

Appendix 9 - Equality Impact Assessments

2024/25 Savings Proposals – 7 February 2024

1. Introduction

This paper provides Members with information to help them fulfil their equality duties; it should be read in conjunction with the Equality Impact Assessments that have been prepared and provided for each budget reduction proposal in advance of the 7 February Executive meeting.

2. Public Sector Equality Duties

The Equality Act 2010 (Section 149) sets out public sector equality duties, which elected Members must consider. Members will recall that the general duties are to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Advancing equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

3. Due Regard

'Due regard' is the regard that is appropriate, in all the particular circumstances. Members must also pay regard to any countervailing factors. The weight to be given to the countervailing factors is a matter for Members. There is no requirement to take certain steps or to achieve certain results. The duty is only to have due regard to the need to take the relevant steps.

4. Protected characteristics

These general equality duties cover the following protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- and marriage and civil partnership. (This protected characteristic applies only to general duty 1.)

In addition to these areas (protected by the general duties) council EIAs also consider the impact on people on a low income.

5. Considering the equality duties

When considering the equality duties listed above in 2, thought must be given to the following areas:

- Meeting different needs includes, for example, taking steps to take account of disabled people's needs.
- Fostering good relations includes having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- Compliance with the general equality duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.
- The general equality duty also applies to other organisations that carry out services on behalf of the Council.

6. 2024/25 Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

To aid understanding and the consideration of these important equality duties, officers have completed initial EIAs for each proposed budget reduction.

The potential impact on equalities groups has been assessed as:

- High
- Medium
- Low
- None – If there are no identified impacts on any protected group.

Consideration is then given if the impact is likely to be ‘negative’ or ‘positive’. Taking account mitigating action that is planned or in place, most of the savings are considered to have no, low, or in some cases a positive impact on service users. If the impact has been assessed as potentially having a negative ‘medium’ or ‘high’ impact on service users, then a detailed EIA has been undertaken and is included within this report.

Where the proposals are not yet developed to a stage to allow a more detailed EIA to be completed, such as:

- The development of Family Hubs (SPTC01/C02)
- Proposals listed in Adults Transformation (ADTR01/ADTR02)
- The transformation of Children’s Social Care Services (CHRT01)
- Home to School Transport (CHTR02)

More in-depth consultation and data analysis will take place as the proposals are taken forward. These EIAs will be prepared taking into account the detailed proposals for further consideration and decision in line with the council’s normal decision-making processes.

As appropriate the detailed EIAs include information about the impact on users of services and council staff, the detailed EIAs include the following important information:

- An assessment of the relevance of the budget proposal to the general equality duties and the protected characteristics.
- Where appropriate, collection and analysis of equality information to ensure equality issues can be fully explored and considered.
- Plans for and results of consultation and engagement with the people affected by proposed changes, to further understand the equality implications of the proposals. (Any consultation and engagement activity will be proportionate to the significance of equality issues to the budget decision)

7. Diversity in North Somerset

It may also be helpful for Members to reflect on the diversity profile of North Somerset.

The Office of National Statistics 2021 Census results indicate that North Somerset has a population of 216,728 people, 111,422 Female and 105,306 Male

Age group	Population	Percentage
Total	216,7278	100.0
0-15	38,162	17.6
16-64	126,696	58.5
65+	51,870	23.9 ((including 85+ - 7,352 (3.4%))

Sex – There are slightly more females (51.4%) than males (48.6%) in North Somerset. This is in line with the national figures – 51.0% female and 49.0% male)

Race – People from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds make up 4.29% of North Somerset’s population compared to 6.87% of the South West area and 18.95% nationally.

An additional 5.31% of people in North Somerset are from 'Other White Groups', which include Irish, European and other White groups. This compares to 5.29% in the South West and 7.51% nationally.

The 2021 Census asked people to identify their first language:

Main language	North Somerset	England
Does not apply	2.87%	3.19%
English (English or Welsh in Wales)	93.32%	87.90%
Welsh or Cymraeg (in England only)	0.02%	0.01%
Other UK language	0.00%	0.01%
Other European language	2.93%	4.36%
Asian	0.59%	3.41%
African	0.05%	0.36%
Sign language	0.03%	0.05%
Other language	0.20%	0.72%

Disability - Disabled people make up 18.7% of the North Somerset population, 40,533 people. This compares to 17.3% of the population nationally.

Religion and Belief – 46.6% of the population indicate that they are a Christian, with 45.26% indicating they have no religion, those with a religion other than Christianity make up 1.83% of the population.

Nationally the profile is: 46.32% Christianity, 36.67% no religion and 10.99% other religions.

Sexual Orientation – 90.60% of the population of North Somerset indicate they are Straight or Heterosexual, a further 6.76% of people opted to not answer the question. 2.64% of the population of North Somerset identify as Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual or all other sexual orientations.

Nationally the profile of 89.37% Straight or Heterosexual, 7.46% did not answer, 3.17% identify as Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual or all other sexual orientations.

Gender Identity – this was a voluntary question in the 2021 Census. In North Somerset 94.46% of people identify as the same gender that was registered at birth. 5.20% opted not to answer the question with 0.34% of people identifying as having a different sex registered at birth but no specific identity, Trans woman, Trans man, non-binary or all other genders.

Nationally this compares 93.47% of people identify as the same gender that was registered at birth. 5.98% opted not to answer the question with 0.55% of people identifying as having a different sex registered at birth but no specific identity, Trans woman, Trans man, non-binary or all other genders.

Unpaid Carers – in North Somerset 4.80% of the population provide up to 19 hours of unpaid care per week, 1.60% between 20 and 49 unpaid care hours a week and 2.40% of people in North Somerset provide more than 50 unpaid care hours per week.

Armed Forces Community – 4.3% of the population of North Somerset have previously served in the UK Armed Forces or the UK reserve Armed Forces

Deprivation - Within the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 the local authority district with a rank of 1 is the most deprived, and the area ranked 317 is the least deprived. North Somerset is ranked at 221.

North Somerset's rank of 221 for overall deprivation compares to a range of 48 to 274 in the South West. Torbay is the most deprived local authority area (48) in the South West, and Bath and North East Somerset is the least deprived (274). North Somerset has 5 LSOAs within the most deprived 5% in England, all within South and Central wards of Weston-super-Mare. There are 12 LSOAs within the least deprived 5% in England, these are spread across the district.

8. Consultation on the 2024/25 EIAs

Draft EIAs were published through the council's website on 21 December 2023, and Members have been encouraged to review and comment on them.

A stakeholder discussion group was held on 12 January 2024 to share information about the 'medium' or 'high' impact EIAs and to seek feedback on the issues raised.

The discussion group included representatives from:

- Citizens Advice North Somerset
- Voluntary Action North Somerset
- Disability Access Group
- Stand Against Racism and Inequality
- North Somerset People First
- Race Equality North Somerset

Helpful comments have also been received from UNISON.

Any further comments received on the EIAs prior to Members considering the Council's budget at their meeting of 20 February 2024 will also be shared with Members.

8.1 Summary of consultation with the Equality Stakeholder Group

At the consultation meeting information about the council's overall budget position was shared including information about our available resources, areas for budget growth and savings proposals.

The Equality Stakeholder Group welcome the opportunity to support the development of the EIAs by providing their views on the proposals made. It is important to note that their role within the process is not endorse, or otherwise, the budget proposal but to share their expert opinion on how they believe the changes will impact on the communities they represent and support.

They provided specific comments on each of the presented budget proposals, and these have been summarised below and incorporated into the EIAs.

In addition to specific comments, the group noted the cumulative impact of the 3 proposals listed below, with all having a potential greater impact on those in rural areas in North Somerset. When changes are made to transport or services based in localities in urban areas the availability of road networks, public transport, alternative services are often more easily obtained, in rural communities this will be more limited potentially leading to greater isolation and further inequalities in these areas.

8.2 Equality Stakeholder Group comments on 'medium' or 'high' impact EIAs

Helpful, constructive feedback was received on the detailed EIAs that were presented as having a potential 'medium' or 'high' impact on equality groups, these included:

CHTR02/PD19/20 – Review the provision of Home to School Transport services.

- Concerns about the differences in impact for those who live in urban and rural areas, with those in urban areas having better access to walking routes, cycle ways etc.
- The impact (financial, time) on some families who may rely on home to school transport to help them manage travel to work, transport of other school aged children etc.
- Concerns re safety if young people travelling on public transport, particularly for disabled young people.
- What opportunities are there to link with voluntary services, other commercial services to support the delivery of the service?

SPCT02/PD18 – Review the delivery model of community transport.

- More information about the routes, usage etc should be added to the EIA to help the understanding of the impact.
- Concerns re the greater impact in the North of the area as the Weston-super-Mare is well served with other forms of public transport.
- Information was shared re the importance of transport for particularly older and disabled people using community transport for social and connectivity purposes, any reduction to the service could result in increased social isolation for those groups.
- The lack of confidence some disabled people have in accessing public transport.

SPTC01/CH02 – The development of Family Hubs

- The need for the project to consider preserving the important local relationships with equality groups that Children's Centres have developed within their locality, for example Yeo Valley with the Gypsy and Traveller community.
- Culture, literacy, disability, income can all effect the way that the services are accessed. The services offered by Family Hubs should be fully accessible. Transport to the buildings, accessibility within the building itself and the accessibility for all of digital and outreach services all need to be considered.
- Offer of support from the Equality Stakeholder Group to help inform the development of Family Hubs.
- Concerns that the centralising of Family Hubs will have a disproportionate impact on those who live in the rural areas of North Somerset.

8.3 Consultation on council budget and spending

As part of the Corporate Plan and budget development process we undertook an extensive engagement and consultation programme with residents and stakeholders, including Town and Parish Councils and equalities groups. This programme aimed to gather views to inform the development of the Corporate Plan ambitions and budget development including priorities and suggestions for saving and transformation options and was held in two phases, the engagement element for development and then the consultation element once drafts were produced.

Full details of the engagement and consultation programme are published with the papers for Executive on 7 February. Particular themes related to equalities groups include being inclusive in how we work, ensuring good access to services linked to equity of provision, and strengthening how we communicate, engage and consult. We have reflected these themes in our updated vision:

The image displays three vertical pillars representing the updated vision. Each pillar has a circular icon at the top, a colored header with the pillar name, a text box with a definition, and a photograph at the bottom.

- Open:** Icon of a hand holding a person. Header: **Open**. Text: "You told us open means being honest and transparent. It means listening to you and your views on the decisions we make. It means being accountable for how we spend your money and ensuring we provide the very best value we can." Photo: A large group of people sitting in a hall.
- Fair:** Icon of hands joined together. Header: **Fair**. Text: "You told us fair means being accessible and inclusive in how we work. It means listening to the views of all groups and acting on local issues. It means ensuring equity in access to services." Photo: A building entrance with a ramp and a sign.
- Green:** Icon of a globe with leaves. Header: **Green**. Text: "You told us green means we take our responsibility to respond to the climate emergency seriously. It means we do all we can to understand the impact our actions have on the environment and mitigate them where possible." Photo: A man and a woman sitting on the grass talking.

We have also committed to undertaking a systematic review of our success in across the Corporate Plan and MTFP period in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion using the Equality Framework for Local Government. It will be a key driver for how we will assess our progress against our equality commitments and statutory duties.

9 Initial EIAs that identified a potential ‘medium’ or ‘high’ impact.

The tables below provide a summary of the area initially assessed as ‘medium’ or ‘high’ impact and the mitigating actions being taken to reduce the level of potential impact wherever possible.

Theme Reference: **CHTR02**

Children’s Transformation – Home to Schools Transport Services

PD20 – Transformation activity to manage the increasing demand for home to school’s transport services for children and young people within North Somerset

2024/25 saving - £650,000

Reason for Full EIA – Medium impact as a result of the potential changes for school aged pupils including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and those who are from low-income households			
Summary of impacts listed in EIA			
Disabled people	Medium	People in particular age groups	Medium
People from different ethnic groups	No	People in particular faith groups	No
Men or women (including pregnant women or those on maternity leave)	No	People who are married or in a civil partnership	No
Lesbian, gay or bisexual people	No	Transgender people	No
People on a low income	Low	Other groups, Parents and Carers	Low
Impact level before mitigation: Medium			
Mitigation listed in EIA includes:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering a wide range of ways in which young people can travel to school. • Engagement with stakeholders to ensure the best options are identified for the young people affected by any changes to the way they travel to school. • Considering the ways in which young people can be supported through life skills development and Independent Travel Training enabling independence and supporting transition to adulthood. • Early communication of any changes with young people affected and their parents and carers 			
Impact level after mitigation: Low			

Theme Reference: SPTC01 – Services we provide to the community – Children’s Centres

CH02 – The development of Family Hubs

2024/25 saving - £150,000

Reason for Full EIA – Any proposed changes to our Children’s Centres will have an impact on all children and families that use the centres across North Somerset. But we know there is a potential for changes to have a ‘high’ impact for parents and carers. Also, a potential ‘medium’ impact on disabled people, those on a low income, people from different ethnic groups, women and certain age groups including children as some centres provide specific activities for these groups.
Summary of impacts listed in EIA

Disabled people	Low	People in particular age groups	Low
People from different ethnic groups	Medium	People in particular faith groups	No
Men or women (including pregnant women or those on maternity leave)	Medium	People who are married or in a civil partnership	No
Lesbian, gay or bisexual people	No	Transgender people	No
People on a low income	Medium	Other groups: Parents and Carers	High
Impact level before mitigation: High			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing engagement with Equality Stakeholder Group to ensure inclusion is considered in the development of Family Hubs. • Development of outreach service and improved online services from the Family Hubs • The accessibility of Family Hubs will be considered in their development. • More detailed analysis of service use to be considered before implementation 			
Impact level after mitigation: Medium			

Theme Reference: SPTC02 – Services we provide to the community – Transport.
PD18 – Review the delivery model of community transport.
2024/25 saving £55,000

Reason for Full EIA – The initial EIA assessed the potential impact as ‘high’ as we know that Community Transport is most likely to be used by older people, disabled people and those with a low income.			
Summary of impacts listed in EIA			
Disabled people	Medium	People in particular age groups	Medium
People from different ethnic groups	No	People in particular faith groups	No
Men or women (including pregnant women or those on maternity leave)	Low	People who are married or in a civil partnership	No
Lesbian, gay or bisexual people	No	Transgender people	No
People on a low income	High	Other groups Those who live in rural areas of North Somerset	Low
Impact level before mitigation: High			
Mitigation listed in EIA includes:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with current Community Transport providers to encourage them to diversify the portfolio of their work. • A re-focus of Demand Responsive Transport for those with no access to a public bus network • Improved information about current bus network and timetables will be made available in Spring 2024 • Consideration of work that could be done with bus companies to improve disabled people’s confidence to travel on public transport 			
Impact level after mitigation: Medium			

10. Impact on North Somerset Council staff

Given the scale of budget reductions, it is inevitable that there will be some impact on our staff. The council's stated policy is to avoid compulsory redundancy whenever possible, if workforce changes are required, we will commence consultation at the earliest possible opportunity, irrespective of the number of employees involved.

The following staff impacts have been identified in the published EIAs:

- The transformation of Childrens Social Care Services is currently underway, including a review of staffing structures, however it is anticipated that this will be positive as there is a recognition of the challenges faced in Childrens Social Care. The review also anticipates positive opportunities for training and career progression. (CHTR01/CH03)
- There are currently no identified staffing reductions in the proposal to develop family hubs however there may be changes to work base location (SPTC01/CH02)
- One vacant post (since May 2022) will be deleted in libraries. There will also be a reconfiguration of hours of work to give better staff coverage across the week (SPTC01/PD16)
- A review of senior staffing structures is taking place in Adults Directorate. The review will seek to ensure parity and fairness. There is a potential impact on 2 posts, both vacant. (TWWW01/ASS15)
- A proposed review of staff structure in Placemaking and Growth will take place, savings could be met through the deletion of at least 1 vacant post (TWWW01/PD25)
- The plan to close and redevelop Castlewood will require staff who are currently based in Castlewood to have a new office base either at the Town Hall or other office across the district (TWWW02/CSD08)

Please note that the TWWW02/CSD08 – Savings following the closure and redevelopment of Castlewood is recorded as 'Low' impact for Service Users, but 'Medium' Impact for staff before mitigation. The full EIA includes a list of actions that are being taken to reduce the impact on staff to low. Please see full EIA for more information.

10.1 Diversity across Council Workforce

It may be helpful for Members to be aware of the overall profile of the Council's workforce, which is shown below, dated December 2023:

The Council currently employs around 1,560 people outside of schools.

Age - the age profile of the non-school workforce is shown in the table:

Age Range	Percentage
16 - 20	0.9%
21 - 30	11.6%
31 - 40	19.7%
41 - 50	26.2%
51 - 65	38.2%
Over 65	3.3%

Sex – 74.5% of the non-school workforce are female.

Ethnicity – 85% of the non-school workforce are from English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British Groups. The remaining 15% are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and ‘Other White’ groups. (Figures based on the number of staff who have declared their ethnicity on iTrent)

Disability – 15.6% of council staff have declared that they have a disability. (Figures based on the number of staff who have declared if they have a disability on iTrent)

Gender re-assignment, sexual orientation & religion or belief - there is insufficient data currently held to accurately report on the workforce profile in relation to these areas.

