

Appendix D – Equality Impact Assessments

1 Overview

- 1.1 This appendix describes the most significant equality pressures confronting each main service area, informed by an equality analysis. It highlights the effect of policy and governance changes; an overview of positive and neutral impacts; and a service impact overview. These outcomes are based upon spending decisions taken during the last two years and changes resulting from the 2016/17 budget.
- 1.2 It is important to note that the budget is a financial plan of the Council's current operational intent and, where known, the equality impact of change is disclosed. However there are a number of individual decisions that will arise over the period of the 2016/17 budget. These will be subject to specific equality impact assessments in line with the Council's equality impact assessment (EIA) guidance. Political decisions will only be taken once effective and meaningful engagement has taken place on a need by need basis. It cannot be assumed that decisions will be taken to implement all these changes.
- 1.3 In making this decision the Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under s149 of the Equalities Act 2010, i.e. have due regard to the need to: A. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act. B. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. C. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 1.4 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. In addition, marital status is a relevant protected characteristic for 1.3(A)
- 1.5 The PSED is a relevant factor in making this decision but does not impose a duty to achieve the outcomes in s149, is only one factor that needs to be considered, and may be balanced against other relevant factors.

Policy and Governance Changes

- 1.6 The proposed council tax increase may adversely impact some residents of Essex; however residents on the lowest incomes will remain eligible for support with their bills via their local council tax support schemes. The proposed increase is the first rise for five years; therefore residents have seen their council tax bill remain flat whilst average wages have increased over the same period. Of the 3.99% increase proposed, 2% will relate to a specific social care precept that will be ring-fenced for adult social care. This should positively impact on vulnerable adults within Essex by helping to protect and improve social care services.

1.7 The localisation of council tax benefit (introducing new payees to council tax as a result of national policy changes) was implemented in 2013/14 alongside a scheme for hardship and investment in collection initiatives including Citizens Advice support. As set out previously, the 12 billing authorities have sustained collection rates against this backdrop, ensuring no negative impact on other council tax payers. Given that success, the Council's budget proposes continuation of the investment into collection and hardship for 2016/17.

1.8 Essex County Council has joined forces with the borough, district and city councils and police and fire authorities to tackle council tax fraud across the county. The programme:

- ensures those entitled to discounts or exemptions on their council tax are receiving the right support
- has introduced extensive regular reviews to ensure the levels of benefits people receive are correct
- encourages people to notify councils if their circumstances change and the consequences of not doing so to enable councils to take swift and appropriate action against people fraudulently claiming council tax benefit.

The Council has anticipated specific increases in demand for services as a result of welfare changes but the full impact of these changes will become more apparent in the months beyond implementation. This is likely to predominantly impact on working age adults with disabilities and where families have someone with a disability.

1.9 Local authorities have recently taken over responsibility from NHS England for commissioning (i.e. planning and paying for) public health services for children aged 0-5. This includes health visiting and Family Nurse Partnership including targeted services for teenage mothers. Again, the Council will pay due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty ensuring that it considers the equality implications of the change. Based on the experience of the transfer of Public Health to local authorities we anticipate these changes to be positive.

1.10 During 2016/17 the Council will continue to support activity to combat financial exclusion and to promote financial literacy through its education services. Financial exclusion is caused in the main by inability of individuals to access mainstream financial products and services. This exclusion, historically has affected people on lower incomes who are also impacted by other forms of social exclusion.

1.11 The budget will be discharged during a period of intense pressure on the health and care system in Essex. Five Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) covering Mid and South Essex are part of the NHS Success

Regime, a new regime for those health and care economies facing particularly deep challenges.

Service Impacts Overview

Adult Social Care

- 1.12 Efficiency savings of **£45.2m** have been identified for the 2016/17 financial year. These savings include reductions in the Public Health grant following central government reductions and also to meet our statutory requirements under new legislation, in particular the Care Act. There is also a need to ensure that Council subsidies are reduced where people have the financial means to pay for services. Where this is evident, detailed equality impact assessments will take place, ensuring that we actively engage and consult with those service users and their carers that are likely to be affected by any proposed changes. This will help us understand any adverse equality impacts, and where possible identify mitigating factors.
- 1.13 The prime focus of the budget is to help older frail people to maintain or regain their independence and to enable them to live at home, rather than go into expensive residential care placements. This is particularly important in the context of demographic growth and reducing government funding.
- 1.14 There are an estimated 293,100 people across Essex aged over 65 and 22,245 social care users. There are estimated to be 41,900 adults with a moderate or serious physical disability living in Essex with personal care needs. Clearly, there are district variations of older people and those with disabilities across parts of our county.
- 1.15 The 2011 Census tells us that an estimated 146,211 adults in Essex provide informal care to relatives, friends or neighbours. This represents 10% of the population.
- 1.16 Of the savings for 2016/17, the majority of the areas of activity relate to:
 - a) Supporting frail elderly people (especially those over the age of 65) to live independently at home. Our objective is to reduce demand for social care by maximising the independence of Older People in the community and following admission to hospital. This will be achieved by investing more into reablement services and making reablement the default pathway before ongoing and longer term care is assessed for. It is expected that by 2020/21 as many as 13,000 cases annually would be suitable for reablement.
 - b) The Care Act places a new duty on the council to prevent or delay the onset of care needs where possible, to promote personal wellbeing, to make information, advice and guidance universally available, and introduces new legal rights for support for unpaid carers. This affects all ages but especially those aged over 65. A new Social Care Case

