

# Draft Financial Decisions 2016-2017

## Budget Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

### Jeremy Beake

This is an Equality Impact Assessment of the Medium Term Financial Plan. Under equality legislation, the Council has a legal duty to pay 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
- foster good relations between different groups.

The duty to pay 'due regard' is required to be demonstrated in the decision-making process. Assessing the potential equality impact of proposed budget changes is the means by which we show 'due regard'.

### Methodology

The assessment is in five stages.

**Stage 1** A review of the proposed budget changes to identify "significant and relevant changes", meaning:

- a) proposals with savings of £50,000 and over
- b) identifying those that have a potential impact on one or more protected groups

Those proposals left were then passed forward to stage 2.

**Stage 2** Proposals that were similar were brought together to better facilitate assessment

**Stage 3** EqIAs were conducted on all "significant changes" identified  
There is a choice of four different recommendations that can result from these assessments.

Green	Savings are made as there is potential to improve the advancement of equality of opportunity
Green-Amber	Adjustments have been identified (or will be made) to remove barriers or to better promote equality.
Amber	Carry on despite having identified some potential for an adverse impact or a possible missed opportunity to promote equality.
Red	Stop and rethink when an EqIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination

A draft assessment has accompanied the Medium Term Budget Cabinet Review in December 2015

**Stage 4** This information will be fed into lines of enquiry in the consultation process throughout December 2015 and January 2016.

**Stage 5** The final report was compiled including updates in the published assessments.

The following tables summarise the results of these stages:

**Table 1: A Summary of Initial Assessments**

<b>Overall number of proposals</b>	<b>No. of proposals that are not significant (Stage 1a)</b>	<b>No. of proposals that are unlikely to have an impact on one or more protected groups (Stage 1b)</b>	<b>No of EqlAs conducted (Stage 2)</b>
<b>123</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>14</b> (from 18 savings)

The summary below contains the outcome of those assessments at stage 2 and recommendations.

**Table 2: Stage 2 Assessments**

	<b>EqlA Completed</b>	<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1	Residential Placements	S16	Green
2	Changes to Intermediate Care Services	S128	Green
3	Homecare measures I – reduce demand and review packages	S17, S19	Green
4	Homecare measures II – cease provision of some services	S20, S21	Amber
5	Sheltered Housing	S24,	Green-Amber
6	Changes in Older People’s services	S25, S26	Green-Amber
7	Learning Disability Review	S27	Green-Amber
8	ASC Charging	S28	Green-Amber
9	Community Engagement Activity	S33	Green-Amber
10	Community & Cultural Review	S34	Amber
11	Improved Home to school transport	S35	Green-Amber
12	Options for support young people in care	S41	Green
13	Reduction in temp accommodation costs	S51, S52	Green
14	Rationalisation of Play Areas	S77	Green-Amber

## **Impact on Services**

An Equality Impact Assessment was conducted on all 123 savings proposals of which 18 were considered as being 'significant' and 'relevant' to equality. Similar decisions have been brought together to produce 14 in-depth assessments. These assessments are likely to recommend that:

- In five (5) green areas, it is recommended that savings continue, as there is a potential to improve the advancement equality of opportunity.
- In seven (7) green-amber areas, adjustments have been/are being made to remove barriers identified by the EqIA or to better promote equality. Proposed adjustments will remove the barriers will be identified.
- In two (2) amber areas, it is recommended to continue despite having identified some potential for an adverse impact or a possible missed opportunity to promote equality. In this case, the justification is included in the EqIA and is in line with the duty to have 'due regard'. Consideration has been made to whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact.
- There are no (0) red areas, it is recommended that savings not continue, as there is a potential for unlawful discrimination.

## **Impact and pressures**

Budget pressures are the extra spending challenges, contained in the budget, many of which will ensure that the council meets the needs of vulnerable people. Of the 34 pressures, 24 pressures will advance equality of opportunity. These include:

- increases in re-enablement, which will help people affected by service changes to residential placements and homecare measures
- measures to meet increases in demand due to sizeable changes in demography, so that the Council has to ensure that services are based on statutory eligible needs and that people's needs are regularly reviewed
- activities that meet the needs of the most vulnerable people with disabilities, children and older people

Overall, the impact in 2016/17 will fall slightly more heavily on older people; however, in the last four years this group has been proportionately more protected. This Equality Impact Assessment suggests that put together pressures and savings show a redirection in support, based on eligible needs, with challenging increases in demand in areas such as fostering and homelessness.