11. Cumulative impact of Budget Reduction Proposals

11.1 Introduction

Creating a picture of how people are being affected by the Council’s budget proposals and proposed future changes to services is difficult and complex. People are different in terms of their needs and expectations; people’s interaction with public services and level of support they need will vary considerably.

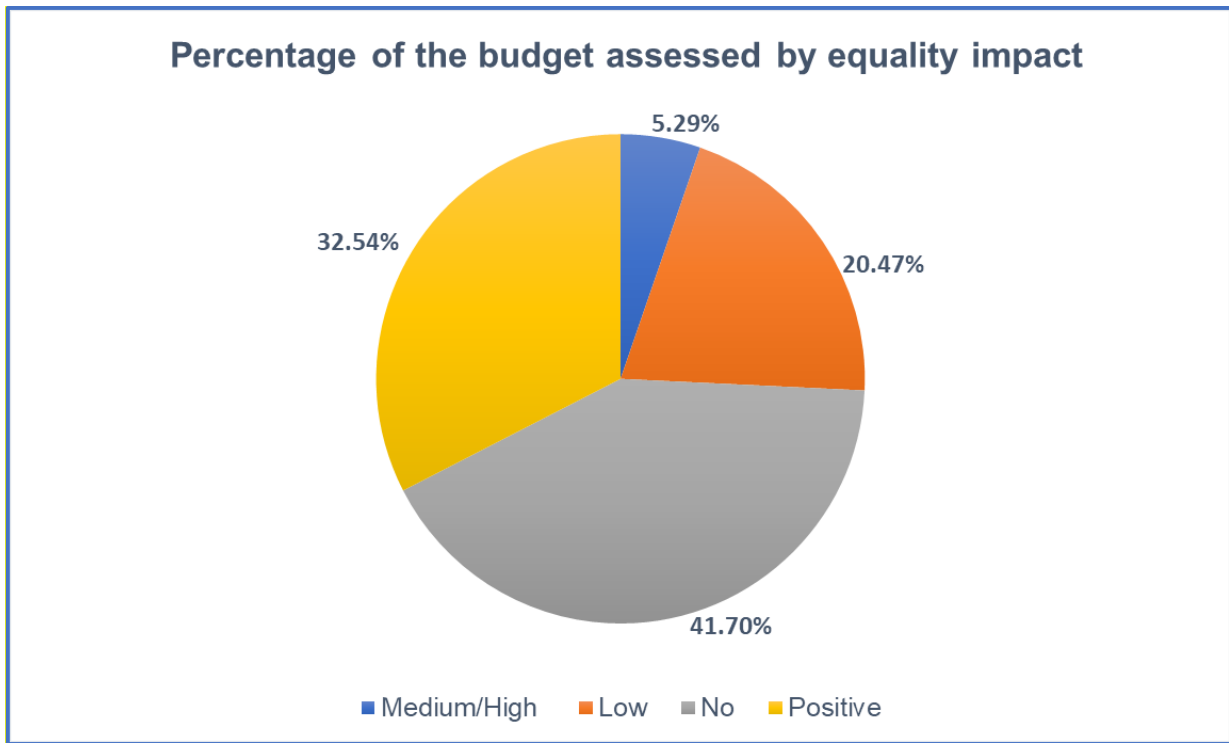
The publication of all EIAs at the same time and altogether in one place (in this report and on the council’s website), in advance of Council considering the 2024/25 budget, should help Members gain an overall picture of the impact of the proposed changes.

In addition, this report identifies areas where protected groups may potentially be more effected by the budget reductions and how they have been considered in more detail and mitigating actions proposed.

11.2 Summary of Equality Impact Assessments

Analysis of the EIAs, show that 50 budget reduction proposals, grouped into 13 themes and have been assessed as having the following potential impact on equality groups:

- 9 assessments indicate that service users should see a positive impact as a result of the budget proposals. The value of these proposals is £5,262,000 or 32.54% of the value of the proposed budget savings.
- 16 assessments indicate that there should be ‘no’ impact on equality groups through the implementation of the budget reduction proposals. The value of these proposals is £6,743,000 or 41.7% of the value of the proposed budget savings.
- 22 assessments indicate that there could be a ‘low’ impact on some equality groups through the implementation of the budget reduction proposals. The value of these proposals is £3,309,000 or 20.47%% of the value of the proposed budget savings.
- 3 assessments indicate that there could be a ‘high’ or ‘medium’ impact on some equality groups through the implementation of the budget proposals. The value of these proposals is £855,000 or 5.29%% of the value if the proposed budget savings. Although it should be noted that after mitigation actions it is assessed that the impact in both ‘high’ and ‘medium’ impact savings will be reduced.



11.3 Positive Impacts

9 of the 2024/25 budget proposals have identified a positive impact on equality groups. Improvements and innovations in delivering services has resulted in improved outcomes for service users, the method of delivery may have changed but positive outcomes are being achieved, examples of these include:

- Building on the existing housing with support plans to accommodate a shift away from residential care options (ADTR02/ASS08)
- Implementing a proactive approach to provide support, debt and recovery advice to ensure service user debts do not increase (ADTR01/ASS12)
- The ongoing development of Technology Enabled Care (TEC) and reablement services to improve long term outcomes for those using adult social care services. (ADTR01/ASS04)
- The re-set and re-design of the delivery of children’s social care to improve outcomes for those children who are currently looked after or on the edge of care. (CHTR01/CH03)

11.4 ‘No’ Impact Assessments

Through their assessments officers have identified 16 areas where they do not anticipate any impact on equality groups because of a change planned in the budget reduction proposals. Examples of the type of savings proposals which would have ‘no’ impact on equality groups include:

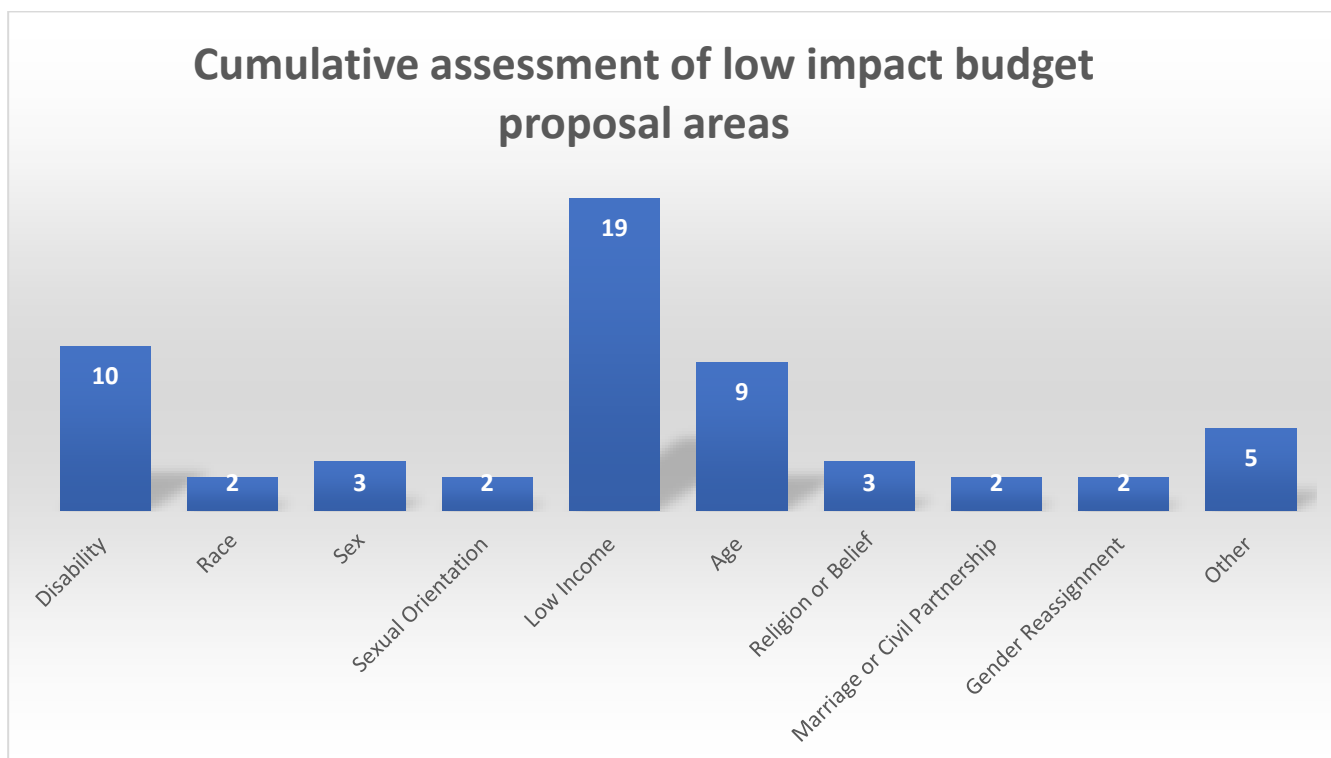
- Technical financial adjustments
- A review of services and contracts provided by external organisations to ensure maximum efficiencies.
- Expansion of the commercial waste service.

- Changing the way we manage council assets by considering a Corporate Landlord Model

11.5 'Low' Impact Assessments'

22 proposals have been identified as having a potential 'low' impact on one or more equality groups.

The table below indicates the cumulative total of officer's assessments of the areas with a low impact:



Of note in this assessment is the impact on those on a low income, those in specific age groups whether older people or children, and disabled people.

Low income – We acknowledge the risk that a cumulative impact of multiple proposals which aim to increase charging may have a negative impact on households who have a low income and people living in poverty unless this is adequately mitigated. We have worked to ensure price increases are kept as low as possible. We have also addressed this risk as far as possible by protecting frontline services and prioritising services for those most in need. Changes in important areas such as social care will continue to adopt a means tested approach to ensure affordability of any proposed changes.

Age – A significant amount of our services is 'age -based', either for children or older people so by default any changes to those services will have an impact on those in a particular age group. Any changes to those services need to ensure they consider the way that people of different ages access services, for example this includes the consideration of the way that older people access information and services when planning digital and online services, young people rely on public transport to access facilities etc.

Disability – Any proposed changes to services must ensure that they continue to consider the need to provide accessible and alternative solutions to enable disabled people to access information and services. Any changes in charges for services that aim to benefit or support disabled people should also be reviewed to ensure we are not impacting upon our duty to advance equality of opportunity.

The impact on service users and council staff continues to be monitored as budget proposals are implemented and measures put in place to further reduce impact wherever possible.

12. Conclusion

Whilst the MTFP for 2024/25 is proposing higher levels of savings than have been required in previous years, the council's budget proposals do also include increased spending plans of over £30 million and over half of this increase will be put into supporting adults and children's social care and transport related budgets.

From an equalities perspective it is very positive to note that the much of the focus associated with the delivery of the £16 million of savings proposals continues to be on driving efficiencies from reviewing the way that we work, transforming our services and also reviewing income to ensure that the council principles of full cost recovery and not subsidising discretionary services are maintained as all of these proposals will help to protect front line services wherever possible. In particular the approach to:

- Maximising independence and well-being in Adult Social Care and providing needs-based services to our children and young people and also
- Reviewing our assets and delivering efficiencies within our processes and the commissioning of our contracts

This is reflected in there being just 3 budget proposals that have been identified as having a potential 'high' or 'medium' impact EIAs.

Through a more detailed review of these savings, officers have identified a range of options to mitigate the impact of the savings and the potential level of impact has been reduced in all 3 budget proposals.

13. Monitoring the Impacts of the budget reduction proposals

Within each EIA there is detailed information about the mitigating actions that are being taken to ensure that any impact is reduced where possible. The budget proposals are regularly monitored by the Corporate Leadership Team, the Executive, and Policy & Scrutiny Panels.

14. Equality Impact Assessments of proposed budget savings for 2024/25 in the Medium Term Financial Plan

Budget Reference	Equality Impact Assessment	Page Number
ADTR01	Adults Transformation – Maximising Independence	16
ADTR02	Adults Transformation – Service Deliver models and efficiency	26
CHTR01	Childrens Transformation – Chidrens Social Care services	33
CHTR02	Children’s Transformation – Home to School Transport	39
INC01	Income linked to inflation	53
INC02	Income linked to Adult Social Care	62
INC03	Income linked to Parking Strategy	68
SPTC01	Services we provide to the Community – Children’s Centres	75
SPTC01	Services we provide to the Community – Libraries	92
SPTC02	Services we provide to the Community – Community Transport	97
TWWW01	The way we work – Service delivery models	110
TWWW02	The way we work – Management of assets	120
TWWW03	The way we work – Managing finance	140
WAST01	Waste Services	145

ADTR01 – Adults Transformation – Maximising Independence

Budget Reference	Budget Proposal
ASS04	Reducing the number / size of new care packages through reablement, Technology Enabled Care (TEC) and other early intervention services.
ASS05	Reviews of existing care packages to ensure that all appropriate Continuing Health Care (CHC) or joint funding is received
ASS07	Identify new Supported Living schemes as a more cost effective and independence maximising alternative to residential placements
ASS09	Single Point of Access – review system and maximise voluntary sector
ASS13	Direct Payments - increase recovery rate of unspent amounts
ASS16	Demand management actions to offset anticipated growth including demographic measures.

Medium Term Financial Plan

Initial Equality Impact Assessment of Budget Proposal 2024/25



1. The Proposal

Budget Theme: **Adults Transformation – Maximising Independence**

Budget reference: **ADTR01**

Budget proposal 2024/25 (£): **£3,150,000**

The following savings are included within this Theme:

Budget Reference	Service Area	Budget Proposal	2024/25 Budget reduction
ASS04	Care in the Community	Reducing the number / size of new care packages through reablement, Technology Enabled Care (TEC) and other early intervention services.	£600,000
ASS05	Care in the Community	Reviews of existing care packages to ensure that all appropriate Continuing Health Care (CHC) or joint funding is received	£500,000
ASS07	Care in the Community	Identify new Supported Living schemes as a more cost effective and independence maximising alternative to residential placements	£100,000
ASS09	Care in the Community	Single Point of Access – review system and maximise voluntary sector	£75,000
ASS13	Care in the Community	Direct Payments - increase recovery rate of unspent amounts	£75,000
ASS16	Care in the Community	Demand management actions to offset anticipated growth including demographic measures.	£1,800,000
Total			£3,150,000

Theme Narrative:

Initiatives designed to support all adults within the community to maximise their independence and to manage demand for council services by focussing efforts on those who need services the most. This will include looking at the services we provide along with partners and other key stakeholders, to expand areas such as reablement and preventative services as well as increasing the types of provision available to residents, for example, delivery of more Supported Living schemes, Extra Care housing places and an increase the use of technology aided care solutions where appropriate.

Summary of changes:

ASS04 - Care in the Community

Reducing the number / size of new care packages through reablement, Technology Enabled Care (TEC) and other early intervention services.

The ongoing development of the Technology Enabled Care (TEC) and Reablement service with revised pathways which focus on therapy and TEC to improve long term outcomes for citizens.

Collaborative working between North Somerset Council, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Sirona led to creation of the Discharge for Access (D2A) business case. The document focuses on redevelopment of the reablement offer and funding through the ICB was agreed. The new service is a collaboration between the multi-disciplinary TEC and Reablement Intervention (TRI) Team, Access Your Care, and the wellness services to deliver a proactive and preventative service which supports the D2A process and improve outcomes for individuals. There is an improved offer for plus sized people and scope for increased staffing resource within these services. If necessary, a Care Act Assessment will be completed once the reablement pathway is completed.

There is ongoing improvement to align with hospital discharge pathways, involving closer working with Sirona and an improved access to TEC and dedicated occupational therapist support for strategic domiciliary care providers. This will enable improved outcomes from provider reviews over the reablement pathway. There is a reduction in packages of care and higher proportion of clients no longer requiring care following successful reablement outcomes.

ASS05 - Care in the Community

Reviews of existing care packages to ensure that all appropriate Continuing Health Care (CHC) or joint funding is received.

When assessing and reviewing the needs of people consideration is given whether the assessed needs relate to their health conditions, an assessment for Continuing Health Care (CHC), to determine their eligibility. It is beneficial for people to access this funding because it is not subject to a financial contribution, and it ensures that their care is co-ordinated by the relevant health organisation. When a

person has been in receipt of Local Authority funding and the responsibility transfers to the Integrated Care Board (ICB) there is a saving.

The dedicated resource that is in place has been very successful in supporting people to achieve CHC funding, the team have expert knowledge of the Continuing Health Care Framework and its application.

The CHC Team will continue to support the operational teams to make CHC applications for people who it is considered may have a primary health need.

ASS07 - Care in the Community

Identify new Supported Living schemes as a more cost effective and independence maximising alternative to residential placements.

Continuation of the Housing with Support Strategy approach to developing further supported living schemes.

This proposal includes the plan to build on the foundations of the existing housing with support plans to an accommodation shift away from residential care options and alternatives for older people and those with learning disabilities.

This includes:

- The development of housing for people with a learning disability with support in place to meet individual's needs. This is supporting a change that allows people with a learning disability and their families to have choices that support self-determination and values including choice and independence. Housing with support offers the opportunity to remain in your local area close to friends and families and established networks, this isn't always available when considering residential care options. This option is based on tenancies that support people being able to keep their home and change care which is not available with residential care.
- There are plans being proposed for 12 self-contained flats being developed in Weston with the aim that these would be available early 2024; This will be able to provide long term secure accommodation to people with learning disabilities and/or people with physical disabilities. The scheme is in partnership with Freeways.
- There are plans to create a framework for developers who can be approached to develop smaller self-contained units in key locations across North Somerset to further secure long-term accommodation for people with learning disabilities and / or physical disabilities.

