

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

1. Overview

- 1.1 This appendix describes the most significant potential equality impacts confronting each main service area, informed by an equality analysis. It highlights the effect of policy and governance changes; an overview of potential 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 2020/21 budget. The analysis also highlights several cumulative impacts that may arise resulting from the 2020/21 budget, and the positive equality impacts based on the activities the Council plans to complete in 2020/21.
- 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 2020/21 budget. These will be subject to specific and more detailed 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 where needed.
- 1.3 In making this decision the Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 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. It is only one factor that needs to be considered and may be balanced against other relevant factors.
- 1.6 Part of the equalities governance 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 regard to the need to:
 - 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.

2. Identified high-level cumulative equality impact

- 2.1 An initial equality analysis of the planned activity and budget proposals incorporated in the 2020/21 Organisation Plan identifies that around 30% of the proposals may have a greater impact on some parts of Essex communities than others.
- 2.2 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 cumulative analysis shows impacts across several budget proposals for the following:
- children, young people and families
 - older people
 - disabled people
- 2.3 Key impacts from this initial analysis across the portfolios are outlined from section 5 below.

3. Mitigating actions which will be considered

- 3.1 **Monitoring of impact:** Services must ensure ongoing equalities monitoring of the impact of service changes, to identify trends in disproportionate or unanticipated impact at an early stage to address them. This reporting should be monitored Council-wide at senior levels within the Council in order to identify cumulative impacts and mitigating actions. Consideration should be given to working with other partners in this monitoring and evaluation where appropriate.
- 3.2 **Informing decision-making:** The findings of this monitoring should be used to inform the budget setting process year on year. During 2020/21 the Council will also be developing district equality profiles for elected members, partners and community groups to inform good decision making.
- 3.3 **Equality Impact Assessments (EIA):** 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. These will all be reviewed to provide an assessment of the cumulative impact of the budget decisions.
- 3.4 **Targeting based on need:** Resources and services should clearly identify specific needs of different groups at an early stage in order to be most effective and meet needs at first contact wherever possible e.g. through consultation.

- 3.5 **Gaps in monitoring:** Where gaps in monitoring have been identified during the equality impact assessment process, steps should be taken to fill these in the forthcoming year. This will enable better modelling of potential impacts and assessments in future.

4. Identified Positive Impacts

- 4.1 The Council is fully committed to addressing the challenges facing communities and supporting residents to live better lives. The Organisation Strategy 2017/20 sets out how services are responding to and are planning for these challenges with a key focus on tackling inequalities across the County. This commitment to equality and inclusion is shared by partners and is firmly rooted in the long-term Vision for Essex: The Future of Essex. This outlines commitments to improve the life chances and experiences for all Essex residents. A key ambition within the Vision for Essex is to share prosperity with everyone, an ambition that is vitally important to the Council.
- 4.2 The Organisation Plan and Budget for 2020/21 gives effect to this in the following ways:
- By ensuring that the savings are balanced across service areas and are not targeted at the most vulnerable
 - By driving savings through the delivery of efficiencies and through the reform of services to improve outcomes and make them more cost effective
 - By continuing to invest in services and activities that will reduce inequalities and support better lives for all residents
- 4.3 Examples of areas where the Council will be taking forward action to achieve this include:
- **Mental Health** - developing new approaches to address the wider drivers of poor mental health, then begin a 'test and learn' phase of potential solutions.
 - **Early Years** - developing a new Early Years Strategy to ensure that all children are given the best foundations to start school and have the optimal opportunities to achieve what they want in life.
 - **Housing** - working to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the county through better practices agreed with housing authorities, and criminal justice and health partners
 - **Social Mobility** - focusing on improving social mobility, increasing levels of aspiration and providing conditions for individuals to fulfil their potential and benefit from the growing economy and opportunities in our county. To achieve this, the Council understands that hard working people who are just about managing should see the rewards of that hard work and therefore will continue to adopt a targeted approach.
 - **Deprivation** - Testing new approaches to targeting early intervention and prevention in areas of deprivation, helping to better understand the impact of the wider social determinants of health and how to address them.
 - **Physical Activity** - delivering the first phase of the Local Delivery Pilot, a £10m programme in partnership with Sport England to boost the take up

of physical activity in the most inactive groups (families with children, older people and people with poor mental health).

5. Policy and Governance Context

- 5.1 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). This should positively impact on vulnerable adults within Essex by helping to protect and improve social care services.
- 5.2 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, our budget proposes continuation of the investment into collection and hardship for 2020/21.
- 5.3 We have 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.
- 5.4 The Council has anticipated specific increases in demand for services as a result of ongoing national welfare changes. This is likely to predominantly impact on working age adults with disabilities and where families have someone with a disability. It is also expected to increase the levels of children in care.
- 5.5 The budget will be discharged against a background of continuing demand pressure across the health and care system in Essex.

