

Budget 2021/22 Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) for impacts on Service-Users and Staff: Legal Duties, Process, Assessment and Planned Actions

Summary

The council is legally required under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 to evidence how it has considered its equality duty in its budget-setting process. Evidence can be provided in different forms but it is commonly held across local authorities that the most effective method is the completion of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). These have been undertaken on all budget proposals where there may be a potential impact on service-users and on staff, related to their legally protected characteristics.

Members are referred to the full text of s149 of the Equality Act 2010 – included at Appendix A the end of this document – which must be considered when making a decision on the matters set out in this report.

All budget EIAs are available in Appendix 7 and should be considered alongside the relevant budget proposal. Within the EIAs, impacts are identified and mitigating actions proposed, where possible.

This document explains the EIA process, identifies the cumulative impacts across all the proposals relating to service-users, and lists overall planned mitigating actions. The budget reductions will inevitably impact on specific individuals and groups, but the proposed mitigating actions are intended to reduce these as far as possible, with monitoring of actual impact to enable appropriate interventions as proposals are implemented.

Service-User EIAs

In terms of overall assessment of impact, the impacts of 8 EIAs are rated as 1 (the lowest impact out of 5); 4 are rated at 2 (out of 5); and 4 are rated at 3 (out of 5). No EIAs identified impacts at 4 or 5 (the highest impacts).

At this stage, the impacts identified across the budget proposals are on the following groups of service-users:

- Age: younger people and older people
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Women
- Carers

The mitigating actions identified (in bold) are summarised below (full details in section 4). These will be followed up with the relevant directorates and services:

- **Response and recovery during COVID19** – continue to respond effectively to the pandemic, adapting services to support communities across the city with their specific needs and assets and keeping our workforce safe and supported.
- **Impact of Covid-19:** Core to the council's approach (outlined in some budget proposals) are early intervention and prevention, staff capacity to respond flexibly to meet changing needs, and collaboration with partners. Covid-19 creates potential significant challenges to this: limiting staff capacity, requiring a focus on emergency response, generating extra demand, and changing the national and local funding landscape. Long-term impacts of the pandemic are also, as yet, unknown.

- **Taking an asset-based approach** - requires an understanding of the different levels of resource and resilience for different groups and individuals.
- **Targeted interventions and prioritisation of support** - must be based on up-to-date information to identify the greatest need and the most effective actions.
- **Close monitoring and evaluation** of service-user experience and progress to identify impacts early and to act on trends.
- **Engagement** - with all stakeholders to influence and communicate changes and enable effective support during transitions.
- **Earlier interventions and preventative work** – EIAs are critical to ensure there are no unintended impacts for individuals or groups.
- **Supporting independence** – working with service-users who are ready to move on to more independence and offering support to people, to enable resources to be redirected.
- **Integration of Health & Adult Social Care** - provides opportunities for more effective and linked-up provision. Ongoing EIAs remain a core need in this process.
- **Reviewing, renegotiating or combining services** – service-users’ diverse needs must be embedded in the commissioning process from bidding to monitoring/evaluation.
- **Increasing collaboration between services in the council and with other agencies in the city** – can maximise the impact of services. However, financial pressures can restrict capacity and resource to develop and/or participate in collaborations.
- **Digital inclusion** - can increase convenience, support independence and provide tailored support. However, accessibility and other contact channels must be embedded.

Staff

For all proposals relating to staff, the following mitigating actions will be in place, as well as any service specific actions identified through the service specific staffing EIAs:

- Involve staff in service redesign discussions using the [service redesign toolkit](#).
- Use staffing equalities data to inform decision making.
- Apply the council’s policies and procedures equitably and appropriately.
- Review vacant posts, use of agency employees etc. to minimise the impact.
- Manage redeployment on a corporate level.
- Where there may be a reduction of posts consider offer of voluntary severance.
- Where there will be compulsory redundancy ensure that selection processes are clear and unbiased, and that processes take into account any individual needs.
- Ensure processes and criteria related to selection for voluntary redundancy are clear and transparent and use the compensation panel appropriately.
- Ensure managers involved in selection have completed relevant training including the Fair and Inclusive briefing sessions.
- HR to support and advise managers delivering service changes.
- Offer all employees one to one meetings and relevant transition support.
- Attach the summary EIA to each consultation document, and continue to assess equality impacts through the consultation process.
- Ensure reasonable adjustments are put in place for individual members of staff.

