

Draft Initial Budget Equality Impact Assessment

1. The Project

Directorate: Healthy & Sustainable Communities

Theme or area: Sustainable Places & Growth

Lead Officer: Jenny Ford, Head of Sustainable Places & Growth

Date: 03/12/2025

Budget reference	Budget proposal	Budget reduction (£k)		
		2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
HSC10	Restructure and reduce Sustainable Places & Growth Team	£135,000	£234,000	0

Description of the project:

The overarching description above refers in practice to a mixture of savings proposals:

2026/27

- Reduction of annual revenue budget for Driving Growth reserve from £80k / year to £40k / year.
- Non-renewal of graduate trainee and apprentice posts, after the current postholders complete their training: £35k part-year saving in 2026/27 rising to £70k total per annum from 2027/28.
- Other staff savings (£60k) through use of alternative funding sources (capitalisation / grants / S106 etc) and/or voluntary reductions in hours or resignations/retirements.

2027/28

- Wider review and restructuring of Placemaking and Growth teams, expected to focus on management structures: £234k.

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

Yes

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

Budget Proposal	Year of assessment	Budget Reference
2025/26 saving against same heading: £70k (achieved)	2025/26	HSC08

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

The 2025/26 saving was achieved through the deletion of an inwards investment role within the Economy Team, following the departure of the postholder. This was deemed to have low equality impacts and alternative funding has since been found for a temporary reinstatement of role.

2. Customer equality impact summary

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

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

+ = Positive, - = Negative

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			X
People who are married or in a civil partnership			X			X
People who are undergoing gender reassignment			X			X
Other significant groups, for example: Armed Forces Community, care experienced young people, carers, parents. Please specify: All of above.			X			X

3. Explanation of customer impact

2026/27

Savings in 2026/27 are expected to have low customer and equalities impacts, as set out below:

Proposal	Saving	Impacts
Reduction in Driving Growth reserve annual base budget	£40k/annum	No direct customer / equality impacts. Driving Growth reserve is used when small amounts of funding are required to pump prime projects, funding bids etc or when a project faces an immediate financial pressure. The reduction in income will reduce our ability to do this and we would instead need to apply corporately for additional funding if required, however impacts on customers will be indirect only.
Non-renewal of graduate trainee and apprentice posts	£35k in 2026/27 rising to £70k in 2027/28	Limited customer / equality impacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The removal of these posts reduces our overall capacity in the teams and across the wider council; this will have some indirect impact on our ability to deliver priorities and services. - Trainee and apprentice programmes have benefits to equality groups in offering positive supported routes into good quality employment (particularly those on low incomes and young people). Whilst only two roles are affected, the reduction in this offer will reduce the availability of that route.
Other staff savings	£60k	Limited impacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The saving identified equates approximately to one role. Any reduction in capacity will impact on the delivery of council priorities and services, which for teams in Placemaking & Growth may also bring some equality impacts. - It is hoped that savings may be achieved through use of alternative funding sources rather than through reducing capacity. - Should it remain required that capacity be reduced or removed, the equality and customer impacts will be reviewed prior to any final decision.

2027/28

The details of savings in 2027/28 will be subject to further development and consultation processes, however are expected to result in overall staff reductions.

The work of the Placemaking and Growth Teams encompasses Heritage & Design, Placemaking (including culture), Economy (including employment and skills) and Climate Emergency (including climate adaptation).

All of these services are designed to take pro-active action helping to prevent and address inequality and disadvantage. Service reductions will impact on our ability to do so and a more detailed assessment of equality impacts is likely to be required.

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

- Reduction in Driving Growth budget: team managers aware, but no further communications activities planned.
- Non-renewal of graduate trainee and apprentice posts: current postholders will be made aware to ensure they know that this doesn't impact their tenures and to discuss their thoughts on potential impact/mitigations. Our understanding of impacts and any possible mitigations will be shared with CLT (in particular in relation to graduate trainees). NSC website and other related information sources, including relevant partner organisations, will be updated to reflect that the opportunities are no longer available.
- Other staff savings in 2026/27: team managers and teams informed. Specific options impacting on capacity will be discussed further with relevant staff and service users if/when confirmed to be moving forward.
- 2027/28 team review and reduction: this process will be subject to a full communication/consultation programme with teams, partner organisations and where appropriate service-users, where this has potential impacts.

4. Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal?

Yes

Explanation of staff impact

2026/27:

- Non-renewal of graduate trainee and apprentice posts: 2 FTE. No impact on current postholders, but posts will not be renewed.
- Other staff savings: potentially equivalent to 1 FTE should no alternative funding sources be found. Expected to be delivered through voluntary reductions in hours and non-renewal of vacant posts rather than compulsory redundancies.

2027/28:

- Additional savings required of c. £200k equate to 2 – 3 senior level staff or 4 – 6 more junior staff, or a mixture of the two. This will require full consultation and HR processes to include EIA.

5. Cumulative equality impacts

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

2026/27: no or minor impacts only.

2027/28: the teams in Sustainable Places and Growth work in a matrix-manner across a wide range of services and partners. Full impacts will need to be assessed.

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
Non-renewal of graduate trainees and apprenticeships.	- Discuss potential impacts and ideas for mitigation with current postholders. - Ensure CLT aware of change and any proposed mitigations.	Jenny Ford (Head of Sustainable Places & Growth)	Dec 2025
Staff savings (both years) and team restructures	Full HR, consultation processes and assessments required as well as programme of engagement / communication with relevant members, colleagues, partners and service users.	Jenny Ford (Head of Sustainable Places & Growth)	Jan 2026 – Sept 2027

7. Review and sign-off

Service Manager Review

Insert any service manager comments here.

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Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed? Yes No

Please note that if this assessment indicates a potential 'medium' or 'high' impact on any protected or significant group a further, more detailed assessment will be required.

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed?

<< date >>

Service Manager:

Jeny Ford

Date:

3 December 2025