6. Portfolio Impacts Overview

Children and Families

- 6.1 The Children and Families Service's purpose is to protect children and young people from neglect and abuse, and to promote their development and wellbeing. The Council will continue to work with partners to provide a wide range of early help, family support and social work interventions, to help

families improve their lives and support children to overcome early childhood trauma, look forward to a brighter future and achieve their aspirations. As Corporate Parents, the Council will do its best to see that this happens for children in care and care leavers.

- 6.2 To do this well and get best value for money, the Council aims to be at the forefront of best practice. It will always learn from the most forward-thinking innovations and positive developments in the social work profession, as well as from the children, young people and families the Council works with.
- 6.3 The portfolio has identified budget savings proposals of **£3.6m** for 2020/21. These can be grouped into three main areas; Placement Strategy, Workforce, Reinventing the Children with Disabilities (CwD) offer.
- 6.4 Under the Placement Strategy the Council is seeking to place children in care within a family setting where possible realising **£2.2m**, as evidenced through the Council's fostering programme. To support this, the Council is investing **£2.8m** of one-off funding over three years (2018/19 – 2020/21) into the Internal Fostering Service. It is also working in partnership with the Department for Education (DfE) in respect of the Inside Out project, which is a **£3m** three-year innovation programme to work with children who have had multiple, unsuccessful placements. Additionally, the Council will deliver a further **£569,000** saving through our Divisional Based Intervention Teams (DBIT) re-unification programme for under-10's which aims to help re-integrate children in care back into a family members care. Both of these initiatives are expected to have a positive impact on the children and their families.
- 6.5 There are also **£613,000** of budget savings proposals related to workforce including organisational redesign and managing the vacancy factor by delaying recruitment to vacant posts where there would be no impact on service users by doing so, closing vacant posts where applicable.
- 6.6 Finally, **£210,000** is to be realised through reinventing the Children with Disabilities offer. Engagement will be undertaken with providers to commission outcomes for the provision of short breaks for children with disabilities. Although the total available to providers has been reduced, 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.
- 6.7 In order to ensure that the Council pays due regard to the PSED, individual equality impact assessments will be undertaken in order to ensure there are mitigating actions, where possible, to minimise any adverse impact on children, young people and their families.

Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate

- 6.8 The portfolio has identified budget savings proposals of **£5m** in 2020/21, the majority of which relate to efficiencies following lean reviews and support service redesign. These changes are not expected to impact on the level of

service provided to residents. Individual equality impact assessments will be undertaken where necessary.

- 6.9 As part of the Council's commitment to equalities it will be making better use of workforce analytics to understand current protected characteristic workforce profiles, highlighting any areas for improvement. We will also be embarking on developing and launching a positive action campaign aimed at improving our representation of women and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people at senior levels within the organisation. Finally, it will also be pioneering new approaches to securing professional talent across our services with a focus on apprenticeships and providing opportunities for those with disabilities and care leavers, ensuring the Council better represents the communities we serve.

Deputy Leader and Infrastructure

- 6.10 Budget savings proposals of **£3.3m** have been identified for the 2020/21 financial year. These are categorised into the 3 main areas outlined below:
- (a) Partnership improvements and efficiencies within the Essex Highways partnership (highways maintenance) has proposals totalling **£2.1m**; Benefits are being achieved through seeking continuous improvements, economies of scale and different ways of delivering services more efficiently. This may have an impact on the level of reactive maintenance on the highway network.
 - (b) Increased income of **£1m** relating to fees and charges, arising from increased enforcement activity to improve safety and reduce congestion. This will result initially in a higher number of penalties issued to non-compliant users of the highway network. It is anticipated that performance and driver behaviour will improve over time which will mean there will be a significant reduction in penalties issued after an initial increase, and therefore income will decrease over time. Failure to enforce could lead to safety and congestion issues.
 - (c) Combined approach to working with other partners will achieve financial benefits of **£150,000** through one-off opportunities, different methodologies, reducing subsidies and increasing income opportunities.
- 6.11 The Council will continue to look at ways of streamlining the Park and Ride service in order to reflect demand more closely. An indicative saving of **£50,000** may have some impacts on service frequency and availability whilst continuing to ensure it can meet demand. Any significant changes will only take place after consultation and equality impact assessment.
- 6.12 For the majority of these proposals above it is not considered that they will have a disproportionate impact on people who share any relevant protected characteristic, there are some cost reductions that could potentially impact people with protected characteristics as detailed implementation plans are worked up.

