

Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment (Organisation Plan and Budget)

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 2018/19 budget.
- 1.2 It is important to note that the budget is the financial expression of the Organisation Plan and our 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 2018/19 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.
- 1.3 In making this decision the Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under s149 of the Equality 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.
- 1.6 Part of the equalities governance at the Council is to ensure that equality impact assessments are undertaken when considering new and/or revised policies to inform and underpin good decision making processes. This also helps us pay due regard to our equality obligations.
- 1.7 The Equality Act also says that public bodies must pay 'due regard' to equality. This means that the Council must:
 - move or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
 - take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

- 1.8 An initial equality analysis of the planned activity and budget proposals incorporated in the 2018/19 Organisation Plan identifies that around 40% of the proposals have the propensity to have a greater impact on some parts of our Essex Communities than others.
- 1.9 At this stage, it is not possible to fully measure this impact of the proposals on those people who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, or how the geographic spread of budget proposals will be felt across rural and urban areas of Essex. However, initial analysis shows that the budget proposals are likely to have a greater impact on services used by older and disabled people and those used by children and young people than for other groups of people with protected characteristics.
- 1.10 As the budget proposals are developed, individual Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken. This will include an assessment of who is likely to be impacted by the changes, whether they are considered to have 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010 and if they are, what mitigation activity is proposed to ensure that they will not be disproportionately affected.

Policy and Governance Changes

- 1.11 The proposed social care precept 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 (operated and maintained by the city, district and borough councils). The increase proposed relates 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.
- 1.12 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 2018/19.
- 1.13 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.

- 1.14 The Council has anticipated specific increases in demand for services as a result of national 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. At this point it is unclear whether the impact is likely to be positive, negative or neutral.
- 1.15 The budget will be discharged against a background of continuing intense pressure across the health and care system in Essex.

Portfolio Impacts Overview

Cross cutting

- 1.16 We are undertaking an organisation redesign to reflect the challenges that the County Council faces; this will affect the majority of employees (excluding teaching staff). The redesign is underway and we are in the implementation phase.
- 1.17 Support services redesign is under way with plans to significantly reduce the cost of these services. This is affecting all employees within these areas and may impact how services are delivered to internal customers. It is not expected to impact on the level of service provided to residents.

Children and Families

- 1.18 The priority is to help children and young people get the best start in life and help protect them from significant harm, when things go wrong. We do this by delivering a range of early help, family support, and social work interventions, together with our partner agencies, to children and their families. We have a specific responsibility to ensure that children in our care and care leavers receive high quality support from us, as corporate parents. We aim to be at the cutting edge of best practice and innovation, both in early help and social work. We will always learn from feedback from the children and families we work with, as well as professional developments in the social care and social work fields.
- 1.19 Set out below are the major objectives for 2018/19, affecting:
- the way we commission services for children in care;
 - organisational improvements to improve delivery;
 - the remodelling of services for disabled children; and
 - the income we receive from being leaders within social work practice.
- 1.20 There will be **£1.6m** of budget proposals realised from our Placement Strategy through from our continued work, placing children in care in the most appropriate setting for them, for example, in fostering households, rather than in residential care. We will be considering options over the coming months for investment in Childrens and Families infrastructure, to accomplish this. This will be achieved against the national and local upward trend of children in care, and demographic growth, locally in 2017/18.

- 1.21 Linked with the strategic aim, *Transform the Council to achieve more with less*, we will look towards digital investment options with a view to implementation in 2019/20. These options will improve efficiency and streamline the frontline service resulting in **£912,000** being delivered in 2018/19 through managing the workforce more efficiently.
- 1.22 Hargrave House closed in December 2017, which should deliver a full year saving of **£1.1m**. An equality impact assessment has been undertaken.
- 1.23 There are budget proposals of **£400,000** which will be realised in respect of engagement with providers to commission outcomes for the provision of respite for Children with Disabilities, where we will be seeking innovative community based solutions. It is anticipated that the impact on children with disabilities will be positive in that a wider range of innovative engagement options, including those afforded through social media and digital technology, will be commissioned. In particular, as future engagement contracts will be outcome based, future providers will have greater freedoms to explore more inclusive means of engaging with some of the most vulnerable young people in our communities
- 1.24 A further **£50,000** of additional income is anticipated from the provision of professional consultancy services to other Local Authorities. Services are being provided to share learning and improve practice. This aims to improve outcomes for children and young people outside of Essex, while building resilience within management capability, within Essex.

Culture, Communities and Customer

- 1.25 The Community Hubs Programme supports Face to Face Services in establishing 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. Part of the Programme's work in 2017/18 was to consult and review the mobile library service. Service changes following the review will potentially affect women, younger, older and disabled people. However a separate equality impact assessment will be completed to understand the implications and measures required to mitigate any impact.
- 1.26 The staffing budgets in this portfolio are likely to be affected by the Support Services redesign (see paragraph 1.17).