Management system will deliver a comprehensive system to manage social care case records through to buying care solutions. This will significantly improve and change how our teams manage their activities and offer further opportunities for people of all ages and their carers to access information about Adult Social Care services. It is generally accepted that younger people are often better internet-connected and have a better understanding of how to access information on the internet, while the proportion of older people who are 'connected' and making active use of the internet continues to grow. As such, we expect that a growing proportion of older people will want to start to access this system. Older people without their own internet access can access the new information web sites via existing IT functionality in community Libraries where available.

- c) The Council has recently decided to increase the cap for the maximum that service users can be charged for care packages, in order to reduce council subsidies for those people who can afford to pay for their own care. This is dependent on people having the financial means to pay for their care. This will potentially impact 3,500 service users. A detailed equality impact assessment which involved substantial engagement and consultation indicates that the proposals will have a disproportionately adverse impact on some people with a particular characteristic; especially those aged over 65 with higher incomes and/or higher assessed capital reserves receiving more costly care packages. The changes aim to make charges more equitable across service users: those who can afford to pay even small amounts towards their care are required to do so.
- d) We are committed to reviewing spend on Housing Related Support Services. There are significant re-procurement activities within the service which is expected to deliver savings in Young People services. In addition, providers of Older People services have been informed about agreed reductions for the services they provide. An EIA was completed for the Older People service review in August 2015.
- e) There is a planned programme of reviews centred on Adults with a Learning Disability. We currently spends considerably more than comparator authorities on adults with learning disabilities. The reviews will 'right size' care packages and lead to reviews with providers across schemes. An estimated 1,630 adults with disabilities may be affected by the proposals. Some people will experience a reduction in the amount of support they receive as they become more independent and support plans are brought in line with the new service offer. Some people will move from residential care to supported living. People with a disability that have no family contact or support may lose the use of advocacy and other non-discretionary services. It is possible that some people may have increased care charges. Again, specific equality impact assessments will be undertaken to analyse the results of our planned programmes.

- f) The Council is exploring the potential transfer of elements of the Adult Mental Health budget to the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in order to drive effective and efficient commissioning and improve outcomes for individuals. This would not include the budget for the Approved Mental Health Professionals as this is a statutory requirement. An estimated 740 adult service users with mental health conditions are known to ECC, and they should be largely unaffected by the integration initiative.
- g) As a result of the Strategic Review of Mental Health, which is being led by the CCG's, a new pan-Essex commissioning team may be created and in the future there may be one Mental Health Trust covering the whole of Essex. This could potentially result in some management and back office efficiencies.
- h) The Council is looking to create a framework contract for mental health residential placements including an analysis of hotel and care costs which needs to be undertaken to ensure best value. This aims to improve quality, align with the Mental Health accommodation pathway so that only people who really need residential care are placed there and via an approved list, and reduce the number of providers making placements more cost effective.
- i) An additional **£10.8m** savings to be achieved by Increasing Independence. This includes reviewing cases and packages of support and ensuring that people are accessing Continuing Health Care support.
- j) A Best Value Review of services to ensure they deliver best value for money and are targeted at those who most need them. This impacts on a wide variety of areas and would require consultation on affected service users. Main policy areas include dementia, domestic abuse, housing related support and support to the Voluntary and Community Sector, including citizen advice bureaus. Again, detailed equality impact assessments will be undertaken on those proposals we aim to take forward.

Children and Families

- 1.17 Efficiency savings of **£4.7m** have been identified for the 2016/17 financial year. These savings focus on ensuring the portfolio is as efficient as possible as well as generating new income and so are not expected to impact on service delivery. Furthermore, the budget ensures delivery of new legislation, in particular the Children and Families Act.
- 1.18 The foundation of the budget is the Looked After Children's Strategy. The priority of the strategy is to avoid the necessity of children having to come into care and look for safe and appropriate alternatives in the first instance. Delivering against the strategy has led to a reduction in the number of children in care in Essex, whilst nationally there is an upwards trend.