ASS09 - Care in the Community

Single Point of Access – review system and maximise voluntary sector.

We are undertaking a review of our Single Point of Access system, with the aim of ensuring referrals are completed as quickly as possible with maximising the independence of people as its priority. This will result in earlier solutions of problems

that may be resolved from provision of improved information and advice and onward referral to universal services available from NSC or such as community meals or activity groups provided by the Voluntary Community or Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. This will be enhanced by the current work on improving information and advice services from the refresh and replacement of the existing North Somerset Online Directory.

ASS13 - Care in the Community

Direct Payments - increase recovery rate of unspent amounts

Working with Liberata, the Direct Payments (DP) support team will ensure that robust reviews are regularly undertaken of how DP funds are allocated, ensuring that underutilised resources are recovered promptly and that resources to support the individual are applied appropriately. Previous exercises have identified the need to recover unallocated resources that accumulate.

ASS16 - Care in the Community

Demand management actions to offset anticipated growth including demographic measures.

We will continue to transform services to ensure our maximising independence measures reduce ongoing demand for services and offset the anticipated growth measures our demographics would indicate. These measures offset growth and ensure specific grants are targeted at enabling care provider sustainability and workforce challenges are prioritised. These measures include deployment of TEC, expansion of our extra care and supported living capacity and improved information and advice services.

Is any of the proposals within this theme a continuation of a previous medium-term financial plan saving?

Yes **No**

If yes, please insert reference number and year of assessment?

Budget Proposal	Year of assessment	Budget Reference
ASS-04 Reablement	2023	ASS03
ASS-05 CHC	2023	ASS05
ASS-07 Supported Living	2023	ASS08

If yes, please describe what steps you have taken to review the equality impacts from previous years?

We have reviewed consequential impacts from previous measures and sought to mitigate actions to ensure positive or neutral impacts are identified.

2. Customer equality impact summary

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups?

Budget Proposal	Equality Impacts – Please consider any potential equalities impacts based on the protected groups below. Please answer High (H), Medium (M), Low (L) or None (N)										Positive (+) or Negative (-)
	Disabled People, including those who are neurodiverse	Race	Men or Women, including those who are pregnant	Sexual Orientation	People on a low income	Age	Religion or belief or none	Marriage or civil partnership	Gender reassignment	Other, for example parents, carers or the Armed Forces.*	
ASS04 – Reablement	L	L	N	N	L	L	N	N	N		+
ASS05 – CHC	H	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		+
ASS07 – New Supported Living	H	N	N	N	H	H	N	N	N		+
ASS09 – SPA	M	L	N	L	M	M	L	N	N		+
ASS13 – Direct Payments	L	L	N	N	L	N	N	N	N		+
ASS16 – Demand Management	L	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		+

3. Explanation of customer impact

ASS04 - Care in the Community

Reducing the number or size of new care packages through reablement, Technology Enabled Care (TEC) and other early intervention services.

The impacts offer positive alternatives and greater independence through an enhanced therapy offer. Whilst Technology Enable Care (TEC) has the potential to benefit all, its scope to maximise the independence of disabled and older people receiving reablement following hospital discharge is particularly positive. Some TEC is customable to other languages and can offer translation capacity so has wider benefits, whilst it can also be inexpensive e.g. Alexa.

ASS05 - Care in the Community

Reviews of existing care packages to ensure that all appropriate Continuing Health Care (CHC) or joint funding is received.

Whether a person receives CHC funding, or joint funded between the Local Authority and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) it should not affect the delivery of their care. There will be continuity of care should it be transferred from the Local Authority to the ICB.

People who are deemed eligible for CHC do not financially contribute to their care. It is beneficial for people who have an elevated level of care needs to have these coordinated by a health care professional.

ASS07 - Care in the Community

Identify new Supported Living schemes as a more cost effective and independence maximising alternative to residential placements.

The outcomes so far show that this way of working has a positive impact for users and their families and helps support people's local connections and closeness to their local networks, friends, and families. It also provides an assured secure tenancy with options for users to choose who supports their care needs.

The groups identified are reflected as predominantly needing this type of accommodation being developed and whom have been mostly impacted by a lack of choices around care, with residential care, often placed outside of the local area, generally being the only option.

Having suitable accommodation situated within the local area also has a positive impact on parent carers, including their health and wellbeing.

ASS09 - Care in the Community

Single Point of Access – review system and maximise voluntary sector.

Ideally referrals to the SPA will be resolved at an earlier stage, ensuring that appropriate information and advice is shared online or via the call and targeted referrals ensure quicker outcomes that maximise an individual independence. An improved signposting and referral service will benefit disabled people the most, earlier involvement with specialist faith and race groups to support individuals maximise their independence.

ASS13 - Care in the Community

Direct Payments - increase recovery rate of unspent amounts.

This will ensure underutilised resources are identified earlier and recovered and any concerns are rectified from regular monitoring. This will ensure more certainty over resources is in place and support the individual manage their resources. This will have low impact benefits across all groups.

ASS16 - Care in the Community

Demand management actions to offset anticipated growth including demographic measures.

The transformation activities from TEC, accommodation shift etc are ensuring future demand for services are minimised from improving independence and wellbeing leading to better outcomes for all our citizens. This will have a low impact particularly for disabled people where access to TEC will have the most impact.

Please describe how you will communicate these changes to your customers.

The communication routes will be specific to each individual proposal dependent on the assessed level of engagement/consultation and the consequential impact, albeit these are broadly positive or neutral across all categories.

4. Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal?

Yes

No

Explanation of staff impact

None

6. Review and Sign Off

Service Manager Review

Insert any service manager comments here:

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed? **Yes**

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed?

During 2024/25 as each project is implemented a separate Equality Impact Assessment will be completed.

Service Manager:

Gerald Hunt

Date:

19 January 2024

ADTR02 - Adults transformation - service delivery models and efficiency

Budget Reference	Budget Proposal
ASS08	Commissioning arrangements for Learning Disability and Mental Health Services - return to NSC/local provision
ASS11	Review future specific grants - Housing and Social Care
ASS12	Improved debt collections/recovery. Supported by advice from Voluntary Sector.
ASS14	Better Care Fund - Inflation on adult protection element - contribution to increased costs
ASS17	Mental Health delivery & AWP integration.
ASS18	Implementation of home care resourcing to optimise planned activity

Medium Term Financial Plan Equality Impact Assessment of Budget Proposal 2024/25



1. The Proposal

Budget Theme: Adults transformation - service delivery models and efficiency

Budget reference: ADTR02

Budget proposal 2024/25 (£): £1,340,000

The following savings are included within this Theme:

Budget Reference	Service Area	Budget Proposal	2024/25 Budget reduction
ASS08	Care in the Community	Commissioning arrangements for Learning Disability and Mental Health Services - return to NSC/local provision	£200,000
ASS11	All directorate	Review future specific grants - Housing and Social Care	£500,000
ASS12	Care in the Community	Improved debt collections/recovery. Supported by advice from Voluntary Sector.	£75,000
ASS14	All directorate	Better Care Fund - Inflation on adult protection element - contribution to increased costs	£365,000
ASS17	Mental Health	Mental Health delivery & AWP integration.	£100,000
ASS18	Care in the Community	Implementation of home care resourcing to optimise planned activity	£100,000
Total			£1,340,000

Theme Narrative:

A package of measures designed to look at how we deliver services to ensure that they are efficient, fit for purpose and make the best use of resources available. This includes making sure that we obtain best value from our contracts, reviewing delivery models, allocating external funding to those services in greatest need and looking at ways that other sectors can provide help and support, for example, by investing in debt advice.

Summary of changes:

ASS08- Care in the Community

Commissioning arrangements for Learning Disability and Mental Health Services - return to NSC/local provision.

This includes the plan to build on the foundations of the existing housing with support plans to an accommodation shift away from residential care options and alternatives for those with Learning Disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health and autism, and includes young adults transitioning through pathways to adulthood. Having suitable accommodation, and care provision situated within the local area is the priority.

ASS11- All directorate

Review future specific grants - Housing and Social Care.

Within both housing and social care, our existing investment on transformational activity aligns with focused government grant priorities, which has led to some efficiency in investment.

ASS12 - Care in the Community

Improved debt collections/recovery. Supported by advice from Voluntary Sector.

Income from charging is a significant source of funding for Adult Care but requires sensitivity in recovery measures. We are keen to implement a proactive support service for debtors that is not focused on recovery, but rather ensuring our debtors have timely access to support, debt, and benefit advice to ensure bad debts do not mature. This is a proactive and supportive measure commissioned by subject experts in the VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) sector and independent and arm's length from any debtor recovery procedure.

ASS14 - All directorate

Better Care Fund - Inflation on adult protection element - contribution to increased costs.

This is not a saving as such, but a technical adjustment to reflect the inflation passed on through the Better Care Fund that contributes to increased inflationary costs across adult social care. This has impact on those who use our services.

<p>ASS17 - Mental Health Mental Health delivery & Avon and Wiltshire Partnership NHS mental health trust (AWP) integration.</p> <p>Reviewing current usage of sub-let accommodation and IT provision within the Avon and Wiltshire Partnership NHS Mental Health Trust (AWP) considering changes to integrated ways of working.</p> <p>This will be reviewed and renegotiated with AWP based on changes to working practices (Hybrid working) and potential changes to the integrated model and a move to data entry within the local authorities recording systems.</p> <p>At this point, the full detail has not been agreed with AWP, and the final model and finalised savings in this area are dependent on this ongoing work.</p>
<p>ASS18 - Care in the Community Implementation of home care resourcing to optimise planned activity</p> <p>Optimising the delivery of home care resources delivered across North Somerset commissioned care providers will deliver both financial efficiency and reduce our carbon footprint. This will involve commissioning interventions to incentivise providers to deliver efficiencies, flexibility where appropriate from resource allocation models used in our local market.</p>

Is any of the proposals within this theme a continuation of a previous medium-term financial plan saving?

No Yes

If yes, please insert reference number and year of assessment?

Budget Proposal	Year of assessment	Budget Reference
ASS-14 – Better Care Fund Inflation	2023	ASS01
ASS-17 – Mental Health /AWP integration	2023	ASS10

If yes, please describe what steps you have taken to review the equality impacts from previous years?

These have been updated and reviewed and where equality impacts have been identified, the revised savings proposals modified, e.g., AWP proposal will not impact on service delivery.

2. Customer equality impact summary

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups?

Budget Proposal	Equality Impacts – Please consider any potential equalities impacts based on the protected groups below. Please answer High (H), Medium (M), Low (L) or None (N)										Positive (+) or Negative (-)
	Disabled People, including those who are neurodiverse	Race	Men or Women, including those who are pregnant	Sexual Orientation	People on a low income	Age	Religion or belief or none	Marriage or civil partnership	Gender reassignment	Other, for example parents, carers or the Armed Forces. *	
ASS08	H	L	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		+
ASS11	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		
ASS12	H	N	N	N	H	H	N	N	N		+
ASS14	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		
ASS17	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		
ASS18	L	N	N	N	N	L	N	N	N		+/-

3. Explanation of customer impact

ASS08- Care in the Community

Commissioning arrangements for Learning Disability and Mental Health Services - return to NSC/local provision.

The outcomes so far show that this way of working has a positive impact for users and their families and helps support people's local connections and closeness to their local networks, friends, and families.

It also provides an assured secure tenancy with options for users to choose who supports their care needs.

The groups identified are reflected as predominantly needing this type of accommodation and support being developed and whom have been mostly impacted by a lack of choices around care, with residential care, often placed outside of the local area, generally being the only option.

Having suitable accommodation, and care provision situated within the local area also has a positive impact on parent carers, including their health and wellbeing.

ASS11- All directorate

Review future specific grants - Housing and Social Care

There are no equality impacts identified as a result of this proposal.

ASS12 - Care in the Community

Improved debt collections/recovery. Supported by advice from Voluntary Sector

Positive proactive support on debt management and support with grant and benefits to support charge recovery will be a positive outcome during this cost-of-living crisis. This will benefit all groups but particularly older people, disabled people, and those on a low income.

ASS14 - All directorate

Better Care Fund - Inflation on adult protection element - contribution to increased costs

This proposal is a technical financial adjustment so there are no impacts anticipated.

ASS17 - Mental Health

Mental Health delivery & AWP integration.

Organisational changes are not anticipated to have any equality impacts.

ASS18 - Care in the Community

Implementation of home care resourcing to optimise planned activity.

Optimising home care delivery will increase capacity available and reduce any delays on package delivery which will be positive, to optimise aggregated delivery may require individual compromise on time of delivery of care which may have some individual dissatisfaction, these will have most impact on older or disabled people, where care interventions may be most time sensitive. Any changes will be discussed with those effected by any changes.

Please describe how you will communicate these changes to your customers.

We will communicate with those effected by any of the proposals listed to ensure they are aware of any impact. It is anticipated that all savings, apart from ASS18 will have a positive impact.

4. Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal? Yes No

Explanation of staff impact

None

6. Review and Sign Off

Service Manager Review

Insert any service manager comments here:

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed? No Yes

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed?

During 2024/25 as each project is implemented a separate Equality Impact Assessment will be completed.

Service Manager:

Gerald Hunt

Date:

19 January 2024

CHRT01 – Childrens Transformation – Childrens Social Care Services

Budget Reference	Budget Proposal
CH03	Implementation of the council's Valuing Care programme which seeks to change the approach in how children currently in care and those on the edge of care are supported, ensuring that decisions are focused on their needs and best practice. Evidence shows that this will result in better outcomes for the children and young people, as well as achieve a reduction in costs and / or cost avoidance in the future.

Medium Term Financial Plan

Initial Equality Impact Assessment of Budget Proposal 2024/25



1. The Proposal

Budget Theme: Childrens transformation - Childrens social care services

Budget reference: CHTR01

Budget proposal 2024/25 (£): £1,837,000

The following savings are included within this Theme:

Budget Reference	Service Area	Budget Proposal	2024/25 Budget reduction
CH03	Directorate Wide	Implementation of the council's Valuing Care programme which seeks to change the approach in how children currently in care and those on the edge of care are supported, ensuring that decisions are focused on their needs and best practice. Evidence shows that this will result in better outcomes for the children and young people, as well as achieve a reduction in costs and / or cost avoidance in the future.	£1,837,000

Theme Narrative:

The Valuing Care transformation programme is a complete re-set and re-design of how the council will deliver children's social care services in the future and aims to improve outcomes for those children who are currently looked after or on the edge of care by providing evidence based and needs focused services to support them.

All aspects of service delivery and the way we work will be reviewed to ensure that the social work teams, systems and processes and decision-making frameworks reflect best practice and are efficient and effective in supporting our children and young people.

The programme will enable the service to address some of the issues and challenges currently being faced, such as rising demand, complexity of need, staffing shortages

and capacity issues within the marketplace, such as a lack of foster carers or suitable residential placements.

The council recognises that this work cannot be delivered in isolation and will continue to work with partners and stakeholders who also have a role to play in improving the outcomes for these children, as well as IMPOWER, who have been commissioned to support the programme, given their success in other councils.

Summary of changes:

Several components of the Valuing Care programme are still being developed which means that further and more detailed equalities assessments will be required. It is anticipated that this EIA will be reviewed in January 2024, with further updates planned for April, June, and September 2024.

Areas that are likely to change that could have an impact include:

- Social work teams and staffing structures – aim is to ensure that the council has enough staff in place and that these teams are structured and managed effectively.

A review will consider numbers of FTE's, grades, management, and leadership arrangements. This is not likely to have a detrimental impact on staff as the current position indicates a lack of capacity in this area; it is anticipated that proposals will deliver a positive impact for both the staff and children who are being supported.

- A proportion of children and young people will be stepped down from their current care provision the aim is to ensure that support provided by the council continues to meet the assessed need but reduces the support in some areas. Examples of change in this area could see a step down from a residential based setting into a foster care placement, or perhaps a step down from foster care to family-based care, where this may be considered appropriate. The care plans for individual children will continue to be monitored by their social workers and their independent reviewing officers to ensure that their needs are being met.

The council recognises that all children in young people in care have a right to family life which means that residential settings may not be an appropriate solution for most children to stay in until they are 18 and so in line with their care plan the council will look to step down children who are currently in residential or unregistered care placements to alternative forms of provision and / or potentially reunification with their families.

Significant work will be undertaken before changes could be considered by the new social care panels to increase the success of any potential proposals that are made including activity such as regular reviews of care plans and needs

2. Customer equality impact summary

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups?

Insert X into one box per row, for impact level and type.

H = High, M = Medium, L = Low, N = None

+ = Positive, = = Neutral, - = Negative

Impact Level	Impact type						
	H	M	L	N	+	=	-
Disabled people (Including consideration of neurodiversity)				X			
People from different ethnic groups				X			
Men or women (including those who are pregnant or on maternity leave)				X			
People who are LGBTQ+				X			
People on a low income		X			X		
People in particular age groups		X			X		
People in particular faith groups				X			
People who are married or in a civil partnership				X			
People who are undergoing gender reassignment				X			
Other specific impacts, for example: carers, parents, armed forces community, impact on health and wellbeing. Please specify: Families of children who are looked after.		X			X		

3. Explanation of customer impact

Children who are looked after are defined in part by their age and so are within a protected equalities group. A lot of children who are looked after also come from

families who may have lower levels of income which means that money can often be an issue within the family.