Economic Growth, Skills, Infrastructure and the Digital Economy

- 1.27 The portfolio has identified budget proposals of **£163,000** for 2018/19, which will be delivered through a reduction in Transportation Studies. It is not considered that this proposal will have a disproportionate impact on persons who share any relevant protected characteristic.

Education

- 1.28 The Education Services Grant ceased in 2017/18. Budget proposals of **£2.6m** are expected to be delivered in 2018/19 to reflect the reduction in income.
- 1.29 The **£430,000** savings identified for the Missing Education and Child Employment Service are on track to be delivered.
- 1.30 Service priorities delivered through EES have been reviewed, which has resulted in a reduction of funding in 2018/19. In addition School Improvement has developed a trading model with schools.

Environment and Waste

- 1.31 The portfolio has identified budget proposals of **£1.6m** for the next 3 years. In addition to these efficiencies the Waste Management service has absorbed, and continues to absorb, significant pressures in relation to waste growth as a result of population growth and changes in resident behaviour.
- 1.32 The major areas of activity underway or proposed, to deliver current and future proposals relate to:
- a. Reviewing the waste infrastructure we operate, and our approach to treating the organic waste collected in Essex, to identify more cost effective and efficient ways of delivering these activities. This is expected to deliver in the region of **£1m** by 2020/21;
 - b. The development and delivery of a waste prevention and minimisation programme, consisting of public engagement and education to encourage the adoption of waste avoidance behaviours and the delivery of services to make it easier for us all to avoid generating waste. The programme aims to deliver waste reduction across Essex with associated benefits of at least **£20,000**;
 - c. Ensuring we have the correct mechanisms in place to recover all costs relating to the disposal of commercially generated waste streams. This is expected to deliver benefits of **£120,000** in 2018/19.
- 1.33 Early indications suggest that there is not expected to be any impacts to protected groups at this stage but an equality impact assessment will be completed as part of the governance and decision making for each individual project.
- 1.34 Working closely with Essex Waste Collection Authorities, there are a number of projects in early stages of development which aim to reduce the treatment and disposal costs of waste; realising savings and efficiencies in the region of **£280,000** in 2019/20. As these changes are progressed, individual equality impact assessments will be undertaken.

Health and Adult Social Care

- 1.35 The priority is to make the best and most sustainable use of all available resources to ensure people, their families and carers have access to the

information and tools to enable them to live healthily and independently for as long as possible and to exercise choice and control over their lives, while ensuring safety, dignity and quality of life for those in need of long term care.

- 1.36 This is largely a reactive support service, but this model is not sustainable and must change as demand – which continues to rise because of demography, ill-health and expectations - exceeds available resource. Through effective practice, we want to see a transformational shift from a focus on long-term care and support to early intervention and enabling people to live independently as long as possible. This approach will enable us to improve outcomes for people in a financially sustainable way and within the financial constraints within which the Council operates.
- 1.37 There are budget proposals of **£30m** planned for 2018/19. There is also a need to ensure that Council subsidies are reduced where people have the financial means to pay for services.
- 1.38 Detailed equality impact assessments will take place where required, 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 equality impacts, including the impacts on protected characteristics, and where possible identify mitigating factors.
- 1.39 We currently support about 17,000 adults with social care needs at any one time. About 10,800 of these are older people, nearly 3,500 people with learning disabilities, 2,250 people with physical or sensory impairments, and over 550 people with mental health needs. We assess and review around 5,000 carers a year. Clearly, there are district variations of older people and those with disabilities across parts of our county. 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.
- 1.40 We will deliver an overarching change programme aligned to the Organisation Strategy. Continued rising demand and falling budgets means that services cannot guarantee their long term sustainability without adopting new approaches. These new approaches will ensure delivery of the 2018/19 budget proposals through the following initiatives:
 - a. It is widely recognised that digital technology can transform the way in which people manage their own health and well-being, engage with services and improve the way in which organisations deliver services, work together and co-ordinate care to optimise benefits to the citizen. We have an ambition to be a digital leader, and recognise that transformation of the way in which we deliver Adult Social Care is key to this success. This programme will save around **£2m** in 2018/19 and would be achieved from productivity grouped investment (Digital Adult Social Care team; Workforce Productivity; and Mosaic Changes) and deliverables are:
 - It will improve how social workers carry out domiciliary assessments. They will be able to do assessments remotely

