

**DRAFT Cumulative Impact of the Indicative Budget Savings 2017/18 – 2021/22**

**(i)The Context:**

The Public Sector Equality Duty ( section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010; advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; and foster good relations between people from different groups.

BCC is facing complex budget challenges for the next 5 years and we are required to reduce our spending by £101m. This will result in significant changes to the way we deliver our services, and the levels of staffing in the organisation. As part of the decision making process, the Public Sector Equality Duty Decision requires council staff and elected members to consider what the impact will be on people with protected characteristics, either in the wider city or in our own organisation, and make their recommendations in this context. We need to understand who will be affected, how they will be affected and how to minimise unintended negative consequences by planning in mitigations from the start.

The recommendations regarding the budget proposals are made by Cabinet and then taken to Full Council, where the budget is set. During the development of budget proposals, officers and Cabinet members have been mindful of the impacts any changes could have on key communities and on the city as a whole, and have been working up individual Equality Impact Assessments over time. Many of these were published with the Consultation on early proposals in October 2016. New proposals have been brought forward in January 2017 and for some of these, officers are still working on full EQIAs to reflect potential impact, but already have Relevance Checks in place.

It is important to recognise that Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) are dynamic and our expectation is that this document will continue to be developed during the next 3 - 4 weeks. Changes will be made as we learn more and as we hear from the public about any further areas they feel we may have missed or underestimated in terms of local and specific impacts, or with new mitigations. We will also be incorporating the feedback from the Consultation received by 5<sup>th</sup> January 2017 into the full EQIAs. Each impact assessment will be reviewed in light of public concerns and updated EQIAs will be produced for Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

In this report we will be focussing mostly on the impacts of disabled people, older and younger people, BME people and women as these are the groups most commonly identified as experiencing disproportionate impacts. We have also highlighted the impact on LGBT people and of geography and socio economic disadvantage as relevant to the cumulative impact of change.

**(ii)Our Approach:**

A key part of our core purpose as a local authority is to support those at risk or in need, and the majority of our revenue budgets are spent on services for people. Therefore any change to our funding has potential for impact and we have taken into consideration the issue of

both direct and indirect impact on individuals and groups of people when working to deliver a set of proposed budget reductions.

It is also important to recognise that although the proposed level of reduction over 5 years is significant, we will still be spending or directing the spend of up to a £billion across the city, whether directly in service provision, or influenced through external funding which is either “passported” to key services such as education or invested in the future of the city as a whole, such as increasing the number of affordable homes built.

Our aim is to minimise direct and indirect impacts on our communities in this budget, specifically our communities who identify within any protected characteristics. Where impacts are probable or likely, that we mitigate against these how and where we can. In building our approach to these budget reductions, we have at all times sought to find the required savings in areas which have the least direct impact on people, and been clear how we will re-shape the ongoing investment to pick up key areas of work. In this context we have also looked at wider measures which have enabled us to maintain many of our services targeted to those more vulnerable in our city. We have committed to:

- building the Council’s ability to raise income to relieve the pressure on the revenue budget and to support targeted services in the future;
- proposed an increase in Council tax recognising that though this impacts on all our citizens, it is focussed mostly on the more resilient households;
- where possible focussing reductions away from those who are most vulnerable, ie: identified as being above the threshold for care support;
- retaining as much funding as possible to protect Voluntary Community Sector investment who are often the best placed to support those at risk in our communities;
- ensuring that we mitigate any reduction by re-shaping and re-designing services in consultation with our stakeholders and in the context of mitigating impact from the service change as a whole.

### **(iii)Detail of Impact:**

We have included in this section where we have identified issues through our Equality Impact Assessment process, specifically where change has potential to impact on those with protected characteristics. It is important to note that none of us has a single identity, and there will be examples in this section where we are focussing on multiple characteristics.