1.19 Of the savings for 2016/17, the majority of the areas of activity relate to:

- The continuation of the Essex Family Solutions Service, which is now fully operational. This service offers intensive work with families experiencing a range of complex issues and facing multiple disadvantages. These significant changes and improvements made to family lives have enabled a reduction on reliance of expensive reactive and specialist services.
- Productivity and efficiency savings will be achieved within the workforce whilst still ensuring caseloads do not increase and continued focus on supporting families through relationship based social work.
- A therapeutic fostering project is reducing placement costs overall by increasing the percentage of children cared for by locally based Essex County Council registered foster carers.
- Other areas of savings have been achieved through containing inflation and ensuring efficiencies on contracted spend. Mechanisms are in place to monitor contractual outcomes so that the expected quality of services to users should not be impacted by the savings.

1.20 In addition, domestic abuse is an important priority for the Council and its partners. A new county wide service for supporting high risk victims of abuse has been jointly commissioned with partners and been operating for a year now. Essex partners have been successful in securing external funding for 2016/17 to develop stronger co-operation with health partners which will facilitate earlier identification of families experiencing domestic abuse.

Communities and Healthy Living

1.21 The Council has to achieve savings to meet a **£3.7m** in-year grant reduction as a result of the national **£200m** reduction in Public Health Grants to local authorities in 2015/16. Various services are affected by this, including 5-19 child health services, breastfeeding services and smoking cessation services. A detailed EIA completed in August 2015 was published alongside this decision. There will be a 12 month break in service for breastfeeding services, with the specific impact that breastfeeding services currently in North East Essex and Basildon and Brentwood will not be in place for 2016/17. Breast feeding support for new parents in these areas will continue to be provided through core health visitor services, but without the additional specialist breast feeding service. New breastfeeding services will be in place from 2017/18.

1.22 A review and re-procurement of sexual health services aims to secure a local, joined up, accessible, acceptable service that addresses people's needs for a choice of community based contraceptive services (other than their GP) and screening for conditions. The aim is to improve accessibility to the whole population but this is likely to yield additional benefits to young

people who are at highest risk of both unplanned pregnancy and chlamydia infection. Targeted service user and potential service user consultation will be undertaken to ensure services take account of service user feedback. We have comparable rates of teenage pregnancy to statistical neighbours and a rate lower than the national average. Evidence shows that a wider choice of sexual health services reduces unplanned pregnancy.

Transport, Planning and Environment

1.23 Efficiency savings of **£4.4m** have been identified for the 2016/17 financial year. The largest efficiencies within the portfolio are predominantly associated with the areas outlined below:

- The redesigned Passenger Transport network has been developed so as to have a positive impact overall, however, individual changes to service may potentially have localised or very specific adverse impacts but the redesign work has been done to ensure that all residents who are currently able to access the bus network will continue to be able to do so however in some cases the means of this access will have been altered. An EIA was undertaken in November 2015.
- Delivery of an Integrated and Streamlined Place Operations service **£1.1m** - a project that seeks: more effectively deliver the council's commissioning outcomes; deliver priorities, such as planning, flood management and energy resilience; operate within a smaller financial envelope, which includes income generation; and provide services which deliver value for our residents and businesses.
- The review of car park charging tariffs at country parks and the introduction of new methods of collection have achieved increases in income. Investment in a new pay per play Sky Ropes attraction has been constructed at Great Notley Country Park along with a branded adventure play trail at Weald Country Park. Both of these invest to save projects are increasing footfall and the length of time visitors spend in the country parks thus impacting on the car parking income and secondary spend generated within the country parks. An EIA was undertaken in April 2014.

1.24 It is not anticipated that the efficiencies measures outlined above will have any adverse impact on the protected characteristics. However these proposals will have an impact on staff, in terms of re-training and staff redundancies. As the Council delivers each of the proposals, the equalities impact will be reassessed and if any potential adverse impact emerges, mitigating action be taken to ensure any negative impact is minimised

Deputy Leader, Economic Growth, Waste and Recycling

1.25 Efficiency savings of **£3.2m** have been identified for the 2016/17 financial year. In addition to these efficiencies the service has absorbed and continues to absorb significant pressures in relation to increase growth in

tonnages (primarily residual waste) which reflect current disposal levels (and the anticipated growth in the number of dwellings within Essex.

