

Bristol City Council Equality Impact Relevance Check

This tool will identify the equalities relevance of a proposal, and establish whether a full Equality Impact Assessment will be required. Please read the guidance prior to completing this relevance check.



| What is the proposal? | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Name of proposal | Council Budget 2020/21 |
| Please outline the proposal. | <p>The Council is required to set an annual revenue budget, its capital programme and the council tax, which enables the delivery of the Council's priorities within a balanced budget. This is described within the Council's financial plan and as regard to core, statutory and regulatory services as well as local key priorities and objectives.</p> <p>The Council has a statutory responsibility to consult on its proposed budget and level of Council Tax under the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The proposed increase in Council Tax is 3.99% (of which 2% to be ring fenced to fund Adult Social Care) to fund the shortfall in the budget requirement as a result of increased costs of running services</p> <p>The funding position beyond 2020/21 is very uncertain; not least as the current spending review only covers the next financial year. The budget planning that has followed models a 5 year balanced position 2020/21 to 2024/25. There is no requirement for any new savings to achieve a balanced budget for 2020/21 due to the previously approved package of savings identified by the Council as part of the 2018 budget.</p> <p>Previously approved savings proposals from prior budget setting decisions which include ongoing savings for 20/21 have been subject to individual equality relevance checks and/or equality impact assessments, with updates where appropriate. These are published on the council's website https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council-spending-performance/council-budgets. They will continue to be updated as appropriate.</p> <p>Any future individual proposals will be subject to their own separate Equality Impact Assessment, consultation and assessment procedures at the relevant time. Decision makers will have the ability to make changes to the individual spending plans following consultation (where necessary) and detailed evaluation of the impact of proposals.</p> <p>There is financial mitigation put aside for any non-delivery or amendments to proposals which may occur due to future consideration of equalities issues or other factors (see 'Financial Deficit' in Appendix 3 -Risk Register Report).</p> <p>Other than the Local Council Tax Reduction scheme the Council has limited options to mitigate the impact of council tax other than the overall level at which it sets the Band D charge. The charges for other bands are set proportionately to Band D by legislation.</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| What savings will this proposal achieve? | The budget proposes an indicative annual expenditure of £1.2bn with pipeline savings (agreed 2018 budget) of £8m. Further savings of £4m (agreed 2018 budget) remain anticipated in subsequent years to 2022/23. |
| Name of Lead Officer | Michael Pilcher |

Could your proposal impact citizens with protected characteristics?
(This includes service users and the wider community)

Please outline where there may be significant opportunities or positive impacts, and for whom.

Against the uncertain backdrop of local government financing councils could face a spike in demand for already hard-pressed services such as adult and children's services and support for people at risk of homelessness. Demand for our services continues to rise. The number of vulnerable adults (for example frail elderly people or those with learning disabilities and mental health) and vulnerable children (for example, those with special educational needs and disabilities) and associated cost pressures are all increasing.

The funding position beyond next year is very uncertain; not least as the current spending review only covers the next financial year with a spending review planned for 2020. The budget planning that has followed models a 5 year balanced position 2020/21 to 2024/25 and incorporate the following specific funding assumptions for 2020/21 as set out in the report.

Despite these increasingly limited resources, we have continued to prioritise services that make the biggest difference to those in greatest need. We are conscious of the impact of council tax increases on Bristol residents. At the same time residents have made it clear they value the services they receive and the environment in which they live and some of those that are able to have indicated that they are willing to pay a little more. That provides a difficult balancing act between council tax increases; income charges; income generation; and service reductions.