#### **A) Impact on Disabled People:**

We have included in this report a number of identified impacts which related directly to equalities communities and which are at varying degrees of severity (Detail below). Whilst we acknowledge that any impact is important and that all equalities communities are affected in different ways, this Cumulative Impact Assessment has identified that there is a greater risk of disabled people being disproportionately affected by a number of proposals. In this identification, we are not making assumptions regarding people’s capacity and ability to across this group to manage their own situation.

Different proposals are likely to affect different groups of disabled people; for example, public transport users, people who need door-to-door transport, disabled

parents, people on benefits, disabled children and disabled people who need support to sustain their tenancies. In mitigation for this, we have chosen not to progress some potential budget proposals which would have further affected some of those disabled groups of people in recognition of the overall impact. Other mitigations will centre around ensuring that the services we retain and re-design are shaped to ensure we are using this impact knowledge to not further disadvantage disabled people.

Examples:

- Disabled people who use door to door transport and disabled people who use subsidised buses will be negatively affected by the budget reductions. As a specific mitigation, the budget proposal to change companion bus passes has been removed
- Budget proposals to reduce Early Help, Children's Centres and school crossing patrols will have an impact on individual families with disabled children who currently receive support.
- The Government is ending the grant to Council for Education Services which will mean a reduction in services funded by the Council (although key statutory duties will be retained, for example, support for Education, Health and Care Assessments (ECHPs) Plans for disabled children). The impact will be on those who do not meet statutory thresholds.
- Changes to funding for community transport services and the removal of commercial bus subsidies (35% of disabled people would be unable to make alternate travel arrangements) will impact both on disabled people who can access commercial bus services, as well as those who are reliant on community transport door-to-door alternatives.
- The proposal to make reductions in peripatetic support through Supporting People would adversely affect disabled people who are the majority of the users. Disabled people would also be negatively impacted by changes to the Local Crisis and Prevention Fund and reductions in PCSOs (disabled people have a higher fear of crime and difficulties in reporting to the police).
- Disabled people are the majority users of information and advice services (IAG) and have experienced significant changes to welfare benefits, so similarly would be affected if access to IAG services is changed and does not meet the varying access needs of all disabled people. Disabled people are affected by the closure of Customer Service Points (CSPs) because parking was available at the CSPs which are closing and the parking around the Temple Street CSP which will remain open is poor. This is compounded because some disabled people are more reliant on face-to-face IAG, rather than telephone or digital access, for example people with learning difficulties, people with mental health issues and people with a hearing impairment.
- Charges for car parking in parks could be mitigated through consultation around not charging for blue badge spaces.
- Disabled workers or students may be affected by not being able to use their concessionary bus passes until 9.30am, but most workers and students are impacted already because they need to begin their journey before 9.00am so they can't use their concessionary pass anyway.

- Disabled residents in Redfield Lodge, users of Community Links and Community Meals will experience changes but these are mitigated by options appraisals to mitigate negative impacts on service users.
- There is also a risk associated with wider scale community ownership of parks and libraries as it may be more difficult for those communities to raise or prioritise the spending to ensure high quality access to these local neighbourhood assets. We are mitigating this issue by ensuring a level of investment to support community asset transfer and building community capacity for managing physical assets to ensure they function for the whole community. We also have a strong voluntary community sector, where there is good expertise around equalities, and we would be targeting some of our support for these organisations to ensure their expertise is shared with wider community groups.

## **B) Impact on Gender**

A number of budget proposals have the potential to impact on women specifically. A summary of these is below. The core mitigations will be in the re-designs of these services/provision to ensure that we can pick up core concerns and address these.