1.26 Of the efficiency savings for 2016/17, the major areas of activity relate to:

- The development and delivery of a waste prevention programme consisting of a public engagement and education programme to encourage the adoption of waste avoidance behaviours. The programme aims to deliver waste reduction across Essex with associated disposal cost savings of **£200,000**. No direct impact on the manner in which waste services are delivered is anticipated and therefore no equality impacts are expected.
- Utilising headroom capacity within the plant for commercial waste through partnering with the waste collection authorities and other bodies within the County, which will reduce operational running cost with no direct impact on public service delivery.
- Waste Contract Review and Asset Management project aims to maximise the efficiency of existing contract and waste handling infrastructure, ensuring waste for which the Authority is responsible for is transported and treated in the most efficient way. The programme of activity will focus on maximising the beneficial returns of existing contractual arrangements. The work is not expected to alter the way in which services are provided to the public.
- The Council provides 21 recycling centres for household waste across the county. This proposal seeks to assess the potential to remove latent capacity within the system and adjust operating practises, charging for the disposal of waste types that are not classified as household waste and are expensive to dispose of (e.g. DIY waste). The final shape of these proposals will be subject to consultation during which service users will have the opportunity to shape the changes proposed so as to minimise impact on service need as well as an equality impact assessment.
- There a range of other savings which will primarily be achieved through efficiencies in process and increased income generation through economic growth activities. It is not considered that these proposals will have a disproportionately adverse impact on persons who share any relevant protected characteristic.

Education and Lifelong Learning

1.27 Devolved Schools Grant (DSG) is a dedicated ring fenced grant that is set by the Government based on pupil numbers and an assessment of need based on a series of factors that help ensure that budget decisions are sufficient and suitable for the children in Essex schools.

- 1.28 Of the savings for 2016/17, the major areas of activity relate to the transformation of education services by identifying services that can be delivered at reduced cost to the council and designing new ways of working with schools.
- 1.29 Home to School Transport is expected to deliver **£1.2m** of savings through implementation of the Education Transport Policy changes. This is largely attributable to the full impact of the revised discretionary post 16 transport arrangements (for further education students) taking effect. A EIA was undertaken in 2013.

Infrastructure and Highways Delivery

- 1.30 Efficiency savings of **£5.1m** have been identified for the 2016/17 financial year. The efficiencies within the portfolio should be noted in the context of absorbed pressures in relation increased demand through demographics and economic growth.
- 1.31 The efficiencies are categorised into the 3 main areas outlined below, which will result in a generally maintained service provision and cost reduction.
- Partnership and Contract efficiencies/negotiations within the Ringway Jacobs partnership (highways maintenance), and the benefits will primarily be achieved through seeking continuous improvements, different methodologies to deliver services more efficiently, and economies in scale. However, it is anticipated that an element of saving will result in reduced service outputs. The effect will be an overall reduction of gully cleanses and defects fixed on the highway network. This will negatively impact service users generally, with more defects outstanding on the highway network
 - Combined approach to work with other partners including Police and the Parking Partnerships. Financial benefits will primarily be achieved through one-off opportunities and different methodologies to assigned funding for Road Safety services. Also, financial benefits will be realised by reducing subsidies and increasing income opportunities within Parking Partnerships.
 - Increased income for Street-works, Bus Lane Enforcement and Records Management. Failure to enforce could lead to safety and congestion issues. Increased enforcement activity will result initially in higher penalties issued to non-compliant users of the Essex Highway Network. It should be noted that performance and behaviour will improve over time and there should be a significant reduction in penalties issued, reducing the saving achievable. It is anticipated that Records Management income will decrease over time.
 - It is not considered that these proposals above will have an adverse impact on persons who share any relevant protected characteristic

Corporate Services

- 1.32 The successful roll-out of new technology enabling mobile and flexible working has given staff the tools to improve their work/life balance and also through Access to Work, provide better solutions for staff with disabilities to support working at the Council. IT also enables front line staff to work more effectively with our most vulnerable residents. IS and Property related projects for 2016/17 will continue this journey.
- 1.33 The In Person Programme supports Face to Face Services in establishing 74 vibrant hubs in our communities that include our library and registration services with other partners, creating places where people can learn, read, share, be inspired and take an active role in community life, as well as accessing the services that they need. In partnership with District and Borough Councils we have also developed a Community Wedding Service that ensures that people can get married locally at a reasonable cost. The EIAs accompanying the service changes introduced found those changes to be of low impact across all equality groups.
- 1.34 The Digital Channels transformation programme has made it easier and more convenient for service users to access council services. Additional customer channels have been introduced creating consumer choice whilst simplifying customer journeys. The opportunity to transact online 24/7 at a time that suits customers is now available. Aspects of the Essex County Council website have been redesigned making information easier to find and instant online translation functionality makes information accessible to all.