It is assessed that these proposals will be positive for the children and young people and their families as changes mean that their needs would be met within a family environment that is closer or within North Somerset. These measures would also allow the council to better support young people during their transition to leaving care.

Please describe how you will communicate these changes to your customers:

Young people, their families and their independent reviewing officers would be fully consulted on any proposals, so their views are heard and understood and incorporated into the care planning process.

4. Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal? No Yes

Explanation of staff impact

As noted above it is anticipated that there will be changes to the staffing structures however the work to review and complete this activity has not yet been finalised. It is estimated that the planned changes in terms of overall numbers of staff will be positive as the services are currently very stretched; and there will also be positive opportunities for training, development and career progression as the council seeks to build a workforce that not only supports our young people, but also one that delivers best practice.

6. Review and Sign Off

Service Manager Review

Insert any service manager comments here:

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed? Yes No

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed?

The further assessment will be completed in January 2024 (outside of the MTFP process) although this will continue to be updated when significant milestones of the Valuing Care programme are implemented. Monitoring information will also be retained which will enable the council to set targets and monitor outcomes.

Service Manager: Claire Shiels

Date: 19 January 2024

CHTR02 – Children’s Transformation – Home to School Transport

Budget Reference	Budget Proposal
PD19	Transformation activity to manage the increasing demand for home to school’s transport services for children and young people within North Somerset

Medium Term Financial Plan

Equality Impact Assessment of Budget Proposal in 2024/25



Where 'Yes/No' options please 'bold appropriate answer

Service area: Home to School Transport
Budget reference: PD19 / CHTR02
Budget proposal in 2024/25 (£): £650,000
Assistant Director/Director: Gemma Dando
EIA review due date: Spring 2024

Budget Ref.	Budget Proposal	Budget Reduction £			
		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
PD20	Transformation activity to manage the increasing demand for home to school's transport services for children and young people within North Somerset	£650,000	£717,000	£1,400,000	£1,000,000

Equality Impacts

Please make High, Medium or Low 'bold' as appropriate

Service User Impact

Before mitigating actions	High	Medium	Low
After mitigating actions	High	Medium	Low

Staff Impact

Before mitigating actions	High	Medium	Low
After mitigating actions	High	Medium	Low

1. The Proposal

1.1 Background to proposal

Transformation activity proposes to manage the increasing demand for home to school transport services for children and young people within North Somerset. This programme will review and update our policies and approach to service delivery to maintain the provision of statutory services, whilst reducing the cost of transport services. There is a requirement to review our suite of Home to School Transport Policies in line with changes to the Statutory Guidance (revision published August 2023)

A statutory service is provided where an application for Home to School Transport demonstrates that the following criteria have been met:

- Statutory school age
Children must be between the age of 5 and 16.
- Statutory walking distances
Children under the age of 8 who attend their nearest suitable school where it is more than 2 miles from their home.
Children aged 8 and over who attend their nearest suitable school where it is more than 3 miles from their home.
- Nearest suitable school
The nearest suitable school for the purposes of home to school travel assistance is the nearest suitable school to their home address that is (or would have been) able to offer them a place. This is determined at the point of application by the Authority during the school admission process.
- Safe walking routes
Walking routes are calculated between the child's home address and nearest school entrance where a safe walking route exists.
- Special educational needs, disabilities (SEND) and mobility problems
Home to school travel assistance will be provided where the young person is attending the nearest suitable school but because of their special educational needs, disability or mobility problems could not reasonably be expected to walk there, irrespective of the distance or whether there is a safe walking route.
- Extended Rights
Applicants will qualify for free home to school assistance if they are entitled to free school meals, or if financial means testing criteria are met.

Non statutory services reflect the discretion the council considers in circumstances where eligibility criteria (see above has not been met). Examples of that are:

- Children under 5 years of age who are accessing a nursery provision within an all age setting and are on the school roll.
- Parental disability or where multiple siblings attend different schools.
- Post 16 travel
- Discretionary applications on a case by case basis.

The transformation seeks to cost mitigate £650,000 during 2024/24. This is a saving against what represents a significant area of spend for the Council and where ongoing cost pressures due to both rising demand and cost increases, are no longer sustainable.

A piece of work is underway with consultants to determine how we make this saving, and we think there is potential for savings related to the range of transport offers available and how we can deliver those differently. This work will also review non statutory (discretionary) services such as post-16 travel, we plan to engage with relevant stakeholders and complete the work to identify the best options to reduce costs in the most equitable way.

When that work is completed by consultants, an option paper will be presented to Corporate Leadership Team that will detail the opportunities to reduce costs of these services, this report will include an updated EIA. Any changes should be part of a suite of measures that continue to offer a means of support to those continuing their home to school transport experience as well as into further education. There will be a focus on obtaining life skills that enables pupil's independence and supports transition to adulthood that equally works alongside reducing the budget.

This EIA will be updated in spring 2024 with the outcomes from that work and engagement with stakeholders to enable reassessment and for it to be re-presented as part of the decision-making process.

1.2 Please detail below how this proposal may impact on any other organisation and their customers.

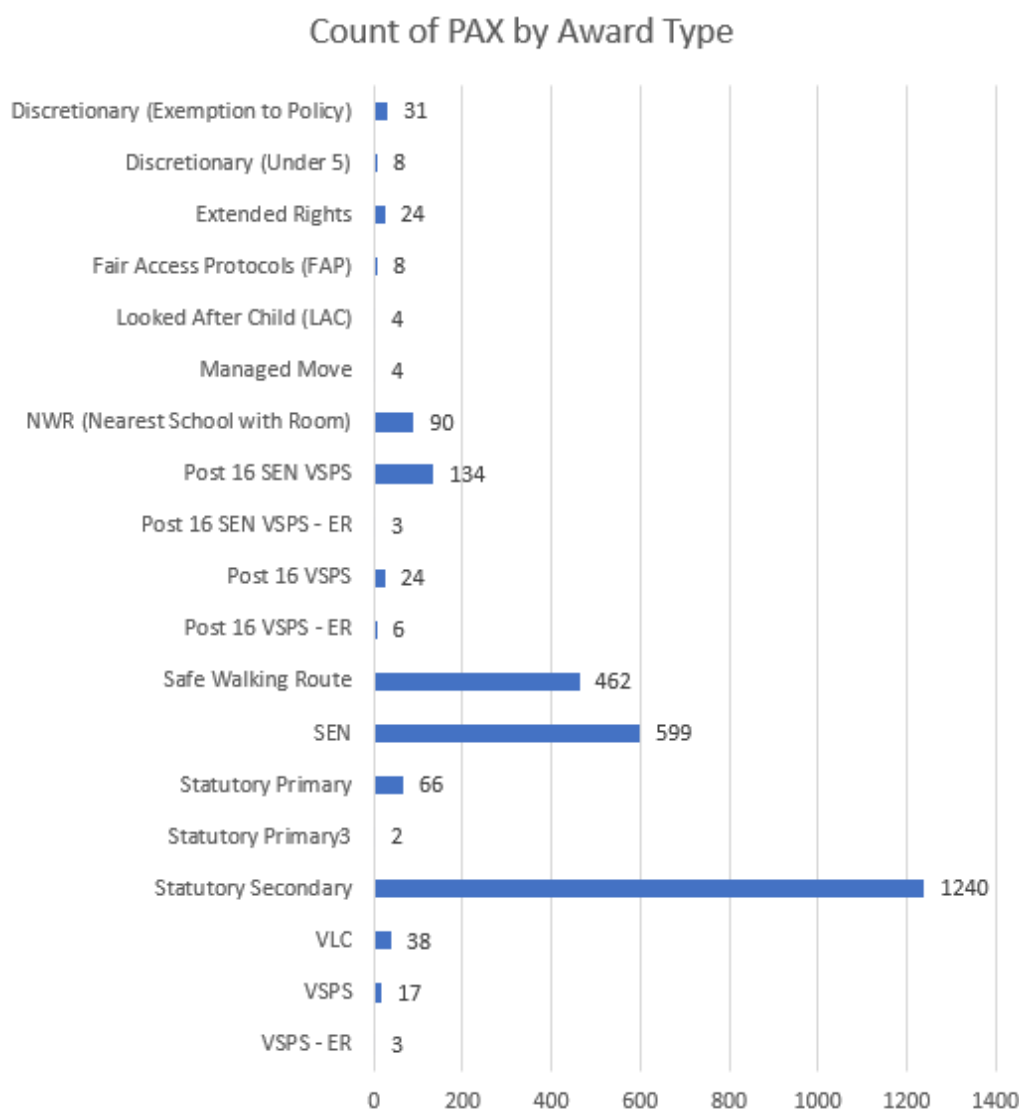
Not known at this time but the ongoing engagement with stakeholders will provide clarity on impacts.

Section 2 – What Do We Know?

2.1 Customer/staff profile details – what data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be, affected?

Until the consultant work has completed and an options paper has been prepared, the full details of who may be affected are not finalised. However non-statutory transport provision will include students aged 4 to 19 years of age.

Within the academic year 2024 to date, there are 2,763 passengers in receipt of a travel offer/award. Of those, 227 young people are non-statutory and in receipt of a discretionary award. Award types are offered as follows:



Key:

Vacant Seat Payment Scheme (VSPS)

Voyage Learning Campus, Pupil Referral Unit (VLC)

Extended Rights (ER)

2.2 What does the data or evidence tell us about the potential impact on diverse groups, and how is this supported by historic experience/data?

Whilst groups such as those on low incomes may be affected by any changes, low-income households are exempt from fees in accordance with current policy and means testing criteria.

Of the 227 young people that are in receipt of a discretionary award, there are 12 passengers who qualify for an exemption and would not likely be affected by proposals.

We don't yet know which of the young people using the service will be subject to any change in how we deliver services. This is the work that the consultants are doing to help inform the decisions.

2.3 Are there any gaps in the data, for example across protected characteristics where information is limited or not available?

We do not hold information on religion, sexual orientation or gender reassignment within the service, but this is not deemed to be relevant to the proposed service changes.

2.4 How have we involved or considered the views of the people that could be affected?

A draft of this Equality Impact Assessment was shared with Equality Stakeholders on 12 January 2024. They made the following helpful comments and observations:

Comment	Response
Please make it clear what elements of Home to School Transport are statutory and non-statutory	Amended the EIA
Please explain in more detail what is meant by promoting life skills and encouraging independence and why this is important/relevant	Amended the EIA
Concerns re difference in outcomes between rural and urban communities, for example those who	The revisions to policy will offer a greater range of transport awards which are both flexible and diverse.

<p>live in urban areas will be well served by public transport, better road links, footways, street lighting etc. With this being a more significant challenge for those accessing schools in rural areas.</p>	<p>This will include Parental Travel Budgets where appropriate, but we are equally keen to link our offers with the Active Travel Strategy where safe walking routes and public/demand responsive transport offer wider benefits within the community.</p>
<p>What opportunities are there for linking with commercial services to help support this proposal?</p>	<p>The Home to School service operates within an Integrated Transport model that considers the wider opportunities that may benefit our communities. We take those opportunities to the commercial market to capture interest and availability.</p>
<p>Concern that responsibility re transport and cost will switch to families who may rely on the Home to School Transport Service</p>	<p>Parental Travel Budgets options are by mutual agreement. In many cases they are suited to meeting specialist medical needs, but budgets can also be used within communities collaboratively to procure local solutions. The budget requires pupils access their placement rather than how they do so.</p>
<p>Does the council have the capacity for individual support and assessment?</p>	<p>Independent Travel Training (ITT) is a means of providing individual assessment and support towards achieving independence and obtaining key life skills. We do not have dedicated ITT resources at present and so we await the recommendation(s) from the transformation process to take that forward.</p>
<p>Are there opportunities to link with the voluntary sector to support the delivery of the Home to School Transport service?</p>	<p>Yes. We actively work with Community Transport Associations who supply us with community transport solutions such as ring a ride, Home to School and Community Meals solutions. We welcome the opportunity to expand on that where we can support with training and development needs.</p>

<p>Concerns re pupil safety on public transport particularly for young people with a disability.</p>	<p>Safety is paramount and officers will assess that needs can be met within any transport offer made. We work closely with our schools, parent/carers and supporting agencies to consider that. Our current policy offers information on the role of parent/carer accompaniment as part of the journey experience. Independent Travel Training (ITT) will seek to enable and support young people to safely access appropriate modes of transport.</p>
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We will consult on any changes to existing provision including stakeholder groups such as the parent carer forum and post-16 education providers. We will communicate with parents/carers any changes to a current transport offer.

2.5 What has this told us?

Please see table above.

2.6 Are there any gaps in our consultation, what are our plans for the future?

Further consultation with stakeholder groups will be undertaken as the transformation work is being conducted and the proposed way forward is more clearly understood. This is expected in February 2024 to enable consultation to inform decision-making in time for any changes to policy to be published by 31st May 2024.

Section 3 – Assessment of Impact

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups? Please describe the nature of the impact in 'Summary of Impact' column. You should describe both negative and positive impacts.

Assessment of impact should include the consideration of Public Sector Equality Duties as listed in [section 149 of The Equality Act 2010](#), specifically:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Please indicate the impact level and impact type with an 'X' for each of the groups listed below.

Impact Level

H = High, M = Medium, L = Low, N = None

Impact Type

+ = Positive, = = Neutral, - = Negative

Impact Level

Impact Type

Summary of Impact

	H	M	L	N	+	=	-	
Disabled people (including consideration of neurodiversity)		x					x	Changes to discretionary/non-statutory provision may impact on those young people with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) that are not of statutory school age and those who are not entitled to free or subsidised transport.
People from different ethnic groups				x				We do not collect this data.
Men or women (including those who are pregnant or on maternity leave)				x				Out of the 2,773 young people who are accessing the service we know that 56.8% are male. Therefore, any changes to the service is likely to have a disproportionate impact on males.
People who are LGBTQ+				x				We do not collect this data.
People on a low income			x				x	Parents on low incomes may be affected by any changes that involve costs or contributions, but mitigations already exist such as 16-19 bursary and means testing.

Impact Level	Impact Type				Summary of Impact			
	H	M	L	N	+	=	-	
People in particular age groups		x					x	Any change to the delivery of the service will have an impact on school age children. The changes proposed are likely to include alternative modes of transport and impacts could include additional travelling time or sharing travel provision where appropriate. However, enabling independent travel can also offer positive impacts and outcomes. E.g. develop key life skills and health benefits where walking/cycling involved.
People in particular faith groups				x				We do not collect this data.
People who are married or in a civil partnership				x				We do not collect this data.
People who are undergoing gender reassignment				x				We do not collect this data.
Other specific impacts, for example: carers, parents, Armed Forces Community, impact on health and wellbeing. Please specify: Parents			x				x	Parents on low incomes may be affected by any changes that involve costs or contributions, but mitigations already exist such as 16-19 bursary and means testing.

Could this proposal have a cumulative impact with any other service areas?

This is an impact that occurs when you consider services or activities together; a change or activity in one area may create an additional impact somewhere else, this maybe within or outside of your directorate or service area. For example, changing the venue for delivery of a service and there being a change to public transport in the same area.

Yes

No

Although it should be noted that there is potential for partnership and collaborative working with Community Transport providers. A budget saving is currently proposed for Community Transport (SPTC01).

If 'yes', please describe?

Section 4 – Staff Impact

Is there an anticipated impact on North Somerset Council staff as a result of this proposal?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe the nature of the impact, including how many posts could be affected, please state whether they are vacant, or filled permanently or temporarily.

If there is going to be a reduction in the number of posts please indicate the number of FTE

Not applicable

Section 5 - Action Plan

Where you have listed that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	How will it be monitored?
Consultant workstream to identify options	Formal decision-making process
Consultation with key stakeholder groups	Review and response to feedback published

Early communication of any changes to policy

Publish any changes by 31st May ahead of new academic year

If negative impacts remain after the above actions have been taken, please provide an explanation below.

Impact on parents with low incomes will be mitigated through the 16–19 year-old bursary and means testing (currently applied)

Please set out how you plan to communicate these changes with your service users.

Engagement with stakeholders will be undertaken to help identify and refine the options to achieve cost savings in the most equitable way.

Where any changes to policy necessitate the need to consult, we will do so in line with council process. In doing so, we will seek the support of our stakeholders to ensure we capture the views of those cohorts concerned.

If any changes to policy and procedures are made these will be published on NSC website and parents informed in writing well in advance if changes were to affect existing provision.

There is an annual requirement for the council to publish any changes to discretionary policy by 31st May.