Examples:

- The proposal to reduce Early Help services is likely to affect mostly women staff, who are more highly represented in this service. The reduction is likely to involve some redundancies and the proposals to close some Children's Centres may also create redundancies for the majority women workforces. Changes to these services will most likely affect the majority women service users. Disabled mothers, mothers of disabled children and women experiencing domestic abuse receive support from Children's Centres and wherever these closures take place, some women will be affected.
- Lone parents and women escaping domestic abuse would be negatively affected by cuts to the Local Crisis and Prevention Fund because women leaving hostel and refuge accommodation may be unable to provide beds and basic cooking equipment for their children.
- Reducing public toilet provision may have a disproportionate impact on women, because women tend to be the primary carers of children and children are more likely to need the toilet at short notice, though we are aware that many people don't use the existing toilet provision as it is considered poor. Alternative toilets in public houses and other venues may not be appropriate for children. This can be mitigated by using a collaborative approach to redesigning our approach to provision.
- Reducing subsidies for park and ride could affect the pricing policy and would therefore affect women disproportionately because they are 65% of users of Park and Ride services.

- Changes to Redfield Lodge residential home and to community meals services will impact on their majority female workforce.

### **C)Impact on Age:**

There are proposals which may impact on Children, Young and Older People. The main risks are detailed below. Mitigation will be primarily in our ability to accommodate key concerns we have identified into the newly shaped services. For example, ensuring we have addressed digital inclusion to support to our services for older and disabled people.

Examples:

- Children and young people will be affected by the proposed reductions to Early Help , Youth Services, Children’s Centres, and reductions to school crossing patrols. Young people are also significant users of the Local Crisis and Prevention Fund emergency payments which is proposed for reduction.
- 35% of people who would be unable to find alternative travel arrangements if the removal of subsidised bus services meant the closure of certain bus routes, are older people.
- Older people are the majority users of community transport services, therefore proposed changes to concessionary fares which could result in the closure of some community transport providers would affect older people. These are in the early stages of design and impacts can be mitigated.
- Some older people could also be affected by Highways service removing telephone reporting of highways issues and some older and disabled people will be unable to use the new online systems to discuss access concerns via a generic website. This is compounded by changes to neighbourhood partnerships which may no longer offer forums for local people to raise concerns about highways and the removal of the delegated budget to neighbourhood partnerships to prioritise highways issues which are of concern to local people.
- Older residents in Redfield Lodge, users of Community Links and Community Meals will experience changes but these are mitigated by options appraisals and further consultation to mitigate negative impact. Increases in client contributions are in line with inflation (except for Redfield lodge residents who will experience a significant increase in fees) and changes in adult learning will be offset by income generation.
- Older people are less impacted by concessionary bus passes being available from 9.00 am to 9.30pm as they are less likely to be in employment or at college when they need to travel.

### **D)Impact on Black and minority ethnic communities:**

Early intervention services have a particular importance for some BME communities. There are social, economic and cultural factors which create specific needs for BME communities, which are often not sufficient to meet thresholds for specific support services. For example:

- Some BME communities have additional support needs, for example refugee and asylum seeker communities have specific information and advice needs and language needs which are not experienced by more settled communities.
- Families and individuals may have specific cultural and religious needs, issues around inclusion and integration, and inter-generational issues which could create additional stressors and these needs may not be met by schools or other generic provision.
- BME communities may experience discrimination, exclusion and historical disadvantage and are more likely to live in poverty and experience long term unemployment than White British people.
- Most BME communities are younger than the Bristol average and are proportionately more reliant on children and families' services

These social and economic factors are partly why BME communities are additionally reliant on VCS initiatives, for example projects which are delivered by and for BME communities; projects which highlight the contributions made by BME communities; educational projects which support BME parents new to the British educational system to understand how best to support their children's' education. Therefore the decision to protect the Bristol Impact Fund will continue to benefit BME communities.