- Ensure staff and managers are aware of the range of support and training available during the consultation process regarding mental health support including individual reasonable adjustments, staff wellbeing information, counselling services and occupational health/risk assessment support where required.

Full details of all impacts and actions are below.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report describes the process of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) made on the budget proposals for 2021/22 and analyses the findings. The council has legal duties under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 to consider the needs of diverse people in our budget-setting processes and address negative impacts where possible.

1.2 Budget EIAs are an effective way, but not the only way, to evidence how the council is meeting this duty and should be considered by members in decision-making. Budget EIAs are available in Appendix 7.

1.3 The aims of an Equality Impact Assessment become especially important at times of straitened budgets, enabling us to:

- think about what the council is trying to achieve;
- consider what potential impact the decision will have on different groups;
- target resources to those who are most vulnerable;
- fund services which respond to people's diverse needs; and
- save money by getting it right first time.

1.4 This report describes:

- the council's legal duties in the budget-setting process (section 2)
- council-wide cumulative impacts on service-users identified at this stage (section 3)
- the over-arching actions which will be needed to mitigate negative impacts and maximise positive impacts (section 4)
- impacts identified from known data on staff across all proposals, across the council and in specific directorates (section 5)
- council-wide mitigating actions, to reduce/remove negative impacts on staff (section 6)
- the national and local context (sections 7 and 8)
- the council's approach to and aims in EIA as part of decision-making (section 9).

2. Our legal duties

2.1 Under the equality duty set out in s149 of the Equality Act 2010 (Appendix A), public authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity; and to foster good

relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 2.2** The protected groups covered by the equality duty are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The duty also covers marriage and civil partnerships (only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination). Assessment has also been included of impacts and actions in relation to child poverty.
- 2.3** The law requires that public authorities demonstrate that they have paid conscious and rigorous attention to the equality duty aims in their decision-making.
- 2.4** By law, our assessments of impact on equality must:
- Contain enough information to enable a public authority to demonstrate it has had 'due regard' to the aims of the equality duty in its decision-making;
 - Consider ways of mitigating or avoiding any adverse impacts.
- 2.5** The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) does not prevent councils from making difficult decisions such as reorganisations and relocations, redundancies, and service reductions, nor does it prevent decisions which may affect one group more than another group.
- 2.6** The duty does enable public bodies to demonstrate that they are making financial decisions in a fair, transparent and accountable way. This involves considering the needs and the rights of different members of the community, how impacts will affect them and mitigating negative impacts as fully as possible.
- 2.7** Nationally, there have been a number of successful legal challenges to funding decisions because public authorities have failed to meet the requirements of s149. In such cases, the public authority may have to start the decision-making process again, with improved consultation and evidence-gathering to identify the impact on particular groups.

“Even when the context of decision-making is financial resources in a tight budget, that does not excuse compliance with the PSEDs [Public Sector Equality Duties], and there is much to be said for the proposition that even in straitened times the need for clear, well informed decision-making when assessing the impacts on less advantaged members of society is as great, if not greater.”
Blake J in R (Rahman) v Birmingham City Council
[2011] EWHC 944 (Admin)

- 2.8** Members are referred to the full text of s149 of the Equality Act 2010 (Appendix A) which must be considered when making a decision on the matters set out in this report.

3. Impacts identified on Service-Users across all proposals

- 3.1** The EIA process and consultation have identified whether or not impacts are likely to be different for a person because of their protected characteristic (with a focus on where impacts may be worse) and if so, list the proposed mitigating actions.

3.2 There has also been an overall assessment in each EIA of:

- the impact of funding changes from one service on another across the council (cumulative impacts);
- consideration of what mitigating actions can be taken, and how we can monitor, evaluate and take action on impacts which may occur.

3.3 The overall assessment is that the proposals put forward have all been considered within the framework of the council's legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and due regard has been given to the potential impacts on people linked to or arising from their legally protected characteristics. Given budget reductions, there are likely to be impacts on specific individuals and groups. However, proposed mitigating actions will reduce these as far as possible, and monitoring of actual impact will enable appropriate interventions as proposals are implemented.