INC01 – Income – Annual Inflationary impacts

Budget Reference	Budget Proposal
ASS01, CH01, CSD01, PD01, PH01	Annual uplift to fees and charges income budgets held by services (£265,000 Adults, £14,000 Children, £37,000 Corporate Services, £129,000 Place, £10,000 Public Health & Regulatory Services)
PD02, PD04	Increase in Place fees and charges to cover specific inflationary impacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Garden waste fee increase - Leisure contract increase - Crematorium contract increase - Public toilet increase to 30p
PD03	Increase in statutory Planning fee income
PD05	Revert back to the pre-covid policy where the mi-permit transaction charge is included within the parking fee to ensure full cost recovery, 10p per transaction
PH02	Review fees and charge policies for regulatory services over inflation allocation, focus on Licensing and Food Safety

Medium Term Financial Plan Equality Impact Assessment of Budget Proposal 2024/25



1. The Proposal

Budget Theme:	Income – annual inflationary impacts
Budget reference:	INC01
Budget proposal 2024/25 (£):	£853,000

The following savings are included within this Theme:

Budget Reference	Service Area	Budget Proposal	2024/25 Budget reduction
ASS01, CH01, CSD01, PD01, PH01	All council	Annual uplift to fees and charges income budgets held by services (£265,000 Adults, £14,000 Children, £37,000 Corporate Services, £129,000 Place, £10,000 Public Health & Regulatory Services)	£455,000
PD02, PD04	All directorate	Increase in Place fees and charges to cover specific inflationary impacts: - Garden waste fee increase - Leisure contract increase - Crematorium contract increase - Public toilet increase to 30p	£276,000
PD03	Planning	Increase in statutory Planning fee income	£50,000
PD05	Parking	Revert back to the pre-covid policy where the mi-permit transaction charge is included within the parking fee to ensure full cost recovery, 10p per transaction	£52,000
PH02	Regulatory Services	Review fees and charge policies for regulatory services over inflation allocation, focus on Licensing and Food Safety	£20,000
Total			£853,000

Theme narrative:

Annual uplift to general fees and charges to recognise the impact of inflation on the ongoing cost of service delivery. The additional income is directly linked to the principle of ensuring that services recover their full costs, which have gone up because of inflation.

Summary of changes:

ASS01, CH01, CSD01, PD01, PH01 - All council

Annual uplift to fees and charges income budgets held by services (£265,000 Adults, £14,000 Children, £37,000 Corporate Services, £129,000 Place, £10,000 Public Health & Regulatory Services)

Customers currently pay fees and charges for a wide range of activities and services that they may use such as building control services, planning applications land charge searches, car parking, leisure activities or care related charges.

Some of these fees and charges are set nationally and the council is legally required to adopt these levels, whilst other fees and charges are set at local levels using the council's discretion.

Given the complexities of calculating the financial impact for each individual potential charge that may arise, the first saving within this Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Income theme continues the council's policy of annually inflating its charges to cover the increased costs for goods and services, which have themselves gone up.

The MTFP saving of £455,000 is the value that will be achieved by uplifting all the council's fees and charges budgets by an average of 2% with effect from April 2024.

It should be noted that whilst this proposed increase may be lower than some current national inflationary measures such as the Retail Prices Index or the Consumer Prices Index, it reflects the average increase in income budgets that is realistically feasible to achieve, and well as the average level of increased costs that the council will incur.

Where the council can demonstrate that the costs to deliver a specific service are higher than this base sum, a separate savings item has been included so that local communities can clearly see the specific change and understand how this may impact on them. These items are listed separately below.

PD02, PD04 - Place directorate

Increase in Place fees and charges to cover specific inflationary impacts of discretionary services:

- Garden waste fee increase
- Leisure contract increase

- Crematorium contract increase
- Public toilet increase to 30p.

The Place directorate currently deliver a range of discretionary services to local residents and visitors which generate a charge if they are used. The cost of delivering these specific services has risen by more than the baseline which means that we need to increase the charge to the service user to ensure that the full cost of delivering the service is recovered from those who use them and that they are not being subsidised through the budget.

PD03 - Planning

Increase in statutory Planning fee income.

This proposal reflects an estimate of the additional income that the council expects to receive next year from planning income. Fees for this service are set nationally which means that the council is legally required to adopt any changes, the latest of which will come into effect from 6 December 2023.

Amongst other things the regulations increase planning application fees by 35% for major developments and 25% for all other applications and introduce an annual indexation of planning fees, capped at 10%, from 1 April 2025. The regulations can be viewed [here](#).

PD05 – Parking

Revert back to the pre-covid policy where the mi-permit transaction charge is included within the parking fee to ensure full cost recovery, 10p per transaction.

Users who park in the council's car parks have the option to pay for their stay electronically using the Mi-permit app rather than use cash. The council incurs an administration charge each time someone uses this facility which was previously included as part of the overall car park fee.

During the pandemic a temporary change was made to the policy to remove the transaction charge from the car parking fee and arrange for this cost to be charged to the council. This decision was part of the national response to managing and containing the outbreak and spread of the Covid virus because it sought to actively encourage and increase the usage of the Mi-permit app to pay for their car park stay and deter people from using 'cash', which would reduce the risk of spreading the infection.

In the early stages of the pandemic this cost was funded using Covid monies provided by the government, but these are no longer in place. The proposal is for the policy to be reinstated so that the transaction cost is once again included as part of the total car parking fee.

PH02 - Regulatory Services

Review fees and charge policies for regulatory services over inflation allocation, focus on Licensing and Food Safety.

The introduction of a new case management system in April 2024 creates scope to process tasks more quickly and secure more income through volume of activity.

Is any of the proposals within this theme a continuation of a previous medium-term financial plan saving?

Yes No

If yes, please insert reference number and year of assessment?

Budget Proposal	Year of assessment	Budget Reference
Annual uplift to fees and charges income budgets	2023/24	CSD24

If yes, please describe what steps you have taken to review the equality impacts from previous years?

These charges largely relate to the provision of discretionary services which means that service users, as well as the council, will also have some choice over whether want or need to use the service and the incur the associated cost.

The largest impact in respect of the previous proposal related to those people who are on low incomes and the council has implemented a series of measures that can provide support to these groups, either directly or indirectly. For example, the garden waste service has a pricing policy to support those on low incomes by offering a discount for using the service; for the last 2 years the council has distributed over £5.2m of funding to people on low incomes through the Household Support Fund which is a way of providing financial assistance to cover day to day living expenses, which could include food, energy or even parking.

2. Customer equality impact summary

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups?

Budget Proposal	Equality Impacts – Please consider any potential equalities impacts based on the protected groups below. Please answer High (H), Medium (M), Low (L) or None (N)										Positive (+) or Negative (-)
	Disabled People, including those who are	Race	Men or Women, including those who are pregnant	Sexual Orientation	People on a low income	Age	Religion or belief or none	Marriage or civil partnership	Gender reassignment	Other, for example parents, carers or the Armed Forces. *	
ASS01 CH01 CSD01 PD01 PH01	N	N	N	N	L	N	N	N	N	N	-
PD02, PD04	N	N	N	N	L	N	N	N	N	N	-
PD03	N	N	N	N	L	N	N	N	N	N	-
PD05	N	N	N	N	L	N	N	N	N	N	-
PH02	N	N	N	N	L	N	N	N	N	N	-

3. Explanation of customer impact

ASS01, CH01, CSD01, PD01, PH01 - All council

Annual uplift to fees and charges income budgets held by services (£265,000 Adults, £14,000 Children, £37,000 Corporate Services, £129,000 Place, £10,000 Public Health & Regulatory Services)

There will be a minimal impact on all customers as the rate of increase applied to generic fees and charges is below current levels of inflation as this considers an average for all services and their costs.

However, it is accepted that any increase may disproportionately impact on customers with lower income levels should they access a service which has a charge associated with it

PD02, PD04 - All directorate

Increase in Place fees and charges to cover specific inflationary impacts:

- Garden waste increase fee
- Leisure contract increase
- Crematorium contract increase
- Public toilet increase to 30p.

There will be a minimal impact on all customers as an uplift is being applied however the increase to these fees and charges will be aligned to inflation and it is anticipated that this will be commensurate with increases in the customers own income levels. It is accepted that this proposal may disproportionately impact on customers with lower income levels should they access a service which has a charge associated with it.

PD03 - Planning

Increase in statutory Planning fee income.

There will be a minimal impact on all customers as an uplift is being applied however the increase to these fees and charges will be aligned to inflation and it is anticipated that this will be commensurate with increases in the customers own income levels. It is accepted that this proposal may disproportionately impact on customers with lower income levels should they access a service which has a charge associated with it. The council does not have any discretion in the statutory charge applied to these services.

PD05 - Parking

Revert to the pre-covid policy where the mi-permit transaction charge is included within the parking fee to ensure full cost recovery, 10p per transaction.

There will be a minimal impact on all customers as an uplift is being applied however the increase to these fees and charges will be aligned to inflation and it is anticipated that this will be commensurate with increases in the customers own income levels. It is accepted that this proposal may disproportionately impact on customers with lower income levels should they access a service which has a charge associated with it.

PH02 - Regulatory Services

Review fees and charge policies for regulatory services over inflation allocation, focus on Licensing and Food Safety

There will be a minimal impact on all customers as an increase is being applied however the increase to these fees and charges will be aligned to inflation and it is anticipated that this will be commensurate with increases in the customers own income levels. It is accepted that this proposal may disproportionately impact on customers with lower income levels should they access a service which has a charge associated with it.

Please describe how you will communicate these changes to your customers.

Information will be shared in a variety of ways depending on customers and how they use the services but as a minimum the council will publish a complete list of all fees and charges for all services on the website before April 2024. Some services will also contact existing customers where that is reasonable and practical.

4. Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal? Yes No

Explanation of staff impact

If yes, please describe the nature of the impact, including how many posts could be affected, please state whether they are vacant, or filled permanently or temporarily.

N/a

6. Review and Sign Off

Service Manager Review

Insert any service manager comments here:

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed? Yes No

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed?

Service Manager:

Melanie Watts

Date:

19 November 2024

INC02 – Income – linked to adult social care services.

Budget Reference	Budget Proposal
ASS02	Increase in income from increase to benefit rates which will increase maximum charges.
ASS03	Extra Care - leasehold charge to self-funders

Medium Term Financial Plan Equality Impact Assessment of Budget Proposal 2024/25



1. The Proposal

Budget Theme: Income - linked to adult social care services.

Budget reference: INC02

Budget proposal 2024/25 (£): £860,000

The following savings are included within this Theme:

Budget Reference	Service Area	Budget Proposal	2024/25 Budget reduction
ASS02	Care in the Community	Increase in income from increase to benefit rates which will increase maximum charges.	£850,000
ASS03	Care in the Community	Extra Care - leasehold charge to self-funders	£10,000
Total			£860,000

Theme Narrative:

Annual increase in fees and charges for adult social care related services specifically linked to the national increase in benefit rates.

Summary of changes:

ASS02 – Care in the Community

Increase in income from increase to benefit rates which will increase maximum charges.

Following government announcements to changes in pensions, benefits and minimum income guarantees, the Council will review all financial assessments and client contributions and adjust the amounts that clients will need to contribute towards their care. This will be based on their income and the amount that the government identifies that clients can retain before making any contribution. The financial assessment process involves a means test that ensures that contributions are affordable. Income from charges will grow in line with pension increases at c9%

ASS03 – Care in the community

Extracare – Leasehold charge to external funders

The leasehold charge that covers the core care costs is met by tenants in the newest Extra Care scheme run by the council. It is proposed to bring the other 4 schemes in line with this model and charge each tenant an equal share of the core costs. The proposal will phase the implementation limiting the charge to new tenants.

Is any of the proposals within this theme a continuation of a previous medium-term financial plan saving?

Yes No

If yes, please insert reference number and year of assessment?

Budget Proposal	Year of assessment	Budget Reference
Increased client contributions to reflect increases in benefits and pensions	2023/24	ASS13

If yes, please describe what steps you have taken to review the equality impacts from previous years?

Client contributions continue to be subject to a mean-test based financial assessment which means that the customers' ability to pay social care fees will be looked at and assessed on an individual case by case basis.

2. Customer equality impact summary

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups?

Budget Proposal	Equality Impacts – Please consider any potential equalities impacts based on the protected groups below. Please answer High (H), Medium (M), Low (L) or None (N)										Positive (+) or Negative (-)
	Disabled People, including those who are neurodiverse	Race	Men or Women, including those who are pregnant	Sexual Orientation	People on a low income	Age	Religion or belief or none	Marriage or civil partnership	Gender reassignment	Other, for example parents, carers or the Armed Forces. *	
ASS02	L	N	N	N	L	L	N	N	N		-
ASS03	L	N	N	N	L	L	N	N	N		-

3. Explanation of customer impact

ASS02 – Care in the Community

Increase in income from increase to benefit rates which will increase maximum charges.

Clients in receipt of care, who are most likely to be older people, or disabled people will be asked to contribute more towards their care because of increased costs to the Council and increases to pensions and benefits. However, this contribution will continue to be based on a means-tested financial assessment. It is also expected that the government will announce increases to the Minimum Income Guarantee and the Personal Expenses Allowance (i.e. the amounts that clients can keep before they start paying for their care) in line with inflation, which should mitigate the impact.

Most clients whose care is arranged by the Council have a maximum weekly charge, which results from their financial assessment. For non-residential care packages, this averages at around £70 per week and for residential care, the average is around £210 per week for older people and £100 per week for younger adults.

Clients who are “self-funders” will feel the full impact of increases in costs, i.e. they will be expected to pay in full for any cost increases that arise from increases in provider costs.

ASS03 – Care in the community

Extracare – Leasehold charge to external funders

It is anticipated that this proposal will have a low impact on older people, disabled people, and those with a low income.

The revised charges will only come into effect for new tenancies, therefore not impacting current tenants. As with all council commissioned care services these charges will be subject to a financial assessment to establish ability to pay. For those tenants already in receipt of a care package this charge will be added to the amount they are liable for but in all cases will be capped by the maximum charge determined by the means test. Self-funders will have to pay the full charge.

Please describe how you will communicate these changes to your customers.

As part of the Financial Assessments annual review process, which is undertaken prior to the start of each financial year.

4. Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal?	Yes	No
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Explanation of staff impact

N/A

6. Review and Sign Off

Service Manager Review

Insert any service manager comments here:

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed?

Yes

No

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed?

Service Manager:

Gerald Hunt

Date:

19 January 2024

INC03 – Income – linked to the Parking Strategy

Budget Reference	Budget Proposal
PD02A	Increase existing parking charges and parking permit charges to cover inflationary costs
PD06	Introduction of new parking charges in areas where we do not currently charge and a shopper's permit

Medium Term Financial Plan

Initial Equality Impact Assessment of Budget Proposal 2024/25



1. The Proposal

Budget Theme: Income - linked to the parking strategy.
Budget reference: INC03
Budget proposal 2024/25 (£): £504,000

The following savings are included within this Theme:

Budget Reference	Service Area	Budget Proposal	2024/25 Budget reduction
PD02A	Place	Increase existing parking charges and parking permit charges to cover inflationary costs	£404,000
PD06	Parking	Introduction of new parking charges in areas where we do not currently charge and a shopper's permit	£100,000
Total			£504,000

Theme Narrative:

Income linked to the Parking Strategy which includes an annual inflation uplift for existing fees and charges as well as the implementation of new opportunities. The Strategy will look to support flexibility in charging whilst still maintaining income levels.

Summary of changes:

PD02A - Place

Increase existing parking charges and parking permit charges to cover inflationary costs.

The cost model to increase the current charges is being developed ready to apply in 2024. This is likely to be implemented in April 2024. The increase in charges will be kept to a minimum. It should be noted that parking charges have not been increased in North Somerset in many years and the rates are significantly lower than other coastal locations.

The exact implementation date of any changes and the proposed suite of charges is yet to be determined following due process for example parking order or appropriate car park order and communications with those effected by the change.

PD06 - Parking

Introduction of new parking charges in areas where we do not currently charge and a shopper permit.

Options are being developed for consideration by the Executive to introduce new parking charges in some of the areas where we do not currently charge.

The recommendation will be to commence a 6-week period of consultation on proposals for new charges and other details to include a shoppers' permit.

Following this consultation this equality impact assessment will be updated and re-presented to the appropriate decision-making body before the final decision is made. It's likely that this change will not take effect until part way through the year, following a formal period of notification of the changes.

Is any of the proposals within this theme a continuation of a previous medium-term financial plan saving?

Yes

No

If yes, please insert reference number and year of assessment?

Budget Proposal	Year of assessment	Budget Reference
Parking Charges Review	2022/23	PDS13
Parking Review	2020/21	DE10

If yes, please describe what steps you have taken to review the equality impacts from previous years?

The main element of the 2020/21 parking review proposal that was implemented was the Leigh Woods residents parking and pay & display scheme. The scheme was subject to a review after 6 months operation when feedback from users were collected and no equalities issues were identified. Please see the [report](#) for a summary of the feedback.

2. Customer equality impact summary

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups?

Budget Proposal	Equality Impacts – Please consider any potential equalities impacts based on the protected groups below. Please answer High (H), Medium (M), Low (L) or None (N)										Positive (+) or Negative (-)
	Disabled People, including those who are neurodiverse	Race	Men or Women, including those who are pregnant	Sexual Orientation	People on a low income	Age	Religion or belief or none	Marriage or civil partnership	Gender reassignment	Other, for example parents, carers or the Armed Forces. *	
PD02A	N	N	N	N	L	N	N	N	N	N	-
PD06	L (+)	N	N	N	L	L	L	N	N	L	-

3. Explanation of customer impact

PD02A - Place

Increase existing parking charges and parking permit charges to cover inflationary costs.

Any increase in charging is likely to disproportionately impact those on a low income. The impact is minimised as the proposed changes will be set at market rates and a range of tariff choices will be available to suit different users where appropriate.

Policies for parking sit within the wider context for integrated transport improvements which include improvements to walking/cycling and public transport services and infrastructure to create a range of travel choices where possible.

