

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 2021/22
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 4.99% (of which 3% 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 2021/22 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 2021/22 to 2025/26.</p> <p>Previously approved savings proposals from prior budget setting decisions which include ongoing savings for 21/22 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 £1.0 billion, which includes all necessary savings to deliver a balanced budget for the next five years.
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.

The overall budget envelope sets out the monies available for the Council which enables the delivery of the Councils priorities. It does not determine specific service provision, which is carried out at the service level.

We have not identified any significant opportunities from the proposal for citizens on the basis of their protected characteristics. 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. 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.

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 4.99% in the amount of Council Tax income receivable, split between:

- Reduction in the size of the Council Tax base
- Core Council Tax increase of 1.99%
- Government-recommended specific increase in relation to adult social care of 3.0%

Relevance Checks and EQIAs, where necessary are carried out for individual service proposals within the overall budget which 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.

We have not identified any significant negative impacts from the proposal at this stage – see above.

With the scale of the financial challenge which the authority faces arising from a combination of increasing spending demands, and impact of covid-19, 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.

All individual proposals to change services will be subject to their own separate Equality Impact Assessment, consultation and assessment procedures at the relevant time.

The Council provides support for those on low income against Council Tax increases through the Local Council Tax Reduction scheme. The Council has no other direct ability 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.

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?

<p>Does the proposal have the potential to impact on people with protected characteristics in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) ? 	
<p>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.</p>	<p>No. The process of applying a Council Tax increase will be equitable and all properties would be increased by the same percentage. Discounts will be applied, subject to the existing council tax reduction scheme which is subject to its own consultation an EQIA when being agreed. Therefore we anticipate a neutral impact on people on the basis of their protected characteristics from this proposal.</p>
<p>Service Director sign-off and date:</p>	<p>Equalities Officer sign-off and date: <i>Reviewed by Equality and Inclusion Team</i> <i>18/1/2020</i></p>