- Review into how domiciliary assessments are carried out to ensure done correctly and more productively
 - This will all translate into ensuring right sizing of domiciliary packages – it will prevent service users being put on unnecessarily expensive packages;
- b. The Adult Social Care Sustainability programme establishes a more consistent and efficient approach to the delivery of operational reviews for adults by applying best value principles. The programme of activities is designed to deliver savings and efficiencies of over **£10m** and will :
- enable us to meet need in as sustainable a way as possible;
 - ensure that the capability and capacity required to sustainably deliver the right outcomes for older people and adults with disabilities is developed and embedded within the service, supported by a legally compliant policy and strong commercial arrangements that are adopted and consistently utilised by all operational teams;
 - work with Health colleagues to ensure that those individuals who are eligible for continuing health care get the support they need;
 - build on the Good Lives conversations and the Increasing Independence ‘enablement and progression’ approaches, ensuring we continue to work with individuals and support them to have greater independence and control over their lives.
- c. We will continue to deliver our Independent Living Older People programme which is designed to provide housing for people over the age of 55 whose current home no longer meets their needs, and alleviate budget pressure on the service. The programme will be delivered via two routes; capital investment from the Council and use of our own land. Our investment will enable revenue savings and facilitate the delivery of 1,800 units over a 5 year period to 2020. In 2018/19, construction work will commence on three schemes which will see the delivery of more than 250 units to meet identified local demands.
- d. We will implement a Market Interventions project to focus on developing, shaping and trialling innovative pathways or technology with Social Care Providers. The aim of the project is to make the procurement of services more efficient and realise savings and efficiencies of around **£1.4m**. The project will work collaboratively with our providers and explore and develop different approaches to increase supply through our existing framework contracts, thus reducing reliance on expensive Spot placements.
- e. We will review our Transport policies to enable us to achieve best value and sustainability in the medium term. This will include reviewing practice to ensure that social workers take a more consistent approach within the law and national and local policy, whilst seeking to provide assurance that expenditure is as low as possible and is consistent with our statutory responsibilities. Any changes are likely to apply to all Adult Social care client groups that use Transport. In addition, we will review our discretionary grant spend to ensure we are getting best value and meeting

need in the most appropriate way possible from the investment we are making.

- f. We will continue to review and implement changes to some policies relating to charging for Adult Social Care services in order to ensure that those people who have the financial means to pay for services do so. These changes will affect approximately 4,700 Service Users receiving care in their own homes (non-residential), across the County. This work is expected to generate additional income of **£0.2m** in 2018/19, but further savings in later years.
- g. We will work with our wholly owned traded company 'ECL' to transform a number of services they deliver on our behalf. Some of this work will be complementary to and build on other initiatives elsewhere in the Council. We anticipate savings of **£0.5m** in undertaking this work.

1.41 In our mental health services we are taking three approaches to enable us to achieve these savings and efficiencies within the framework of our vision.

These are:

- a) Earlier intervention, through development of the new Care and Assessment Team to pick up demand before a need for Secondary Care support develops.
- b) Building greater independence and resilience through redesign of the mental health accommodation pathway, including varied support options for stepping down from residential care.
- c) Back-office efficiencies through our annual negotiation with the Secondary Mental Health trusts.

Highways

1.42 Budget proposals of **£3.7m** have been identified for the 2018/19 financial year. These should be noted in the context of also absorbing pressures in relation to increased demand through demographics and economic growth.

1.43 Further budget proposals are categorised into the 3 main areas outlined below, which will result in a generally maintained service provision and cost reduction:

- a) Partnership and Contract efficiencies within the Ringway Jacobs partnership (highways maintenance); whilst benefits are being achieved through seeking continuous improvements, different ways to deliver services more efficiently, and economies in scale, which may result in the level of service output. This may also change the level of reactive maintenance on the highway network. However the detail of this is yet to be worked up.
- b) Combined approach to work with other partners including Police and the Parking Partnerships. Financial benefits will be achieved through one-off opportunities, different methodologies, reducing subsidies and increasing income opportunities.

c) Increased income for fees and charges, including in the main Bus Lane Enforcement, Records Management and Green Claims. 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. It is anticipated that Bus Lane enforcement and Records Management income will decrease over time.

1.44 However despite these opportunities and partial mitigations we will see a growing impact on the network and users linked to planned reductions in capital funding levels.

1.45 It is not considered that these proposals above will have a disproportionate impact on persons who share any relevant protected characteristic.

1.46 In the drive to reduce the Council's subsidy across the Essex Park and Ride service, we have identified adverse impacts on certain protected groups. In particular on users of the older person's bus pass after 9am, with whom the service has proven popular (60% of patronage in Colchester). The introduction of the cross-city route in Chelmsford in 2016 elicited concerns from older people and physically disabled people. This was due to changes to stops along the route. We will continue to monitor impacts of changes to the service on protected groups and where necessary we will implement mitigating actions accordingly.

Housing, Property and Planning

1.47 Budget proposals within this portfolio relate to the scalability of Essex Housing and it is not considered that they will have an adverse impact on persons who share any relevant protected characteristic. An equality impact assessment will be completed as part of the governance and decision making for each individual project.

Leader

1.48 The staffing budgets in this portfolio are likely to be affected by the Support Services redesign (see paragraph 1.17).

Resources

1.49 The Digital Foundations Programme is a series of projects to improve our technology infrastructure. It includes workstreams to migrate our servers to the cloud, upgrade the desktop experience and install a new cloud-based Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform. It aims to increase productivity by allowing more flexible and mobile working and to ensure value for money service provision.

1.50 The staffing budgets in this portfolio are likely to be affected by the Support Services redesign (see paragraph 1.17).