It should be noted that parking charges have not been increased in North Somerset for many years, and that there are considerable subsidies currently available for bus transportation which can offer an alternative for some residents.

PD06 - Parking

Introduction of new parking charges in areas where we do not currently charge and a shopper permit.

Disabled people with blue badges will benefit from greater availability of parking spaces, both in dedicated bays and the charged bays where management of parking will increase turnover of users and availability of spaces should increase significantly. Blue badge holders are exempt from on-street Pay & Display charges and time limits.

The implementation of new parking charges is likely to disproportionately impact those on a low income. This impact will be minimised if charging levels are at market rates and will be subject to a formal public consultation as part of scheme development. The shoppers permit will enable regular users to purchase parking at a significant discount on an annual basis. This will mitigate impacts on lower income groups and reduces the potential displaced parking impacts.

Some faith groups may be affected if charges new charges are proposed near locations used regularly for congregation. Where cases are identified through consultation, opportunities for mitigation will be considered such as adjustments to hours of operation and waiting limits.

Parents/carers may be affected where new charges are applied but improved turnover should make it easier to find a space. Overall health and wellbeing should improve particularly for those who decide to walk or cycle rather than pay for parking.

Please describe how you will communicate these changes to your customers.

PD02A - Proposals for increases to existing charges will be communicated by either notification or consultation in line with the car park order process. The charges will also be displayed in the car park sites and on the council website and social media channels.

PD06 - Proposals for introducing charges in areas not currently charged would be subject to one round of informal public consultation for several weeks in addition to a separate statutory 3-week formal consultation in connection with any traffic regulation orders or car park orders that are taken forward.

4. Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal? Yes No

Explanation of staff impact

None

6. Review and Sign Off

Service Manager Review

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed? Yes No

PD02A - The proposal is to increase charges in-line with inflation and as such is bringing charges in line with previous year's levels. We are below other Local Authorities in the region and increases have been kept to a minimum to reduce impact on residents.

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed? Yes No

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed?

PD06 - This Equality Impact Assessment will be updated following the appropriate consultation on the changes. Expected date May 2024.

Service Manager:

Darren Coffin-Smith

Date:

19 January 2024

SPTC01 – Services we provide to the Community – Children’s Centres

Budget Reference	Budget Proposal
CH02	The Development of Family Hubs

Medium Term Financial Plan

Equality Impact Assessment of Budget Proposal in 2024/25



Where 'Yes/No' options please 'bold appropriate answer

Service area: Children's Centres
Budget reference: SPTC01 – Services we provide to the community.
Budget proposal in 2024/25 (£): £150,000
Assistant Director/Director: Pip Hesketh/Claire Shiels
EIA review due date: January 2024

Budget Ref.	Budget Proposal	Budget Reduction £			
		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
CH02	The development of Family Hubs	£150,000		£250,000	

Equality Impacts

Please make High, Medium or Low 'bold' as appropriate

Service User Impact

Before mitigating actions	High	Medium	Low
After mitigating actions	High	Medium	Low

Staff Impact

Before mitigating actions	High	Medium	Low
After mitigating actions	High	Medium	Low

1. The Proposal

1.1 Background to proposal

North Somerset is committed to creating a small number of Family Hubs to better serve its communities. Family Hubs are different to Children's Centres; they have a multi-agency offer and serve families with children in a wider age range than Children's Centres. Where they have been implemented successfully, they have achieved high levels of impact for local families through effective early and joined up support; they have also created efficiency savings.

Although a group has been working towards the development of Family Hubs, there is work to do to pick up the pace to support delivery. This includes some further analysis of existing data and addressing some data gaps through the commissioning of further needs assessment work. This will enable a firm and viable model to be developed which we can discuss with community stakeholders and staff.

In 2024/25 the project focus is the development of a new model for the delivery of joined up services for families in their local communities in line with new national Family Hub policy. This will see a different offer of services in communities for families with children aged 0-19 years or 0-25 for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. This is likely to involve delivering services from a smaller number of buildings, with more outreach into communities and education settings and an improved online service offer.

This would mean rationalising the number of Children Centres we operate (14 Centres) by developing a smaller number of Family Hubs which offer a wider range of services than are currently offered in children's centres. This will be supported by offering outreach services supporting the main Family Hub offer. This might mean children's services workers offering services and support nurseries, schools, community centres along with an improved online offer where people get better information, advice and support at times that suit them.

1.2 Please detail below how this proposal may impact on any other organisation and their customers.

There is currently co-location of practitioners and services from a range of different organisations in a number of our children's centres. The current co-location of services is an offer which has evolved over time whereas a Family Hub model allows us to purposefully design a blended offer from the outset.

A key project consideration is the potential impact of any proposed changes on providers who include Sirona Healthcare, United Bristol Hospital Trust, Springboard Opportunity Group, voluntary and community sector

organisations. Children's centres also share spaces with North Somerset Council libraries and maintained nurseries.

It is important to emphasise that a Family Hub model is in essence a more accessible and joined up offer of services for families than currently exists and we will be actively working with a range of organisations through implementation to ensure that we are able to deliver this vision. We are committed to fully engaging our communities and service users in the design and implementation of Family Hubs, as well the organisations who currently provide services and those who may in the future.

Section 2 – What Do We Know?

2.1 Customer/staff profile details – what data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be, affected?

Data analysis of our information about users of children's centre services is limited but a greater data capture of the current reach and take up of services is underway. Family Hubs provide universal and targeted services to communities and in particular those families who have greatest needs. We anticipate that amongst those currently using our Children's Centres, there will be a demographic profile of diversity and social and economic disadvantage as well as special educational needs and disability. Where there is a low take-up from particular groups, we will work with our voluntary and community providers to ascertain whether there is unmet need and opportunity within the design to address this in the future model.

We are also undertaking analysis of the people employed by North Somerset Council who use children's centre buildings as an office base as well as those who deliver services to families from these spaces to understand the impact on their work.

2.2 What does the data or evidence tell us about the potential impact on diverse groups, and how is this supported by historic experience/data?

Historically children's centre delivery has been focused on meeting the needs of families with young children and actively targeting services towards those who need them the most. This inevitably means that any change will have an impact on a wide range of families from diverse groups. However, it is important to note that the Family Hub model seeks to increase access to services for a wide range of people by focusing on service integration and connection and making it easier for families to get help, so this will be considered during the design phase.

There are important considerations to make when selecting locations for Family Hubs buildings, satellite services, outreach model and online offer to ensure that we take into account what can be barriers to service access for

some particular groups including: physical accessibility for people with disabilities; geographical accessibility in terms of transport availability and affordability; digital accessibility in terms of any online service offer – taking account of particular needs of users including need for interpretation and translation as well as any challenges in relation to access to technology and or internet.

There is an opportunity to consider how we can tailor services more effectively to reach groups who have been less likely to engage with children's centre activities through the development of our online offer including working parents and others who prefer to engage in different ways.

Traditionally, we know that fathers can be less likely to engage with children's centre activities than mothers, and that within certain communities, there are cultural differences in the expectations about how services are provided. We are committed to considering all these issues as we develop a proposed offer and mechanisms for delivery.

2.3 Are there any gaps in the data, for example across protected characteristics where information is limited or not available?

There is limited available information for some users of our services in relations to protected characteristics, with sexual orientation, gender identity, faith not routinely captured in case management systems at present. Additionally, there are limitations to the case management system used to capture information about delivery creating some additional challenges. However, we will put in place additional mechanisms to understand both the needs and preferences of current and future users of the service; and engagement activity with communities on any proposals will seek to capture and understand the impacts on those with protected characteristics.

We will provide this information to the appropriate decision-making body to inform decision making of the future service model.

2.4 How have we involved or considered the views of the people that could be affected?

Formal engagement and consultation with users of the service or with employees has not yet commenced. However, the development of Family Hubs is a national evidence-based model which was developed with a wide and diverse range of users. There is a national programme of support in place to local areas who are seeking to implement this approach and a network of local authorities who are already delivering in this way. We will use this to inform our approach and to ensure that we consider all groups and users as we implement, seeking where possible to mitigate issues around access.

This Equality Impact Assessment was shared with Equality Stakeholders on 12th January 2024. They made the following comments:

Comment	Response
<p>It is difficult to assess the full impact of the proposal without a detailed understanding of the users of the current Children's Centres.</p>	<p>We understand and agree. We will bring an updated assessment back to the steering group as soon as this becomes available.</p>
<p>Concern that the reduction in availability of Children's Centres within a local area will disrupt the benefits that have been achieved through the development of local relationships. For example, the Gypsy and Traveller community in Yeo Valley, Springboard in Weston-super-Mare.</p>	<p>The insight into the needs of the Gypsy Roma Traveller communities is much appreciated. We particularly appreciate that relationships of trust with officers and other professionals providing services are hard won but easily lost if we do not approach the development of services without working through the well established relationships. We are committed to be sensitive to these and building increased trust over time by demonstrating that we have shaped our proposal to reflect their needs effectively.</p>
<p>Access is key to the services that are being offered through the Family Hubs. The development of services should consider culture, literacy levels, disability, and income as all these factors can impact on the way that people access services. The highest levels of access within the building should be included within the design.</p>	<p>We understand our duty to make all services accessible to disabled people and are committed to meeting this. We fully appreciate that there is a risk that needs associated with the diversity of our community may be overlooked because of the relatively low numbers of people within different groups. However, we see the Family Hubs as an opportunity to go further towards inclusive services to promote increased participation and equality between people of different faiths, culture, and races. As we develop our proposals, we will welcome the participation of the Steering Group to hold us to account, bring to our attention</p>

	<p>matters which we have not already considered and reach agreement about areas where we can improve the accessibility of services.</p>
<p>Moving to more central locations will mean that issues like car parking, including accessible parking and access to public transport to the Family Hubs will become critical to those using the centres. There was also a concern re the potential cumulative impact of proposed changes to transport (Home to School and Community Transport) may have on access to Family Hubs.</p>	<p>This is an important consideration. Although not directly linked, we do appreciate the need to consider the cumulative impact of different projects such as changes to community or home to school transport. The principles which underpin a Family Hub are to increase reach and accessibility rather than reduce it so we will carefully consider the ways in which communities can access services. Family Hubs will certainly provide outreach services for communities in other locations and venues</p>
<p>How confident are we in the engagement of diverse communities in the planning and design of services? The Equality Stakeholder Group offered support and commitment to engage in the development of Family Hubs.</p>	<p>We are very committed to this and since meeting the Stakeholder Group, we have secured commitment to include representatives from the Group on the Partnership Board. We warmly welcome the offer from members to continue to participate in discussions with us throughout the development of the proposal.</p>
<p>Concerns that that centralising of Family Hubs will have a disproportionate impact on those who live in rural areas of North Somerset as those that live in urban areas have ready access to public transport, other forms of parental support/parent and carer groups etc.</p>	<p>We recognise that this is a risk, and it is important that we don't give false expectations that there will be more Family Hubs than we are able to deliver. However, we will be actively developing an outreach model and making connections with other services that are delivered across the district so that we can make sure we join up our offers. We have not yet finalised either the location or the number of Family Hubs so there is opportunity to consider accessibility in the development of the proposals.</p>

2.5 What has this told us?

Please see table above.

2.6 Are there any gaps in our consultation, what are our plans for the future?

Formal consultation plans will be developed as part of the implementation plans.

This will include engagement with current users of the services and people who do not currently use the services. This will be through a mixture of online surveys and face to face meetings. This information will be used to inform decision making about location as well as the service delivery model.

One of the ambitions for the Family Hubs is the inclusion of parents and carers in the governance arrangements of the new service provision so that they can be involved in decisions about service design and future developments of the Hubs over time. We will seek to recruit parent/carer representation as part of the project implementation and to actively include people with protected characteristics.

Section 3 – Assessment of Impact

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups? Please describe the nature of the impact in 'Summary of Impact' column. You should describe both negative and positive impacts.

Assessment of impact should include the consideration of Public Sector Equality Duties as listed in [section 149 of The Equality Act 2010](#), specifically:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Please indicate the impact level and impact type with an 'X' for each of the groups listed below.

Impact Level

H = High, M = Medium, L = Low, N = None

Impact Type

+ = Positive, = = Neutral, - = Negative

Impact Level

	H	M	L	N	Impact Type			Summary of Impact
					+	=	-	
Disabled people (including consideration of neurodiversity)		X			X		X	The intention is to create an accessible Family Hub network with greater outreach capability and online presence which will improve service access for some people with disabilities, including those with neurodiversity. However, there will be a reduction in some buildings-based services, and potentially therefore an impact on a small proportion of disabled users who may have to travel further for face-to-face delivery. The extent of this is not yet known and will form part of the consultation and decision making. When designing the new model, we will ensure that we consider how to make services accessible. An important element of the Family Hub model is that it offers services for children with special educational needs and disabilities therefore this will be a key part of the model going forward – including specialist services
People from different ethnic groups		x				X		We recognise that people from different ethnic groups can be more likely to be socially or economically disadvantaged and therefore may have a greater need to access services provided by Family Hubs. Contact with our communities and their

				<p>representatives throughout the development of our proposals will ensure that we do not make superficial judgements or assumptions about the cultural appropriateness of delivery of services. We will expect as a minimum to provide information in a range of community languages but also consider other aspects of race and faith such as prayer spaces and culturally appropriate refreshments, hours of opening etc. The current children's centres host a range of support to different groups such as International Parents group and Ukraine Group – these groups will be included in discussions about the design of the future model.</p>
Men or women (including those who are pregnant or on maternity leave)	X	X	X	<p>It is recognised that women are the predominant users of current Children's Centres, so any changes are likely to have an impact on women. Considering the ways that diverse groups access the services is a key consideration.</p> <p>Changing the service delivery model to one which offers a wider range of online services and service outreach into different areas of the community will improve access for some groups, particularly fathers. The co-location of local partners and the</p>

					<p>development of a rounded 'Start for Life' Offer will improve access to information and support for expectant parents and those in the first years of life.</p> <p>However, there is a potential that there some people including those who are pregnant or on maternity leave may have to travel further to receive face to face services.</p>
People who are LGBTQ+		X		X	We do not collect information on this protected characteristic, so it is not possible to measure impact.
People on a low income	X				X Changes to the service delivery model, including provision of face-to-face services may require some people on low incomes to travel further for face to face support and as a result incur additional transport costs or result in a reduction in take up of early help.
People in particular age groups		X	X		The Family Hub model that will be implemented expands the range of services that are offered to wider age range – moving beyond early childhood services to the provision of services for families with children aged 0-19 or 0-25 for those with SEND, therefore this proposal will have a positive impact of these groups.

People in particular faith groups	X		X		We do not collect data to for this protected characteristic, however learning from other areas suggests there is no reason to believe that there will be any impacts on this group. Service design will need to be sensitive to the needs of faith groups to ensure sensitivity to their needs.
People who are married or in a civil partnership	X		X		We do not collect information on this protected characteristic to measure impact. However, there is no reason to believe that there will be any impact on this group – apart from potential positive impact as the Family hub model includes a requirement to deliver support for parents experiencing parental conflict to improve the co-parenting relationship.
People who are undergoing gender reassignment	X		X		We do not collect information on this protected characteristic and are therefore unable to measure impact.

Impact Level					Impact Type			Summary of Impact
	H	M	L	N	+	=	-	
<p>Other specific impacts, for example: carers, parents, Armed Forces Community, impact on health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Please specify: Parents and Carers and people living in rural communities</p>	X				X		X	<p>The purpose of the development of family Hubs is to deliver joined up and integrated services for parents and carers that better meet their needs and will therefore have a positive impact on these groups with the delivery of co-located practitioners, a wider service offer and improved online services. However, as we reduce the number of buildings that we deliver services from, there may be a requirement for some families to travel further for face-to-face service delivery which could impact on the uptake of these services and may mean that their needs are not met early enough.</p>

Could this proposal have a cumulative impact with any other service areas?

This is an impact that occurs when you consider services or activities together; a change or activity in one area may create an additional impact somewhere else, this maybe within or outside of your directorate or service area. For example, changing the venue for delivery of a service and there being a change to public transport in the same area.

No

Yes

Changes to the service delivery model may have an impact on other services such as libraries where spaces are currently shared. Partnership work will need to be undertaken to understand the impact on those services of us changing the venues we deliver services from.

The Family Hubs project is not directly impacted by transport projects running concurrently but we commit to regularly reviewing this as the project develops.

It is also noted that the closure of Castlewood will result in the reduction in available office space for NSC staff.

Section 4 – Staff Impact

Is there an anticipated impact on North Somerset Council staff as a result of this proposal?

No

Yes

The development of a new model of service delivery will inevitably have an impact on all those delivering services in current children's centres, early help and in the early years' service. It is anticipated that this will most likely be in relations to ways of working but may also affect centre of duty for officers who may need to travel to different places for work.

If there is going to be a reduction in the number of posts please indicate the number of FTE

This proposal seeks to reduce spend on buildings and associated costs rather than specifically reduce head count. However, it is likely that some roles may change through the life of this programme and active consideration of opportunities for redefining roles and responsibilities will be part of the implementation. This position will be kept under active review.