- 6.13 In order to ensure that the Council pays due regard to the PSED, individual equality impact assessments will be undertaken in order to ensure there are mitigating actions, where possible, to minimise any adverse impact on groups with protected characteristics.

Economic Development

- 6.14 There are budget savings proposals of **£310,000** relating to a reduction of the Skills Service operational budget to focus on supporting activity that meets our statutory responsibilities. This may impact on service users through reductions in the schools based vocational skills programmes. The statutory tracking and targeted not in education, employment or training (NEET) provision will be protected to ensure that the most vulnerable provision for young people remains in place. Going forward, programme and staffing budgets in this Skills area will be better targeted, both in terms of addressing economic growth and inclusion outcomes as well as geographic targeting in localities.

Education and Skills

- 6.15 The portfolio has identified budget savings proposals of **£4.4m** for 2020/21, of which the most significant are set out below.
- 6.16 **£1.5m** one-off contribution from education grants. No impact on service users is anticipated.
- 6.17 Staffing savings of **£386,000** through Organisational Design and holding vacancies where appropriate.
- 6.18 Passenger Transport have budget proposals of **£1.8m**, which includes **£1.1m** on Concessionary Fares where the Council will undertake negotiation with operators to deliver a statutory scheme and subsequently reflect any changes against budget. This will have no impact on concessionary users. The Council is consulting on other potential changes to how the passenger transport services are delivered in order to achieve **£700,000** of the savings assumed against the 2020/21 budget but it is not anticipated that there will be any adverse impact to service users.
- 6.19 Increased income of **£407,000** through advertising and the recovery of fees and charges; through advertising within Passenger Transport and fees and charges which mainly relate to income from penalty notice charges to parents who take their children out of school without permission.
- 6.20 Savings of **£250,000** through the reduction in expenditure of costs in securing vacant school properties following the disposal of surplus sites.
- 6.21 Where not specifically mentioned, proposals are not considered to have a disproportionate impact on persons who share any relevant protected characteristics, however an equality impact assessment will be completed as part of the governance and decision making for each of the above individual projects.

- 6.22 The Council will be reviewing our Support and Early Intervention approach by developing a new Early Years Strategy to ensure that all children are given the best foundations to start school and have the optimal opportunities to achieve what they want in life. It will improve the identification of, and response across the whole system to, children who at the age of two are demonstrating signs that they may not be ready to start school or who may require additional support to make a successful start to school.

Environment and Climate Change Action

- 6.23 The portfolio has identified budget savings proposals of **£7.9m** for 2020/21. This will be delivered by efficiencies through undertaking a forensic review of budgets and analysing current and historic trends to accurately forecast waste tonnage volumes, contractual and non-contractual spend and optimising our waste infrastructure for maximum utilisation.
- 6.24 It is not considered that savings proposals will have an adverse impact on persons who share any relevant protected characteristic. However, an equality impact assessment will be completed as part of the governance and decision making for each individual project.

Finance, Property and Housing

- 6.25 The portfolio has identified budget savings proposals of **£5.9m** in 2020/21, these relate to additional commercial activity across the authority along with a number of efficiency savings. These changes are not expected to impact on the level of service provided to residents. With regards to Housing the Council will be taking action with partners to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the county through better practices agreed with housing authorities, criminal justice and health partners as well as better use of data tools to identify need earlier thus helping to reduce the number and level of vulnerability of homeless people placed into Essex.

Health and Adult Social Care

- 6.26 The priority is to operate sustainably while fully meeting our legal obligations and in so doing ensure adults, carers and families have access to the information, advice and tools they need to enable them to live ordinary lives, safely and independently, for as long as possible. The Council currently supports around 16,000 adults, of which about 10,000 are older people, over 4,000 are people with learning disabilities, 2,050 are people with physical or sensory impairments and 750 are people with mental health needs.
- 6.27 Included within the total net budget of **£423m** (total gross budget is **£683.9m**) are budget savings proposals of **£24.5m** (5.8% of the total or 3.6% of the gross budget) that need to be made in order to achieve financial sustainability and to accommodate demographic and inflationary pressures in 2020/21.

6.28 The main areas that will see changes as a result of our budget proposals are set out in the following paragraphs.

(a) Learning Disability – over the next 3 years the Council aims to improve outcomes for adults with a Learning Disability and Autism (LD/A) reviewing operational practice, shaping the market, improving health outcomes and increasing support for young people as they prepare for adulthood and to improve value for money for the Council.