#### Examples:

- The Government ending of the grant to Councils for Education Services will result in a reduction in support services currently funded for schools and may have particular relevance for BME children, particularly those cohorts of BME children who are performing 10% below the general Bristol attainment levels, as schools serving the areas with high BME populations have traditionally received these services. It is important that in planning these reductions, schools are clear about their responsibilities to promote equality of opportunity (and outcomes) for BME children.
- The reduction of in-house employment support needs to maintain a focus on BME communities, because some BME communities are three times as likely as white communities to be long term unemployed (Pakistani and Black African). This will be mitigated by improved partnership working to target apprenticeship opportunities to BME young people, and other such initiatives, through the Learning City Partnership work.
- These social and economic issues also lead to an under representation of the voice of BME communities and some arts providers seek to address this by working with these communities. Reductions in Bristol's cultural offer would need to ensure authentic BME voices and talents are promoted in recognition of a historical lack of representation
- For newer BME communities where language is an issue, decisions to move to digital and reductions in face-to-face IAG (changes to the CSP and wider IAG services) create an additional barrier to service access. This is compounded by BME communities being high users of IAG so may be disproportionately affected by changes and will need to be fully involved in

any new service designs. BME users are also high users of the Local Crisis and Prevention Fund.

- BME staff (33%) and BME service users (20%) at Redfield lodge may experience additional concerns as relocation to provision in outer lying areas where the proportion of BME staff and BME residents is smaller, could feel more isolating. Full and open consultation which takes into account the concerns of BME staff and BME residents and families is additionally important.
- BME communities have a higher fear of crime and less confidence to report crime to the police, so any changes again need to be well consulted upon with BME communities.

### **E) Impact on Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities:**

The level of impact on this group is often less clear within Equality Impact Assessments. We have included some potential areas of risk in this document. As with other areas, we need to be aware of the issues of the LGBT community when we are re-designing or re-shaping our provision.

Examples:

- In changes to youth services, the issues for LGBT young people are mainstreamed and included to ensure LGBT young people feel safe and welcome in mainstream provision.
- LGBT communities have worked hard to have a voice on Neighbourhood Partnerships and any new community structure need to be inclusive of diverse communities. LGBT people can have a particular vulnerability to community control of resources like libraries and parks if safeguards aren't in place. For example if there is a majority local opinion which objects to openly gay lifestyles then communities could refuse gay friendly events in parks for fear of 'excluding the local community'.
- LGBT communities are more reliant on PCSOs to challenge everyday homophobia and transphobia, and more reliant on homelessness providers in developing proactive LGBT policies and LGBT staff initiatives to create residential environments where LGBT people feel safe to be themselves when living in homeless accommodation.

### **F) Impact on Faith communities:**

Examples:

- Muslim communities in Bristol are more likely to live in poverty and experience long term unemployment than White British people or people from other faiths or no faith. Muslim communities are younger than the Bristol average and are proportionately more reliant on children and families' services.
- Experiences of discrimination, exclusion and negative media portrayals within Muslim communities have created specific stressors in comparison to other faith or no faith communities. Similar to BME families, these stressors are not

sufficient for most individuals and families to meet thresholds for specific services but it does create an additional reliance on projects, positive action and voluntary sector funding to promote good relations between people of different faiths.

### **G) Impact of geography:**

We are aware of the importance of ensuring that reductions and changes do not disproportionately impact on specific areas of the city. Geography is both important in terms of the demography of the area – who lives there – and also the Multiple Indices of Deprivation which tell us how an area is doing, and where there are key social issues for communities.

Examples:

- More BME people live in East Central and in the inner circle of north Bristol than in South Bristol. Therefore any service reduction or closures in East and North Bristol are more likely to adversely impact on BME people. Also, it is important that poorer white communities aren't competing with poor BME communities for resources. If resources are allocated equally between 3 areas according to geography, then BME people may be indirectly adversely affected because resources to South Bristol will mainly support people of white British origin (the population of South Bristol is approx. 93% white British).
- Areas of the city with new and newly arrived communities do have additional information and advice needs and additional resettlement, language and integration costs which are not costs incurred by white British communities. Therefore, funding allocation for some services in East central may need to be more per head than for other areas. We are clear that when we are redesigning any changed services or relocating resources we need to be sophisticated in our needs analysis to avoid disproportionate effects.

We will be targeting resources to those geographic areas with higher needs and higher levels of poverty. This targeting is important, but we are mindful that not all people with protected characteristics will be living in those higher needs areas.