The overall budget envelope sets out the monies available for the Council which enables the delivery of the Councils priorities. The proposal within the report is that for 2020/21 budget should be predicated on the basis of a proposed increase of 3.99% in the amount of Council Tax income receivable, split between:

- Growth in the size of the Council Tax base
- Core Council Tax increase increase of 1.99%
- Government-recommended specific increase in relation to adult social care of 2.0%

The overarching annual impact of this increase is outlined in the table below.:

| | Band A | Band B | Band C | Band D | Band E | Band F | Band G | Band H |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | £ |
| 2020/21 Council Tax £ | 1,172.19 | 1,367.55 | 1,562.92 | 1,758.28 | 2,149.02 | 2,539.75 | 2,930.47 | 3,516.57 |
| 2019/20 Council Tax £ | 1,127.21 | 1,315.08 | 1,502.95 | 1,690.82 | 2,066.56 | 2,442.30 | 2,818.03 | 3,381.64 |
| Increase | 44.98 | 52.47 | 59.97 | 67.46 | 82.46 | 97.45 | 112.44 | 134.93 |
| Percentage Increase | 3.99% |

The Council has continued to provide a local Council Tax reduction scheme that supports working age people on a similar basis to those who previously received 100% Council Tax benefit prior to this being abolished in 2013;

and is one of a handful of English councils to do so. Pensioners are protected from any changes under the prescribed national scheme. The overall scheme is estimated to cost in the region of £39.5m in 2020/21.

The impact of each 1% increase in Council Tax is an additional £0.32 per week for a band D property which would raise an additional £2.2 million to fund priority services.

At this stage in the process it is difficult to fully consider the implications the proposals will have on citizens with protected characteristic. The budget consultation report shows the breakdown of the respondents to the consultation on the budget by protected characteristics.

The assumption has been made on a very local level that some protected characteristics will be evenly distributed across income groups and as such Citizens who are of working age with Council Tax liabilities will be negatively affected.

Many people on low incomes can get Council Tax Support to help them pay their Council Tax bills. The Council Tax Support Scheme is mainly funded by the Government although the Council help pay towards the scheme as well. Any increase in Council Tax means a similar increase in the amount of funding for the local council tax reduction scheme maintaining current levels of support and assistance to working age households.

In addition further support is in place through the Council's discretionary policies for those who suffer hardship.

Relevance Checks and EQIAs, where necessary are carried out for individual service proposals within the overall budget and individual reports associated to the key funding streams. These are live documents which are updated as more information becomes available as propositions are developed and the latest position is considered by members prior to decision making and will be submitted to Full Council with the overall budget proposals in February.

Please outline where there may be significant negative impacts, and for whom.

See above

With the scale of the financial challenge which the authority faces arising from a combination of increasing spending demands, reduced central government grants, it is inevitable the authority has to review the way it provides services and we cannot carry on providing services in the same way as we have in the past.

The budget proposals agreed by full council in February 2018 included proposition that change how we fund and provide services. Whilst a small number reduced or stopped services, the majority of the propositions from 2020/21 are intended to produce different or better outcomes for less public money, business efficiency savings aimed at delivering the same or similar outcomes for less money and income generation. These will enable the Council to deliver our priorities and meet the needs of our residents within the likely funding available to the Council. The budget also include some discretionary investment, particularly to support maintaining capital investment programme. Maintaining the capital programme is a key element of the stimulating economic regeneration including supporting local jobs working on local projects, stimulating housing, tackling congestion, strengthening families and providing facilities to equip young people with the skills they will need to enter the future jobs market.

Could your proposal impact staff with protected characteristics?

(i.e. reduction in posts, changes to working hours or locations, changes in pay)

Please outline where there may be significant opportunities or positive impacts, and for whom.

N/A – this is determined at a service or directorate level

Please outline where there may be negative impacts, and for whom.

N/A – this is determined at a service or directorate level

Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required?

Does the proposal have the potential to impact on people with protected characteristics in the following ways:

- access to or participation in a service,
- levels of representation in our workforce, or
- reducing quality of life (i.e. health, education, standard of living) ?

Please indicate yes or no. If the answer is yes then a full impact assessment must be carried out. If the answer is no, please provide a justification.

No.
The impacts are set out within the individual saving proposals to meet the savings and income generation were proposed within the Council Budget 2018/19. Relevance Checks and EQIAs have been conducted against these individual proposals.

Service Director sign-off and date:

Denise Murray 13/01/2020

Equalities Officer sign-off and date:

Reviewed by Equality and Inclusion Team 13/1/2020