The programme will:

- i) ensure that individuals are well supported across their whole life and improve health outcomes by reducing health inequalities
- ii) ensure that the Council has a skilled front-line social care workforce that enables people with LD/A to live meaningful lives through excellent practice
- iii) shape a stable and sustainable market that helps to deliver the employment, housing, health and progressive social care outcomes to meet the ambitions and expectations of service users and their families.

Meaningful Lives Matter will define a commissioning approach that enables people to be listened to and valued, have lifestyle opportunities, make their own choices and be integrated within and be contributors to their community.

In addition, the Council is seeking to strengthen adults' local support networks by reviewing the out of county placements and bringing adults back to Essex where this is the appropriate thing to do. It is also supporting adults to access support from other sources, such as Continuing Health Care or Funded Nursing Care at home where this is appropriate, on the basis that this will better meet their needs and ensures appropriate use of public money.

The Council is committed to ensuring that it maximises the use of the in-house provision, to ensure it can offer flexibility in planned respite care and meet the needs of those requiring urgent support to prevent social care placements or hospital admissions. It will also fully exploit the opportunities offered by assistive technology to meet needs and reduce funded care where this is appropriate.

It is anticipated that the initiatives outlined above will generate efficiencies of **£17.7m**.

(b) Mental Health – Wherever possible the Council will ensure that adults whose mental health needs can best be met through the provision of accommodation are offered an accommodation option that meets their needs and promotes their recovery. The offer is designed to be flexible and the duration of our support will be based on the support requirements of the adult. Implementing this approach will obtain better longer-term outcomes for the adult and generate efficiencies of **£1m**. The Council currently places

high numbers of people with a mental health and accommodation need into residential settings, which does not always result in good outcomes for the individuals. The Council believes this will have a positive impact on this group. It will be developing new approaches to address the wider drivers of poor mental health, then begin a 'test and learn' phase of potential solutions. This will help ensure that people are able to build their mental health and resilience and are able to access early support before their needs escalate. It will also be delivering improved social value outcomes through how we buy in the market. The Council are going to work with suppliers to ensure it has better, and more, employment opportunities for those with learning disabilities or mental health issues.

(c) Technology, and Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) -

The Council will ensure it fully exploits the opportunities offered by technology and where appropriate will use it to replace interventions currently carried out by paid carers.

Care technology can play a key role in supporting vulnerable adults (for example, working age adults with learning disabilities, adults with physical and sensory impairments, and older frail adults) to live as independently as possible, to connect them to their families and friends, and to help prevent episodes of crisis. The programme will drive efficiency savings in 2020/21 of **£2.1m**. This programme does not distinguish between client groups so has the potential for a positive impact for all through an enhanced experience.

(d) Older people – The Council will be reviewing the support it is currently offering to ensure that it is both appropriate and sustainable. It will do this through undertaking robust person-centred reviews using the strengths and assets model and exploiting the potential of technology where appropriate. It is possible that for some people the review may result in a change in the way the Council offers support. In all cases this will be based on the assessment of need and professional judgement on how those needs can most appropriately and sustainably be met. It anticipates that this approach will generate efficiencies of **£1.2m**.

For some older people, it is anticipated there will be a positive impact as the Council meets their needs through alternative and improved methods of support.

(e) Public Health – savings of **£1.7m** will be achieved through efficiencies and it is not expected that there will be any adverse impact on the delivery of services although this will be carefully monitored in the case of the Housing Related Support contract re-provision. The Council will be developing a strategic approach to prevention: promoting healthy lifestyles, reducing health inequalities and reducing/delaying the impact of changing needs. It will also be testing new approaches to targeting early intervention and prevention in areas of deprivation, helping to better understand the impact of the wider social determinants of health and how to address them. Finally, the Council will be delivering the first phase of the Local Delivery Pilot, a

£10m programme in partnership with Sport England to boost the take up of physical activity in the most inactive groups (families with children, older people and people with poor mental health). Alongside this, it will develop community opportunities around physical activity and obesity and increase the number of residents supported to lose weight to 15,000.

- 6.29 In order to ensure that the Council pays due regard to the PSED, individual equality impact assessments will be undertaken in order to ensure there are mitigating actions, where possible, to minimise any adverse impact on citizens accessing Adult Services.

Leader

- 6.30 The portfolio has identified budget savings proposals of **£300,000** in 2020/21, the majority of which relate to efficiencies through support services. These changes are not expected to impact on the level of service provided to residents. Individual equality impact assessments will be undertaken where necessary.

Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships

- 6.31 The portfolio has identified budget savings proposals of **£1.5m** in 2020/21, the majority of which relate to efficiencies through support services. These changes are not expected to impact on the level of service provided to residents. Individual equality impact assessments will be undertaken where necessary. In 2020/21 the Council will also be improving the way in which its equality objectives are aligned to the corporate performance framework.