3.4 In terms of overall assessment of impact, the impacts of 8 EIAs are rated as 1 (the lowest impact out of 5); 4 are rated at 2 (out of 5); and 4 are rated at 3 (out of 5). No EIAs identified impacts at 4 or 5 (the highest impacts).

At this stage, the impacts identified across the budget proposals are on the following groups of service-users, largely reflecting groups of people who are more likely to be eligible for and use council services:

- Age: younger people and older people
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Women
- Carers

3.5 The EIAs do highlight concerns about the council's ability to increase equality and inclusion, as prioritised in our Corporate Plan. Therefore, key activities have been identified to ensure continued progress against this aim. More details are below.

4. Service-Users: Proposed Mitigating Actions

4.1 The EIA template highlights where officers identify a cumulative impact linked to other services or the wider local/national context. The Communities, Equality & Third Sector team has also considered all the EIAs to assess where groups may be impacted by more than one change across the council.

4.2 Impacts identified in section 3 (above) are the result of proposed changes to a number of services including some specifically focused on provision for these groups. Specific actions to mitigate as far as possible impacts arising from each proposal are defined within the relevant EIAs. In addition, council-wide mitigating actions are detailed below.

4.3 Overall mitigating actions identified from EIAs:

- **Response and recovery during Covid-19** – continue to respond effectively to the pandemic, adapting services to support communities across the city with

their specific needs and assets and keeping our workforce safe and supported. Ongoing impact assessment is embedded into service responses and the recovery and renewal process.

- **Impact of Covid-19:** Core to the council's approach (outlined in some budget proposals) are early intervention and preventative work, staff capacity to respond flexibly to meet changing needs, and collaboration with other services, CVS and statutory partners. The Covid-19 context creates potential significant challenges to this: limiting staff capacity, requiring a focus on emergency response, generating extra demand for some services, and changing the national and local funding landscape, so that some alternative funding sources are reduced. There are likely to be long-term impacts of the pandemic that cannot yet be foreseen, contributing to a high level of uncertainty for services.
- **Working towards an asset-based approach** - requires an understanding of the different levels of resource and resilience for different groups and individuals.
- **Targeted interventions and prioritisation of support** - must be based on up-to-date knowledge, data and feedback from local groups to identify the greatest need and the best forms of intervention, communications and engagement.
- **Better monitoring and evaluation** of service-user experience and progress to identify impacts early and to act on trends.
- **Improving engagement** with service-users, carers, families, CVS groups and other stakeholders to enable people to give views on and influence changes; communicate changes to minimise negative impacts and anxiety; enable effective support during transitions; and understand alternative forms of support for themselves and the service-user.
- **Supporting independence** – working with service-users who are ready to move on to more independence and offering support to people, to enable resources to be redirected.
- **Integrated commissioning of Health & Adult Social Care** - provides opportunities for streamlining of more effective and linked-up provision. Ongoing assessment of the equality impacts (by all providers) remains a core need to ensure that services remain accessible, appropriate and effective for everyone.
- **Reviewing, renegotiating or combining services** - creates opportunities for better links between services and a more consistent experience for service-users. It remains vital to be clear that the needs of service-users are as diverse as the service-users themselves and provision must be flexible and responsive and maintain focused interventions where required. Requirements throughout the commissioning process from bidding to monitoring/evaluation must embed these principles.
- Increasing collaboration between services in the council and with the voluntary and community sector and other partners in the city – can maximise the impact of services and funding decisions for the benefit of residents. However, financial pressures can restrict capacity and resource to develop and/or participate in collaborations.
- **Digital inclusion** - can increase convenience, support independence and provide tailored support, particularly in the context of Covid-19. However, accessibility and availability of other forms of contact must be considered and embedded.

4.4 Other mitigating actions

- 4.4.1** Ongoing council approaches, such as Equality Impact Assessment and the aims in the council's Equality and Inclusion Strategy are a critical part of minimising or avoiding negative impacts on specific groups protected in law.
- 4.4.2** Equality monitoring and analysis to evaluate trends and identify actions, and robust equality impact assessments which actively engage stakeholders are fundamental to meeting our legal duties and corporate commitments. Senior managers will continue to have responsibility for overseeing these processes as decisions are made and service changes take place.

