive outreach approach, including in-person engagement within South and Central wards which are identified as the areas most likely to be impacted.

## **4. Staff equality impact summary**

**Are there any staffing implications for this proposal? Yes**

## Explanation of staff impact

This is unclear until the outcome of the Organisational Design review, which itself includes management changes and re-structures that impact on these teams.

However it is anticipated that the budget changes may lead to a reduction of 3 – 5 FTE, depending also on potential income generation and access to grant-funding.

At least 1.5 of the FTE can be achieved through deletion of posts that are already being held vacant. This does not entirely mitigate the impacts, as if the posts are permanently deleted, we will have to make decisions about elements of workstreams that would have to move from being 'on hold' to permanently non-deliverable.

## 5. Cumulative equality impacts

### Is this project linked to or likely to have an impact on any other service areas?

Reductions may impact on the advice that can be given to planning teams in relation to proposals coming forward, in particular in relation to commercial investment proposals.

Reductions in dedicated placemaking resource are likely to increase expectations placed on other teams, for example in relation to the management of events, support for cultural activity and ability to bid for national funding for capital works.

There will be no scope for additional support to the wide range of teams involved in addressing the Climate Emergency.

## 6. Action Plan

### Are there any further actions that should be taken because of this Equality Impact Assessment?

| Issue Identified  | Planned Action   | Lead Officer | Time for review |
|---|--|--------------|-----------------|
| Year 2 & 3 savings likely to have at least medium impacts on some groups. | Full EIA to be carried out for year 2 & 3 savings once confirmed | Jenny Ford   | By 31/12/2025   |

## 7. Review and Sign Off

### Service Manager Review

Insert any service manager comments here. N/a

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed? Yes

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed? See above – relates to years 2 & 3, to be completed by 31/12/2025.

Service Manager: Jenny Ford

Date: 2 December 2024