Section 5 - Action Plan

Action taken/to be taken	How will it be monitored?
Engagement/consultation on proposals with users of service with capturing of protected characteristics to better understand potential impacts off changes and consideration for service design. This will include further analysis of equality issues.	Through the Family Hub Partnership Project Board
Service design principles to be agreed and to include considerations such as public transport availability, service delivery times, outreach models and online offer	Through Family Hubs Partnership Project Board initially and following set up through regular reporting to the Children and Young People's Partnership Board
Representatives from the Equality Stakeholder Group to be included as members of the Family Hub Partnership Board	Through the Family Hub Partnership Project Board

If negative impacts remain after the above actions have been taken, please provide an explanation below.

There is an intention to have an enhanced service offer through Family Hubs through increasing the age range of the service offer, formalising an outreach model, and improving the online service offer, however there will remain a small number of people who will have to travel further for face-to-face services. This will need to be carefully monitored and understood through the life of the programme, with those on lowest incomes most likely to be affected. We will continue to engage with the ESG through the life of the project to find ways to mitigate the impact of changes.

Please set out how you plan to communicate these changes with your service users.

Engagement events with users of the services, a communication campaign on the Family Hub offer will be essential along with a public consultation with communities on the new service model.

SPTC01 – Services we provide to the community – Libraries.

Budget Reference	Budget Proposal
PD16	Progress the Libraries Strategy by investigating alternative funding opportunities, models, and partnerships

Medium Term Financial Plan Equality Impact Assessment of Budget Proposal 2024/25



1. The Proposal

Budget Theme: Services we provide to the community.

Budget reference: SPTC01

Budget proposal 2024/25 (£): £181,000

The following savings are included within this Theme:

Budget Reference	Service Area	Budget Proposal	2024/25 Budget reduction
CH02	Childrens Centres	The development of Family Hubs – Please see full EIA for more information.	£150,000
PD16	Libraries	Progress the Libraries Strategy by investigating alternative funding opportunities, models and partnerships	£31,000
Total			£181,000

Theme Narrative:

Proposals to transform and reshape the delivery of library services, nurseries and children’s centres to residents ensuring best use of buildings and considering alternative delivery models.

Summary of changes:

<p>CH02 – The development of Family Hubs – please see Full EIA for more details</p> <p>PD16 – Libraries and Community Savings have been realised through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) redesign of the library customer enquiry delivery model ii) deletion of an unfilled post and iii) reconfiguration of vacant posts and their work patterns at Weston Library. <p>i) Delivery of Library enquiry services were brought back in-house in 2023 having previously been delivered through the LibrariesWest consortium. This has resulted in a saving of £10,500 per annum.</p> <p>ii) Revenue savings can be achieved by deleting post reference DELIB0153 Community Services Officer (Level 4, 12.5 hours) based at Weston Library. This post has been unfilled since May 2022 and is no longer required due to the changing patterns of customer behaviour post-pandemic. This will result in a saving of £11,227 per annum.</p> <p>iii) Reconfiguration of Community Services Officer hours of work at Weston Library is possible due to some vacant posts arising concurrently. This will result in a saving of 11.25 hours at Level 4 – approx. £10,102 per annum.</p>
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Is any of the proposals within this theme a continuation of a previous medium-term financial plan saving?

Yes **No**

Budget Proposal	Year of assessment	Budget Reference

If yes, please describe what steps you have taken to review the equality impacts from previous years?

2. Customer equality impact summary

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups?

Budget Proposal	Equality Impacts – Please consider any potential equalities impacts based on the protected groups below. Please answer High (H), Medium (M), Low (L) or None (N)										Positive (+) or Negative (-)
	Disabled People, including those who are neurodiverse	Race	Men or Women, including those who are pregnant	Sexual Orientation	People on a low income	Age	Religion or belief or none	Marriage or civil partnership	Gender reassignment	Other, for example parents, carers or the Armed Forces. *	
PD16	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N/A

3. Explanation of customer impact

Please describe the reasons for the impact level in the table above. Please describe both positive and negative impacts.

PD16 – Libraries

The revision to the enquiry process is already embedded and communicated, designed considering equalities considerations and mitigations and with no negative feedback received. The staffing changes will have no impact on customers as the same level of front-line service will be provided.

Please describe how you will communicate these changes to your customers.

PD16 – No customer changes to communicate.

4. Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal? **Yes** **No**

Explanation of staff impact

PD16 - One post will be deleted which has been held vacant since May 2022 and for which cover is not currently being provided. Another two vacant posts will have their hours of work reconfigured to give a better coverage of hours across the week to support the team and customers. Cover is currently being provided for some of the vacant hours through use of casual staff and other team members working additional hours.

6. Review and Sign Off

Service Manager Review

Insert any service manager comments here:

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed? **Yes** **No**

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed?

Service Manager: **Gemma Dando**

Date: 19 January 2024

SPTC02 – Services we provide to the Community – Community Transport

Budget Reference	Budget Proposal
PD18	Review the delivery model for community transport

Medium Term Financial Plan

Equality Impact Assessment of Budget Proposal in 2024/25



Where 'Yes/No' options please 'bold appropriate answer

Service area: Place, Passenger Transport
Budget reference: SPCT02
Budget proposal in 2024/25 (£): £55,000
Assistant Director/Director: Gemma Dando
EIA review due date: January 2024

Budget Ref.	Budget Proposal	Budget Reduction £			
		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
PD18	Review the delivery model for community transport	£55,000	£55,000	£0	£0

Equality Impacts

Please make High, Medium or Low 'bold' as appropriate

Service User Impact

Before mitigating actions	High	Medium	Low
After mitigating actions	High	Medium	Low

Staff Impact

Before mitigating actions	High	Medium	Low
After mitigating actions	High	Medium	Low

1. The Proposal

1.1 Background to proposal

Historical national research identifies community transport as one of many factors that help reduce social isolation and promote the ability to live independently longer.

The provision and support of community transport is not a statutory service. It provides a discretionary service for those that typically are unable to access the traditional public transport network. In North Somerset it is run by limited company transport operators who have a charitable or trust related foundation using volunteers or paid staff.

There are several small community transport providers that operate within North Somerset with no formal council funding, we consider and award small grants (typically up to £500 per annum) upon application through Quartet. These discretionary grants will continue to be funded within the annual budget.

The Council has commissioned 2 contracts for the north and south of the district for the provision of scheduled weekly shopper services, with some potential impact on 'Dial a Ride' services, which is the provision of single trip car journeys (included within the '2' contracts). The annual value of these contracts is £110,000 per annum.

Service users must be a member of the organisation to access the service, usually for a small annual membership fee, and they are expected to contribute towards the cost of the specific journeys, which are then in part subsidised by the council, along with any other funding that the organisation musters towards the running of the service.

There are separate NHS commissioned schemes in North Somerset run by various foundation trusts providing access to health services, however the current contracts do provide an overlap service to local healthcare facilities and regional hospitals. Members of the community transport providers schemes often use the service to access health services based on price and service levels.

It should be noted that North Somerset Council is not the sole funder of community transport activities.

1.2 Please detail below how this proposal may impact on any other organisation and their customers.

The providers of 2 community transport contracts have been advised re the changes to funding. The contractors have stated that a review of service levels to customers will need to be undertaken, this ranges from the costs

charged to use the service, through to the number of journeys made, to ensure they are sustainable in the short and long term.

During discussions relating to contract changes the council have made the contractors aware of other statutory related contract work such as Home to School Transport which could provide supplementary income and mitigate the impacts of requiring grant income.

There are other community transport organisations within North Somerset Council that operate annually using the Quartett small grants schemes (up to £500 per annum) this funding will continue.

There are also grant opportunities via the Westlocal Bus service Improvement Package.

Section 2 – What Do We Know?

2.1 Customer/staff profile details – what data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be, affected?

The council does not hold personal details of who uses the services or data on the nature of the journeys, only the destination and overall patronage data per trip, it is not therefore possible to identify any specific impacts on equality groups.

North of district contract passenger volumes by route year to date.

Service	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
4200 - Dial-A-Ride	64	88	64	83	47	39	62	84	74
4001 - Clevedon	47	50	65	63	73	60	49	68	56
4002 - Nailsea	55	73	48	46	69	49	60	49	40
4003 - Long-Ashton	14	21	17	19	22	30	38	30	29
4004 - Backwell	15	20	16	20	23	25	27	32	26
4008 - Felton	18	27	20	19	22	21	22	26	16
4010 - Portishead	67	82	98	87	83	95	93	87	98
4012 - Pill	21	25	27	23	26	27	27	24	22
Total	301	386	355	360	365	346	378	400	361

South of district contract passenger volumes by route.

Not available

However, the Community Transport Association's survey of members in England (CTA, 2014) shows that the great majority of community transport users are older people (98%) and people with disabilities or restricted mobility (85%), while more than half (55%) are geographically excluded. This aligns with an evidence review from 2020 (Department for Transport, 2020) which found DRT, including dial-a-ride services, to be particularly important for two cohorts:

- Those who don't drive or own a car, particularly older people, those with limited mobility and low incomes; and
- Those living in rural areas with low population density, where there is low demand for public transport and limited fixed route public transport services

We have used this information to inform our equality impact assessment.

2.2 What does the data or evidence tell us about the potential impact on diverse groups, and how is this supported by historic experience/data?

As above.

2.3 Are there any gaps in the data, for example across protected characteristics where information is limited or not available?

Whilst we do not directly hold information about the service users, we have reviewed research (ref 2.1) that suggests that:

- older people
- those with limited mobility
- those on low incomes
- those in rural areas

are most likely to be impacted by these proposed changes.

The known demographic of users are older typically vulnerable residents. We will need to engage with the users and contract providers to determine the full impacts and any potential mitigations.

2.4 How have we involved or considered the views of the people that could be affected?

In the recent consultation on the council's corporate plan, there were no significant issues raised on transport related matters.

In January 2024 this EIA was shared with Equality Stakeholders, they made the following observations, comments:

Comment	Response
More information re the routes and nature of the trips needs to be	Details of data we hold has been added to section 2.1

added to the EIA to provide more context for the proposed changes.	
Limited information about the demographics of the patronage of the service is a concern.	Noted. The contracts do not enable Data sharing at this level.
It is assumed that there is greater usage in rural areas, the impact is likely to be greater in these areas as this change combined with generally less public transport	The majority of trips demands appear to be focuses in or between our larger villages and towns.
Several anecdotal accounts of how important transport is to daily life, specifically for older and disabled people. Community transport is likely to be used for social and connectivity purposes as well as accessing essential shopping and health services. The reduction in this service could result in increased social isolation for those groups.	This information helps us to understand the importance of community transport and provides information for us to consider in our ongoing plans.
Acknowledging that conversations have already started; it was considered that further discussions could take place with a broad range of community transport providers to ensure they are aware of collaboration opportunities.	Further meetings are being arranged with contractors to discuss contract opportunities for the new financial year, and groups have been directed towards Westlocal funding opportunities.
The lack of confidence some disabled people have in using public transport was raised.	This is duly observed, and NSC will endeavour to engage with bus operators and disabilities groups to improve access and consumer confidence.
Any information (including new public transport timetable information) about public transport must be provided in accessible formats including EasyRead.	Noted. New timetable and route promotion campaigns are being worked up for delivery in the spring of 2024 and beyond, this will include network maps to all households.
Is the provision of more accessible vehicles within current public transport routes being considered	The council are working with operators to implement the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations standards which improve access and information on registered bus services.

<p>Concerns re the inequality of impact on the 'north' and 'south' of the district with Weston super Mare already well served by a transport network and community transport providers are already diversifying their offer to ensure access to community transport can continue.</p>	<p>This potential inequality is acknowledged. The council have made extensive efforts to advise operators of the reducing resources available to fund operations. The council specifically advised our contractors in April 2023 that we had no identified funding beyond March 2024 and to assume there would be no further financial assistance in future years.</p>
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2.5 What has this told us?

Please see above for consultation responses.

The limited passenger trip data has identified there is a low level of demand for occasional transport across the north of the district.

2.6 Are there any gaps in our consultation, what are our plans for the future?

The council commissions an annual survey by the Passenger Focus group, there were no issues raised with the access or utilisation of community transport services in the annual survey return.

Transport recognised as a specific rural isolation issue for those with no access to public or personal transportation.

The local transport plan makes direct reference to The Bus Service Improvement plan and associated Assesswest study, which outlines the ambition and necessity to provide sustainable alternatives to fixed line timetabled bus routes which are unsustainable in areas with low population density.

Section 3 – Assessment of Impact

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups? Please describe the nature of the impact in 'Summary of Impact' column. You should describe both negative and positive impacts.

Assessment of impact should include the consideration of Public Sector Equality Duties as listed in [section 149 of The Equality Act 2010](#), specifically:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Please indicate the impact level and impact type with an 'X' for each of the groups listed below.

Impact Level

H = High, M = Medium, L = Low, N = None

Impact Type

+ = Positive, = = Neutral, - = Negative

Impact Level

Impact Type

Summary of Impact

	H	M	L	N	+	=	-	
Disabled people (including consideration of neurodiversity)		X					X	Higher proportion of the existing users are understood to be disabled people therefore any changes to Community Transport will have an impact on this group.
People from different ethnic groups				X				No data available, it is not anticipated that there will be an impact based on ethnicity.
Men or women (including those who are pregnant or on maternity leave)			X					No identifying data available, although it is anticipated that more women will use public transport than men.
People who are LGBTQ+				X				No data available, it is not anticipated that there will be an impact based on sexual orientation.
People on a low income	X						X	A reduction in funding will result in higher costs for the service, this will affect those with less income available.
People in particular age groups		X					X	No specific data available, although we know national trend is for older residents to use community transport services.
People in particular faith groups				X				No data available, it is not anticipated that there will be an impact based on faith groups

People who are married or in a civil partnership	X		No data available, it is not anticipated that there will be an impact based on marriage or civil partnership
People who are undergoing gender reassignment	X		No data available, it is not anticipated that there will be an impact based on gender reassignment.
<p>Other specific impacts, for example: carers, parents, Armed Forces Community, impact on health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Please specify: Those who live in rural areas of North Somerset.</p>	X		X

Could this proposal have a cumulative impact with any other service areas?

This is an impact that occurs when you consider services or activities together; a change or activity in one area may create an additional impact somewhere else, this maybe within or outside of your directorate or service area. For example, changing the venue for delivery of a service and there being a change to public transport in the same area.

Yes No

If 'yes', please describe?

The council is developing a rural strategy, community transport providers often reduce the impacts of rural isolation, complimenting commercial alternatives such as private hire or more limited fixed line bus routes. Medical services often sign post users to Community Transport services as an alternative means of travel where available.

Access to transport is a key consideration for the proposed changes to the locality of Children's Centres into Family Hubs, although there is no evidence to suggest that families with young children are accessing Community Transport.

Section 4 – Staff Impact

Is there an anticipated impact on North Somerset Council staff as a result of this proposal? Yes No

If there is going to be a reduction in the number of posts please indicate the number of FTE N/A

Section 5 - Action Plan

Where you have listed that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

If negative impacts remain after the above actions have been taken, please provide an explanation below.

Action taken/to be taken	How will it be monitored?
Re-focus of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) Activity for those with no access to the public bus network	Through the DRT platform, and project board
The improvement of the bus network coverage across North Somerset	Regular reviews of patronage and service performance through the BSIP program.
The council provides opportunities to Community Transport (CT) operators through the commissioning of statutory home to school contracts to help spread operating costs over a diverse portfolio of work should they wish too.	Tender opportunities are routinely advertised to operators via our procurement channels.
The council will continue to provide small annual discretionary grants (limited to £500 per annum) per organisation to fund small incidental costs to all CT operators.	The budget is monitored, and grants approved as required/justified.
CT operators have been advised to consider and bid for the Westlocal BSIP package to provide new and innovative registered bus services	Bids are being evaluated for compliance and suitability, potential to deliver services differently going forward to meet some community needs.
The Equality Stakeholder Group asked for the return of printed timetable booklets, to improve awareness of improved bus network	The council is producing and distributing timetable books in the spring of 2024.
The Equality Stakeholder Group requested that work is done with Bus Companies to improve the confidence to travel for residents with disabilities.	This is noted and will be worked in the BSIP program this year under the passenger experience workstream.

Please set out how you plan to communicate these changes with your service users.

The council's current contracts are for 12 months and are due to end on the 31 March 2023. The communications plan will centre around the end of the contracts and the limited budgets to renew them going forward, people will be signposted to the enhanced bus network and Demand Responsive Transport services.

It is expected that Community Transport operators will continue to run, and efforts will be made to publicise their services going forward.

TWWW01 - The way we work - service delivery models and efficiencies.

Budget Reference	Budget Proposal
ASS15	Review of staffing structures
CSD03	Review the resources required to deliver legal, democratic and scrutiny services as well as registration services; this will look to reduce costs and / or increase income.
CSD04	Review the scope and scale of support provided to the council through external contractual arrangements
CSD06	Reduction in former employee pension costs following changes in demand
CSD07	New savings arising from the re-design of the contract and digital transformation
PD25	Review Placemaking & Growth management and structure
PD28	Reduce the base budget for Driving Growth Projects
PD29	Reduce the base budget for the Local Plan
PH04	Look to deliver savings through re-procurement on contracts

Medium Term Financial Plan

Initial Equality Impact Assessment of Budget Proposal 2024/25



1. The Proposal

Budget Theme: The way we work - service delivery models and efficiencies.