5. Staff: Impacts identified across all proposals

- 5.1** The Restructure EIA template is completed so the council can evidence compliance with the Equality Act 2010: thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty during decision-making processes and ensuring equality issues inform our budget decisions. This approach also supports the Council's Fair and Inclusive agenda. It is also reasonable and proper for the Council to consider factors such as service requirements, customer needs, and statutory or legal obligations.
- 5.2** At this stage in the process, it is not possible to identify which specific staff members will be affected by the proposed reductions in staffing in any service. Therefore, the analysis of data highlights where a particular service profile differs from the council workforce profile. Where groups of staff sharing legally protected characteristics are under- or over-represented in a service, due regard and conscious attention will be paid during decision-making, to avoid, as far as possible, further reduction in under-represented groups and/or disproportionate impacts on any groups. The analysis will be used by managers in consultation and in decision-making.
- 5.3** For groups of over 20 staff, equalities data has been used to assist the identification of potential impacts. Where there are fewer than 20 staff affected data has not been produced to protect the confidential sensitive equalities information provided by staff. EIAs have been completed in these instances with regard to known information about the staff group and proposals made.
- 5.4** Information which might identify individuals has been withheld from this document to protect confidentiality, but all information has been provided to managers and will be used to inform the implementation of agreed proposals.
- 5.5** Managers have assessed the equalities impacts and completed EIAs where the impacts on staff are known at this stage. This assessment process will continue through staff consultation allowing staff and unions to raise specific issues not identified via the completed EIAs.
- 5.6** The EIA template highlights where officers identify an impact linked to the profile of the workforce across the Council in terms of legally protected groups as compared to the make-up of groups affected by the budget proposals. HR has considered all the EIAs, although consideration of potential impacts will need to be kept under

review as the detail of some proposals become clearer and through staff consultation processes.

- 5.7** It is not currently proposed to change or withdraw any proposal based on potential impact. Because the proposals are broad at this stage many of the actions are currently generic. The outcome of EIAs will guide the consultation process and inform the implementation of changes.

6 Staff: Council-wide Mitigating Actions:

In addition to the specific mitigations identified in each service area the Council has guidance, procedures and approaches for managing change that are designed to ensure change is managed fairly and groups sharing protected characteristics are not negatively impacted:

- 6.1** Involve staff in service redesign discussions using the [service redesign toolkit](#).
- 6.2** Attach the summary EIA to each consultation document, and continue to assess equality impacts through the consultation process.
- 6.3** Ensure the council's relevant policies and procedures are equitably and appropriately applied (e.g. redeployment, development of new post details etc) to ensure that no adverse impact is created for employees in minority groups. Use staffing equalities data to inform decision-making.
- 6.4** Review vacant posts, use of agency employees etc to minimise the impact on current substantive post holders.
- 6.5** Manage redeployment at a corporate level.
- 6.6** Where proposals may result in a reduction of posts consider the offer of voluntary redundancy to mitigate the impact of potential compulsory redundancy processes. Ensure processes and criteria related to selection for voluntary redundancy are clear and transparent and use the compensation panel appropriately.
- 6.7** Where there will be a potential compulsory redundancy situation, ensure that selection processes are clear and unbiased, and that processes take into account any individual needs.
- 6.8** Ensure managers involved in selection have attended the Fair and Inclusive briefing sessions, completed corporate recruitment and selection training and are signposted to the Equality & Diversity training opportunities.
- 6.9** Ensure that managers delivering service changes are appropriately supported and advised in relation to all employee equalities.
- 6.10** Ensure all employees are offered one to one meetings to discuss their circumstances and any concerns they may have.
- 6.11** Ensure staff and managers are aware of the range of support and training available during the consultation process regarding mental health support including individual

reasonable adjustments, staff wellbeing information, counselling services and occupational health/risk assessment support where required.

7. National context

7.1 The budget proposals are being developed within ongoing national changes which may have an equalities impact, including (not exclusively):

- Ongoing roll-out of welfare reforms and transfer to Universal Credit;
- Ongoing pressures on public sector budgets, particularly Adult Social Care;
- Britain leaving the EU;
- Potential reforms to Adult Social Care and Health; and
- Covid-19 has highlighted and increased existing inequality.

