

Equality Impact Assessment [version 2.9]



Title: Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Strategy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Function <input type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Other [please state]	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Already exists / review <input type="checkbox"/> Changing
Directorate: Cross Cutting	Lead Officer name: Denise Murray
Service Area:	Lead Officer role: Director: Finance

Step 1: What do we want to do?

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment is to assist decision makers in understanding the impact of proposals as part of their duties under the Equality Act 2010. Detailed guidance to support completion can be found here [Equality Impact Assessments \(EqIA\) \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

This assessment should be started at the beginning of the process by someone with a good knowledge of the proposal and service area, and sufficient influence over the proposal. It is good practice to take a team approach to completing the equality impact assessment. Please contact the [Equality and Inclusion Team](#) early for advice and feedback.

1.1 What are the aims and objectives/purpose of this proposal?

Briefly explain the purpose of the proposal and why it is needed. Describe who it is aimed at and the intended aims / outcomes. Where known also summarise the key actions you plan to undertake. Please use plain English, avoiding jargon and acronyms. Equality Impact Assessments are viewed by a wide range of people including decision-makers and the wider public.

The Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Strategy are integrated and key parts of the Council's financial planning process. They set out the Council's strategic approach to the management of its finances and provides a framework within which delivery of the Council's priorities will be progressed.

The refresh of the Medium Term Financial Plan considers the financial outlook for the Council over the next five years, after taking into account changes in the national and local context which may impact on the Council, ongoing financial uncertainty associated to Covid-19 recovery, delays to local government funding reforms, savings measures agreed in the past year not delivered, emerging demands, pressures and opportunities.

The Capital Strategy details the high-level approach and framework that will underpin the development of the Capital Programme, sets out the governance framework required to ensure the Capital Programme can be delivered and in a balanced way will support the delivery of the Council's objectives, key issues and risks that will impact on the delivery of the programme and that capital investment remains sustainable and affordable.

The reports have been prepared in compliance with the relevant codes and in developing the financial outlook various assumptions have been made. These are modelling / planning assumptions which will be kept under constant review, given the increased level of uncertainty in the financial and economic climate. At the point at which specific service or project proposals are made regarding these assumptions, a full equalities impact will be undertaken.

The Council is required by law to set a balanced budget and even before the global pandemic, finding solutions to balance the Council's annual budget was becoming ever more challenging, particularly while seeking to manage the impact on those with the greatest need of our support.

The Council has defined statutory responsibilities, but deliver against a far broader agenda, providing universal services benefiting the whole community, and targeted services aimed at individuals, communities with particular needs and businesses. Which are administered by our workforce, city partners, stakeholder organisations and commissioned services.

The Medium Term Financial Plan outlook considered in this report indicates a budget gap of £23.1million in 2022/23, reducing to average £7million in 2023/24 to 2026/27. This is on top of previously agreed savings. The

financial strategy in the report to bridge the gap focuses primarily on delivering efficiencies, service re-design programmes which cut across directorate boundaries, increasing external income and Invest to Save revenue. The wider impact of lower than required funding levels on council activities and services will be considered in particular decisions such as the level of Council Tax funding and planned expenditure in the annual budget process. A full equality impact assessment will be undertaken to consider the implications of proposals based on these assumptions, and to inform decision makers at the point when specific decisions are made.

1.2 Who will the proposal have the potential to affect?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bristol City Council workforce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service users	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The wider community
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioned services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City partners / Stakeholder organisations	
Additional comments:		

1.3 Will the proposal have an equality impact?

Could the proposal affect access levels of representation or participation in a service, or does it have the potential to change e.g. quality of life: health, education, or standard of living etc.?

If 'No' explain why you are sure there will be no equality impact, then skip steps 2-4 and request review by Equality and Inclusion Team.

If 'Yes' complete the rest of this assessment, or if you plan to complete the assessment at a later stage please state this clearly here and request review by the Equality and Inclusion Team.

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	[please select]
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We have not identified any significant equality impact from the Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Strategy at this stage. This is because: any future individual proposals will be subject to their own separate Equality Impact Assessment, consultation if required at the relevant time; and because 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.

The Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Strategy will form the financial framework and set the parameters for the overall budget envelope (the monies available) for the Council, which will enable capital borrowing for investments and the delivery of the Councils priorities. They are set against the uncertain backdrop of local government financing, climate and ecological emergency, Covid-19 recovery, spike in demand for already hard-pressed services such as adult and children's services and High Needs. The number of vulnerable adults (for example 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.

However the impact of the Council budget proposals cannot be seen in isolation. The challenging economic climate is also likely to impact on some groups on the basis of their protected and other relevant characteristics and add to the cumulative impact of council proposals.

The budget planning that has followed models 2022/23 to 2026/27 and incorporate assumptions regarding nationally driven changes to the Councils funding, such as business rates and the following specific assumptions:

- Estimated Pay award of up to 2.5% in future years
- Inflationary Increases of up to 4% in expenditure, fees and charges
- Continuation of the Council Tax Reduction scheme at the same level of up to 100% - provide financial assistance with Council Tax bills for working age adults who are on a low income or less able to pay and pensioners.
- Increases in Core Council Tax at 1.99% (subject to public consultation and Council decisions)
- Increase of 1% in the Social Care Precept (this is subject to consultation and final agreement by parliament, public consultation and Council decisions)
- DSG funding in line with DfE Indicative funding allocations increase of 9.7% for High Needs Block.
- General Fund capital borrowing levels contained within existing capital financing levels
- HRA capital affordability income cover ratio not lower than 1.25 for HRA borrowing

We are conscious of the impact of price and Council Tax increases on Bristol residents and that this provides a difficult balancing act between, income generation and reductions in valued services. Bristol remains one of a few local authorities to keep its level of support to low-income families at the pre 2013 levels, including up to 100% of household's liability. Bristol's CTR scheme as of April 2021 costs £42.3m (or £43.8m if you include the additional MHCLG funded CTR hardship payments for working age households). It supports 35,865 low-income households of which 25,35 are working age. This means that for over three quarters of working age households all their Council Tax will be fully discounted. The table below shows a breakdown of those who are working age (only) and either receive full (100%) or part CTR.

Percentage of council liability covered by CTR	Number of households
Under 50%	2,949
50 – 74%	1,611
75 – 99%	1,313
100%	19,452
Total	25,325

The Medium Term Financial Plan assumptions also includes a number of growth proposals that if endorsed are designed to address the needs of vulnerable residents and as such, they would be expected to have a positive impact on equality.

The final position regarding any of the above and continuation of schemes such as the Local Crisis Prevention Fund which provides support to low-income families and individuals requiring emergency financial support, will be decided at each year as part of the annual budget setting process and subject to a specific equalities impact assessment at that point.

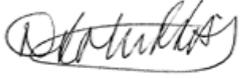
These are live documents which are updated as more information becomes available from national context such as the Spending Review 21, Autumn Budget and local government finance settlement and local service changes. Previously approved savings proposals from prior budget setting decisions which include ongoing savings for 2022/23 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.

The external consultation method for obtaining stakeholders and the public's views of spending priorities, individual proposals to meet savings requirement and acceptable levels of Council Tax, will be considered as part of the preparation of the Council's budget for 2022/23. The HRA is subject to a separate consultation process and Schools and the Schools Forum are consulted on any factors impacting on the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Budget and service planning processes are entwined, will involve a wide range of staff across the Council and relevant stakeholders. The consultation results from all the above will be presented to Cabinet and Council in advance of decisions in relation to the budget and if required managing change processes will be adhered to.

Step 5: Review

The Equality and Inclusion Team need at least five working days to comment and feedback on your EqIA. EqIAs should only be marked as reviewed when they provide sufficient information for decision-makers on the equalities impact of the proposal. Please seek feedback and review from the Equality and Inclusion Team before requesting sign off from your Director¹.

Equality and Inclusion Team Review: <i>Reviewed by Equality and Inclusion Team</i>	Director Sign-Off: 
Date: 26/11/2021	Date: 26/11/21

¹ Review by the Equality and Inclusion Team confirms there is sufficient analysis for decision makers to consider the likely equality impacts at this stage. This is not an endorsement or approval of the proposal.