**Table 3: Summary of the areas where it is recommended to continue without adjustments**

<b>Area of Work</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Residential Placements	There is significant investment in services that support improving independence and wellbeing including re-enablement services. As a result, of these positive outcomes there is already a reduction in the number of people needing to be supported in long-term residential care placements.
Changes to Intermediate Care Services	Following an Intermediate Care Service Review that identified resources given to Heath Service Providers and reallocation of Orchard House funds due to the building condition to take the opportunity to strength re-enablement
Homecare measures I – reduce demand and review packages	The positive work of re-enablement services has seen a reduction in the number of people needing care packages and where people have needs investment of £300k to increase the capacity in Intermediate Care re-enablement services will lead to a reduction in the cost of homecare.
Options for support young people in care	There will be a reduction in the use of higher cost placements, particularly those provided by the commercial sector (often at a distance from Milton Keynes) for older young people. This will be achieved in a planned and safe way.
Reduction in temp accommodation costs	Permanent housing is the best solution to tackling the problems of homelessness.

Table 4 contains Budget proposals where adjustments have been made or being considered to remove barriers identified by the EqIA or to better promote equality. The proposed adjustments will remove the barriers identified.

**Table 4: Summary of adjustments being made**

<b>Area of Work</b>	<b>Adjustment Made/Being Made</b>
Sheltered Housing	Where people have eligible care needs these are assessed and receive care packages to meet their needs provided. There are 780 tenancies, with only 106 having care packages, suggesting that such an approach was already producing indirect discrimination upon those not in these schemes. The schemes are well placed to be actively involved in community groups and activities and many take place in the centres themselves.

<b>Area of Work</b>	<b>Adjustment Made/Being Made</b>
Changes in Older People's services	<p>For the Day Centres, bringing these services together on one new site will provide a modern day service for older people with dementia and those who are physically frail.</p> <p>For the community call, an offer to the external market would reduce staff costs and the need to maintain the call handling system. More creative solutions and up to date technology could be available, helping people with low level needs remain at home.</p>
Learning Disability Review	A number of suggested changes contain adjustments that advance equality. For example, Shared Lives has a proven record of accomplishment of improved service and savings. Increase use of direct payments has led to different choices and more tailored solutions.
ASC Charging	There is a need for review following introduction of the new Personal Independent Payment Benefit (PIP) to ensure equitable treatment of benefits when service users are being financially assessed to pay towards the cost of care. This will ensure against indirect discrimination.
Community Engagement Activity	In partnership with other children & young people partners engagement will be refocused.
Improved Home to school transport	Adjustments will be made to ensure the service provided fully meets the statutory requirement in terms of the qualifying distances. However, a larger number of journeys will be made on public transport, sometimes with an expectation that parents or carers accompanied their children on the journey.
Rationalisation of Play Areas	Using the standard from the Local Plan the accessibility (both physical locality) and "play value" of play areas will improve, however the number of play equipment items will decrease.

Table 5 outlines those areas where the recommendation is to continue, despite having identified some potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality. In these cases, the justification is included in the EqIA and is in line with the duty to have 'due regard' and reasons are provided.

**Table 5: Summary of the justification for accepting a potential adverse impact**

Area of Work	Cabinet should have due regard to:
Homecare measures II – cease provision of some services	Ceasing the services will have an effect on some service users. However, these are services that neighbouring Councils have ceased as it moves beyond the requirement of the Care Act and are services that could be provided by voluntary sector organisations. The need for these types of services does not meet the eligibility criteria for support. A review of the alternatives will be conducted to ensure that alternatives are in place. Adjustments through an improved re-enablement service will meet the needs of the most affected people.
Community & Cultural Review	These changes, which were initiated under the community and cultural services review (CCSR) may yet have an adverse impact but there is a commitment to finding more creative and sustainable models for the delivery of libraries, children’s centres and youth services, including information advice and guidance, other than to simply closing them. This remains the objective of this work. The first year of planned changes was successfully implemented. Partners, including local schools, have engaged well and are continuing to assist with the development of options for ongoing service delivery at a lower cost to the Council.

**Impact on the Equality for the Workforce**

The budgetary decisions will be tested to consider whether they are free from discriminatory factors, that the selection of staff at risk was fair. To answer this, in January the proportion of those that are at risk for all major characteristics will be compared against the proportion within the establishment as a whole. A statistical test will be applied to gather whether we can be 90% confident that the result is fair and free from discrimination.