8. Local context

8.1 The council's priorities defined in 'Our Plan 2020 to 2023' agreed by Policy & Resources Committee in December 2019 are collected within the vision for 'a fairer city, a sustainable future'. The priorities are:

- A city to call home
- A city working for all
- A stronger city
- A growing and learning city
- A sustainable city
- A healthy and caring city

These match with the Brighton & Hove Connected priorities for the whole city, as contained in the Sustainable Community Strategy: 'Brighton & Hove: The Connected City'.

8.2 Relevant local priorities and context includes:

- Covid-19: citywide structure with cross-sector representation to identify and respond to equality priorities based on wide engagement and local/national data. This includes a Vulnerable People workstream and other workstreams to focus on different protected groups;
- Close partnership working across social care and health both for children's services and adults, particularly through the 'Better Lives, Stronger Communities' integration initiative;
- Using Modernisation Boards across the council to drive service redesign that will lead to greater collaboration with partners and communities to provide better, more joined-up outcomes for everyone;
- A joint approach to public services as a whole for the city through the City Management Board;
- Greater alignment between the development of the medium-term financial strategy and Corporate Plan 2020-2023;
- Proactive work to support financial inclusion and collaborative approach to welfare support across the council and with partners;

- A focus on improving educational attainment and opportunities for access to employment for our young people.
- Responding to the climate emergency – making the city carbon neutral by 2030 by focusing on the city’s transport network.
- The council’s pledge to become anti-racist and to work with partners towards an anti-racist city.

9. Brighton & Hove City Council Approach and Process

- 9.1** The council most commonly uses a Budget EIA process to screen and identify the main potential disproportionate impacts arising because of people’s legally protected characteristics and, for service-users, on child poverty. Where relevant they draw on existing service EIAs.
- 9.2** The aims of an Equality Impact Assessment become especially important at times of straitened budgets, enabling us to:
- think about what the council is trying to achieve;
 - consider what potential impact the decision will have on different groups;
 - target resources to those who are most vulnerable;
 - fund services which respond to people’s diverse needs; and
 - save money by getting it right first time.
- 9.3** Service leads or HR completed EIAs on budget proposals where the proposed changes potentially impact on service provision and/or on staff. The document presented to Members lists all the disproportionate impacts on groups because of their protected characteristic. It also identifies the planned actions to mitigate negative impacts.
- 9.4** All the EIAs have been reviewed by the Communities, Equality and Third Sector Team and/or Human Resources. The Executive Leadership Team has agreed and supported the process, as well as considering the impacts of specific funding decisions.
- 9.5** The Human Resources team has assessed equalities impacts on staff arising from the proposals. Information from staff consultation processes was incorporated into these EIAs, where available.
- 9.6** Since the equality duty is a continuing duty which must be complied with when implementing and reviewing a decision, assessment of equality impacts and responses to them will continue after budget decisions are agreed. Data from these EIAs will also be shared with relevant managers, to enable them to identify the best ways to implement the decisions to minimise negative or disproportionate impacts on legally protected and socially excluded groups.
- 9.7** All political groups are able to present alternative budget proposals and/or budget amendments. Where substantial alternative proposals or amendments are submitted these will have been screened by officers and advice given as to whether there is any new or additional cumulative equality impact requiring either a revised Budget EIA or a new EIA. Where proposals are not substantial (most amendments), officers will screen the amendment and will normally advise that either an EIA is not required or that an existing Budget EIA remains valid.

Appendix A

149 Public sector equality duty

- (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- (2) A person who is not a public authority but who exercises public functions must, in the exercise of those functions, have due regard to the matters mentioned in subsection (1).
- (3) Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—
 - (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - (b) 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;
 - (c) 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.
- (4) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
- (5) Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—
 - (a) tackle prejudice, and
 - (b) promote understanding.
- (6) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.
- (7) The relevant protected characteristics are —
 - age;
 - disability;
 - gender reassignment;

- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

(8) A reference to conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act includes a reference to—

- (a) a breach of an equality clause or rule;
- (b) a breach of a non-discrimination rule.

(9) Schedule 18 (exceptions) has effect.