- Disabled children and disabled parents are more likely to live in poverty than non-disabled households, but they are spread relatively evenly across wards in the city and therefore when we are reducing our investment in wealthier areas, we need to ensure we are not compounding any issues of isolation or disadvantage for these groups. We will mitigate this by using our needs analysis and knowledge of who is using our services to ensure our new shaped services take account of these groups.
- Disabled mothers, mothers of disabled children and women experiencing domestic abuse have additional needs which are unrelated to wealth so are located across the city.

As we undertake the re-design work for the changes in services which have a locality provision – such as libraries, Children’s Centres, neighbourhood partnerships, school crossings, subsidised bus services - we will be considering this geographical impact carefully, and ensuring that where we are locating services will be to the best possible benefit of any at risk communities.

### **H)Economic inequality**

Socio-economic disadvantage is not covered by the Equality Act 2010, and not included in Equality impact assessments. However, it is important to identify proposals which introduce additional charges and could impact on poorer people. We also need to identify proposals which have additional relevance for communities which experience socio-economic disadvantage. In mitigation of any increased charges, we will be evaluating and reflecting ability to pay in our approaches.

- The proposal to impose additional fees for Redfield lodge residents and the increase in client contributions are mitigated by financial assessments on peoples’ ability to pay. The removal of the adult learning subsidy is also mitigated by evaluating people’s ability to pay.
- IAG provision offers advice to people on welfare benefits so this will affect communities which experience socio-economic disadvantage. Also Early Help is more important for communities which experience socio-economic disadvantage,
- Reduction to the Local crisis and Prevention fund will impact on communities who experience socio-economic disadvantage because they have less access to affordable credit and are particularly reliant on this service to replace broken white goods, recover from an emergency or when leaving hostel accommodation. The fund also helps make families under stress more resilient to crisis and the removal of the fund could place greater pressures on Early Help services.
- There are plans for some services (libraries, parks, neighbourhood partnerships, school crossings) to be led by other agencies including volunteers, which could offer opportunities for local communities to run local services. Collaborative communities are more likely to look out for each other, increase cohesion and minimise the cost of dependency and institutional care. However, some communities find it harder to self-organise into social networks and groupings that allow people to do things for themselves. Some disadvantaged areas have a strong tradition of self-organising but most areas do struggle with day to day poverty related issues such as high unemployment, poor health and anti-social behaviour which create additional barriers to this kind of self-organising.

### **Conclusion:**

This is a work in progress. We have worked to thoroughly assess the potential impacts on equalities communities of the proposed changes to our services. This assessment demonstrates that we understand the impacts and can work towards embedding mitigations when we are ready to re-shape and re-design service once decisions have been made.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Implementing the Public Sector Equality Duty**

Non-Compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty brings a risk of judicial review, and there is extensive case law arising from rulings on judicial reviews which help us to understand what is required of decision makers.

- Decision-makers must consciously bring the Duty to mind when considering the proposal. If they don't or if their appreciation of the duty is incomplete or mistaken, the courts will deem that due regard has not been applied.
- Due regard must be paid before and at the time that a particular decision is being considered, not later. Attempts to justify a decision as being consistent with the exercise of the duty when it was not, in fact, considered before the decision, are not sufficient to discharge the duty.
- The duty must be exercised with substance, with rigour and with an open mind. It is not a question of just ticking boxes, or of merely paying lip service. There must be substantial sifting of relevant facts and research, and fair attention to conflicting views. It follows there must be meaningful consultation and engagement with interested parties.
- The duty to have due regard cannot be delegated to a third party (e.g. a commissioned organisation).
- It is good practice to keep an adequate record showing that the equality duties have been actually considered and pondered. Minimally, the record should be dated and should indicate the evidence that has been taken into account. The purpose is to discipline decision-makers to undertake their equality duties conscientiously. Bristol City Council use the Equality Impact Assessment process to record equalities considerations.