Budget reference: TWWW01

Budget proposal 2024/25 (£): £754,000

The following savings are included within this Theme:

Budget Reference	Service Area	Budget Proposal	2024/25 Budget reduction
ASS15	All directorate	Review of staffing structures	£152,000
CSD03	Legal & Democratic Services	Review the resources required to deliver legal, democratic and scrutiny services as well as registration services; this will look to reduce costs and / or increase income.	£40,000
CSD04	Contracts	Review the scope and scale of support provided to the council through external contractual arrangements	£10,000
CSD06	Corporate Finance	Reduction in former employee pension costs following changes in demand	£10,000
CSD07	Support Services Contract	New savings arising from the re-design of the contract and digital transformation	£389,000
PD25	Place-making & Growth	Review Placemaking & Growth management and structure	£93,000
PD28	Place-making & Growth	Reduce the base budget for Driving Growth Projects	£20,000
PD29	Planning	Reduce the base budget for the Local Plan	£20,000
PH04	Public Health	Look to deliver savings through re-procurement on contracts	£20,000
Total			£754,000

Theme Narrative:

Ongoing programme to review how the council delivers its services to ensure they are fit for purpose and provide value for money. This includes making sure that we obtain best value from our contracts, reviewing delivery models and staffing structures, implementing process improvements, and reallocating resources to those services in greatest need.

Summary of changes:

The proposals (ASS15- PH04) are not expected to have a direct impact on residents or members of the public as they relate to delivering better economy and efficiency in the way we work as well as looking at how we fund some of our services through use of one-off reserves and income. Where council staff are affected, our organisational policies will apply in compliance with the public sector equality duty and applicable legislation and are therefore not anticipated to have an adverse impact on any group.

PD25, PD28 and PD29 may have indirect impacts on residents or member of the public, as these may reduce the overall quantity, scope or speed of placemaking and growth initiatives that can be undertaken, particularly if new activity is requested. The specific impacts are difficult to assess at this point but will be further considered as part of consulting on and confirming the final changes.

CSD07 – the need to ensure the access needs of protected groups will be considered in the development of digital services.

ASS15 - All directorate

Review of staffing structures

Review senior staffing structures when restructuring opportunities arise. Any proposed changes to structures will be made following the council's consultation process, in dialogue with unions and subject to policy around restructure including opportunities for redeployment etc. At this stage, no posts have been identified. As part of the organisation's broader approach to Organisational Development in 2024 a review of roles and responsibilities will be undertaken to ensure parity and fairness. A further EIA will be developed as a part of this review.

CSD03 - Legal & Democratic Services

Review the resources required to deliver a range of internal support services including legal, democratic and scrutiny services.

The review to assess and implement technological and digital solutions to work processing including use of Generative Intelligence (Gen AI) capabilities to meet more demand and increasing levels of demand by use of such processes and allowing service users to self-serve with limited support. Future of registration services at end of initial contract term to be reviewed and look to reduce costs

and / or increase income. Other income streams such as legal recharges to external third parties to be increased in line with market.

CSD04 - Contracts

Review the scope and scale of support provided to the council through external contractual arrangements, some of which are currently subject to a re-procurement process. This activity seeks to ensure best value for the taxpayer and so will assess what services are delivered in the future and the associated pricing structures and models. Contracts included within this area include the archiving and artefact, internal audit, and information governance contracts.

CSD06 - Corporate Finance

Reduction in former employee pension costs following changes in demand.

This is a technical adjustment based on previous employee numbers and the actual cost is lower than in previous years.

PD25 - Place-making & Growth

Review Placemaking & Growth management and structure.

A saving of £93,000 has been proposed for 2024/25 which would equate to a reduction of 1 – 2 posts (including overheads/oncosts). This could potentially be met through the deletion of vacant posts, however at present no specific decisions have been made. Any proposed changes to structures will be made following the council's consultation process, in dialogue with unions and subject to policy around restructure including opportunities for redeployment etc.

PD28 - Place-making & Growth

Reduce the base budget for Driving Growth Projects by £20,000 per annum.

This base budget contributes to a reserve to fund one-off initiatives to support placemaking and growth. Reductions in the budget are relatively minimal will be managed through careful prioritisation and programming, including consideration of any equality impacts where required. The reserve associated with this budget is programmed over several years and has built up a degree of capacity to absorb the impact of the reduction over the Medium-Term Financial Plan period.

PD29 - Planning

Reduce the base budget for the Local Plan by £20,000 per annum.

This budget is used to fund one-off costs involved in creating a new Local Plan, including the costs of the required Examination in Public. It also funds technical studies and policy work required to ensure that development is deliverable and sustainable.

Reductions in the budget are relatively minimal and will be managed through careful prioritisation and programming to minimise impacts. Officers will continue dialogue with bodies such as Homes England to access alternative external funding sources where possible. The reserve associated with this budget is programmed over several years and has built up a degree of capacity to absorb the impact of the reduction over the Medium-Term Financial Plan period.

PH04 - Public Health

Look to deliver savings through re-procurement of contracts with external providers. This will include the potential to gain efficiencies through joint commissioning with other local authorities and other partners, e.g. the Integrated Care Board. Service models are regularly reviewed against local needs and evidence about what can help a shift towards prevention and early intervention and improve outcomes, including reducing inequalities.

CSD07 - Support Services Contract

New savings arising from the re-design of the contract and digital transformation.

Our support services contract is due to expire in September 2025. In reviewing the way the contract is delivered, recommendations have been made to disaggregate the contract and deliver these via a number of smaller ones which will introduce greater flexibility and reduce the margin we pay to contractors due to removal of the subcontracting arrangements. Where possible, we will negotiate staggered end dates for these which will enable earlier savings.

To achieve efficiencies in delivery, we will follow our digital first strategy, meaning that where services can be automated and delivered digitally, they will.

To ensure we are protecting vulnerable residents, we will also be conducting research to find out more about those who are digitally excluded in North Somerset, including those with accessibility needs, older residents, and those on a low income. This will happen in advance of any launch or refresh of digital services.

Is any of the proposals within this theme a continuation of a previous medium-term financial plan saving? Yes No

If yes, please insert reference number and year of assessment? N/A

If yes, please describe what steps you have taken to review the equality impacts from previous years? N/A

2. Customer equality impact summary

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups?

Budget Proposal	Equality Impacts – Please consider any potential equalities impacts based on the protected groups below. Please answer High (H), Medium (M), Low (L) or None (N)										Positive (+) or Negative (-)
	Disabled People, including those who are neurodiverse	Race	Men or Women, including those who are pregnant	Sexual Orientation	People on a low income	Age	Religion or belief or none	Marriage or civil partnership	Gender reassignment	Other, for example parents, carers or the Armed Forces. *	
ASS15	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		
CSD03	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		
CSD04	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		
CSD06	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		
PD25	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	-
PD28	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	-
PD29	L	N	N	N	L	L	N	N	N	L	-
PH04	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		
CSD07	L	N	N	N	L	L	N	N	N		-

3. Explanation of customer impact

ASS15 - All directorate

Review of staffing structures

It is not anticipated that there will be any impact on equality groups because of this proposal.

CSD03 - Legal & Democratic Services

Review the resources required to deliver a range of internal support services including legal, democratic and scrutiny services as well as registration services and look to reduce costs and / or increase income.

It is not anticipated that there will be any impact on any equality groups because of this proposal.

CSD04 - Contracts

Review the scope and scale of support provided to the council through external contractual arrangements in respect of Internal Audit and Archiving, i.e. the storing of historic records and artefacts.

It is not anticipated that there will be any impact on any equality groups because of this proposal.

CSD06 - Corporate Finance

Reduction in former employee pension costs following changes in demand.

It is not anticipated that there will be any impact on any equality groups because of this proposal.

PD25 - Place-making & Growth

Review Placemaking & Growth management and structure.

The services in scope are not directly customer-facing, however there may be indirect impacts on residents in reducing overall capacity to deliver placemaking and growth initiatives, particularly where new activity is requested. In that placemaking and growth activities seek to promote economic and social inclusion, this could impact on all of the groups above, but this impact should be relatively low. Impacts will be mitigated as far as possible through the prioritisation of activity, use of reserves, and through seeking efficiencies in delivery.

PD28 - Place-making & Growth

Reduce the base budget for Driving Growth Projects.

This may have indirect impacts on residents in reducing the ability to deliver a full range and scope of placemaking and growth initiatives, or in reducing the speed at which they are delivered, particularly where new activity is requested. In that placemaking and growth activities seek to promote economic and social inclusion, this could impact on all of the groups above, but this impact should be relatively low. Impacts will be mitigated as far as possible through the prioritisation of activity and through seeking efficiencies in delivery.

PD29 - Planning

Reduce the base budget for the Local Plan. This may have indirect impacts on residents in reducing the funding available to carry out technical studies in support of the development and delivery of the Local Plan. In some cases, this could include indirect impacts for some of the groups above, specifically those on a low income and those with disabilities, as the work includes technical and policy work on matters such as affordable and accessible housing, and on assessments of infrastructure to support growth.

However, this risk is believed to be manageable in the light of the stage that the plan has reached and because the reduction in budget is relatively minimal. Further mitigation will be undertaken through careful prioritisation and programming; use of reserves; and accessing external funding where available.

PH04 - Public Health

Look to deliver savings through re-procurement on contracts.

It is not anticipated that there will be any impact on equality groups because of this proposal.

CSD07 - Support Services Contract

New savings arising from the re-design of the contract and digital transformation.

To achieve efficiencies in delivery, we will follow our digital first strategy, meaning that where services can be automated and delivered digitally, they will.

To ensure we are protecting vulnerable residents, we will also be conducting research to find out more about those who are digitally excluded in North Somerset; including those with accessibility needs, older residents, and those on a low income because we know those groups have a higher tendency towards being digitally excluded. This will happen in advance of any launch or refresh of digital services – which are yet to be designed. Because we will be in a position to better understand the needs of our residents in terms of digital services, and where particular groups may need more support to access our services – for that reason, the initial EIA assessment is for a low negative impact at this stage, although the outcome should be that those who can access services online do so, which will free up resources for those who are not able to.

Please describe how you will communicate these changes to your customers.

Changes to the way services are delivered will be shared using our established communication channels and subject to a specific communications plan where necessary – e.g. for revenues and benefits this will be via council tax inserts, email directly to residents. We will also use notices in libraries and our partnerships to share with individuals and communities.

4. Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal? **Yes** No

Explanation of staff impact

The council has a total headcount of 1,552 and the details below provide an overview of the current make-up:

- 881 (or 57%) are full time employees and 671 (43%) are part-time
- 74% are female employees and 26% are male employees.
- 4% are from a Black and Minority Ethnic group, 85% are not, 11% unknown.
- 3% of employees are >65 years of age, 38% aged 51-65, 27% aged 41-50, 19% aged 31-40, 12% aged 21-30 and 13% aged <20.

Where council staff are affected, our organisational policies will apply in compliance with the public sector equality duty and applicable legislation. Impacts within this proposal are noted below:

- ASS15 – potential to impact on 2 posts, both of which are vacant.
- PD25 – proposal is not yet fully scoped although initial review has indicated that this has the potential to impact on at least 1 vacant post, although a wider review may be carried out when further information is confirmed.

6. Review and Sign Off

Service Manager Review

Insert any service manager comments here:

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed? **Yes** No

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed?

More detailed EIA to be made alongside our research on North Somerset Digital Exclusion.

A further EIA will be developed and shared with decision makers as a part of the review of staffing structures as the project progresses.

Service Manager: Amy Webb

Date: 19 January 2024

TWWW02 - The way we work - strategic management of our assets.

Budget Reference	Budget Proposal
CSD08	Savings following the closure and redevelopment of Castlewood
PD30	Corporate Landlord Model: - Asset rationalisation/disposal - Income generation
PD31	Asset Decarbonisation

Medium Term Financial Plan Equality Impact Assessment of Budget Proposal 2024/25



1. The Proposal

Budget Theme: The way we work - strategic management of our assets.

Budget reference: TWWW02

Budget proposal 2024/25 (£): £215,000

The following savings are included within this Theme:

Budget Reference	Service Area	Budget Proposal	2024/25 Budget reduction
CSD08	Office Accommodation	Savings following the closure and redevelopment of Castlewood	£170,000
PD30	Property & Projects	Corporate Landlord Model: - Asset rationalisation/disposal - Income generation	£30,000
PD31	Property & Projects	Asset Decarbonisation	£15,000
Total			£215,000

Theme Narrative:

Activity to ensure that the council maximises the value from the assets it holds, which includes focussing efforts on investing in assets that support service delivery, reducing our carbon impact and energy costs as well as the divestment of assets no longer required.

Summary of changes:

<p>CSD08 - Office Accommodation Savings following the closure and redevelopment of Castlewood.</p> <p>This proposal relates to the transitioned closure of Castlewood in Clevedon as part of the council's core office accommodation, in particular the transition arrangements where areas of the building will be closed off to reduce costs when staff have moved into the Town Hall. The saving will increase in future years.</p>
<p>PD30 – Property & Projects Corporate Landlord Model: - Asset rationalisation/disposal - Income generation</p> <p>This proposal relates to the way in which the council manages its assets, ensuring they are fit for purpose in delivering services, maximising rental income and including centralisation of functions and recharging to other areas of the council and third parties.</p>
<p>PD31- Property & Projects Asset Decarbonisation</p> <p>This proposal relates to savings released from property and project budgets because of work to decarbonise our assets.</p>

Is any of the proposals within this theme a continuation of a previous medium-term financial plan saving?

Yes **No**

If yes, please insert reference number and year of assessment?

2. Customer equality impact summary

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups?

Budget Proposal	Equality Impacts – Please consider any potential equalities impacts based on the protected groups below. Please answer High (H), Medium (M), Low (L) or None (N)										Positive (+) or Negative (-)
	Disabled People, including those who are neurodiverse	Race	Men or Women, including those who are pregnant	Sexual Orientation	People on a low income	Age	Religion or belief or none	Marriage or civil partnership	Gender reassignment	Other, for example parents, carers or the Armed Forces. *	
CSD08	M	L	M	N	M	L	L	L	N	N	Variable – see full EIA
PD30	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
PD31	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	

3. Explanation of customer impact

Please describe the reasons for the impact level in the table above. Please describe both positive and negative impacts.

CSD08 - Office Accommodation

A full EIA has been completed of the proposed changes to Castlewood. It identified the following potential impacts for NSC staff:

Disability – For those who may have specific IT and furniture needs in flexible office space/home; all office areas accessible; plans are in place to ensure quiet space is available, anchored desks for those with accessible equipment will continue to be provided.

Sex – Women are more likely to have caring/school run responsibilities – our flexible workstyles offer more opportunities to manage work/life balance. People who are pregnant are likely to have more flexibility to be able to work from home. An Infant Feeding Room is being built in the Town Hall Gateway which will assist those returning to work whilst feeding/expressing milk.

Additional gender-neutral toilet facilities are also being planned for the refurbishment of the town hall.

Low income - People on lower incomes may be less supportive of hybrid working. The cost of utility bills working from home may be more expensive than the commute to work for some. Those who live closer to Clevedon will be adversely affected. They may be less likely to own a car/afford travel. We will continue to offer flexibility at work for those experiencing financial difficulty.

Age – There is a potential negative impact for younger people who live close to Clevedon who may find it more difficult to travel to Weston as they tend to have a higher preference for working in the office. If they find it more difficult or too expensive to travel to Weston and have a mobile/flexible workstyle, they may decide to work at home more.

Faith and Belief – a positive impact as there is no multi faith room in Castlewood but a new facility is being built in the Town Hall.

Carers/parents - may need to leave the office at short notice or do school runs, impact on working day, making up time. There could be a negative impact if this is easier to do from Castlewood rather than Town Hall but has a positive impact on those who find it easier from Town Hall.

The recommendations of the Council Report are to agree to transition the workforce out of the Castlewood building and to prepare detailed options related to the sites future use.

The actual closure of the building as a place of work will not be immediate and will be a phased transition within the context of an overall flexible working policy. Further work will be required to understand the impact level and impact type of options and a preferred option. The future use of the site may provide opportunities for positive impacts on some groups of people.

PD30 – Property & Projects

The move to a Corporate Landlord Model should not in itself have any customer impacts, as this relates to improving the mechanisms through which properties are managed. Decisions about the assets themselves will be made separately and will where necessary be subject to additional EIAs.

PD31 - Property & Projects

No customer impact, although measures will result in reductions in costs and carbon emissions which will have indirect benefits to residents.

Please describe how you will communicate these changes to your customers.

Staffing impacts - All changes are communicated via Jo Walker's weekly staff message, The Knowledge, to individuals/managers where appropriate, and via staff webinars.

4. Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal? **Yes** No

Explanation of staff impact

CSD08: The proposal will mean that Castlewood is no longer the main place of work for approximately 738 council officers (as of 3 May 2023) modelling the adopted 'Workstyle' behaviours of the council's hybrid working policy. 515 NSC staff will be re-located to the Town Hall in phases from May 2024 and space planning assumes directorate areas for the purposes of estimating capacity and to allow collaborative working. Some colleagues (approximately 220) are not included in the move because they (i) may need a presence in the north of the district or (ii) their pattern of work requires regular access to equipment and/or vehicles that cannot be accommodated at the Town Hall. Please see above in Table 3 for the description of how potential impacts are being mitigated for NSC staff.

PD30: The move to a Corporate Landlord model may require changes to the responsibilities of some staff, for example where services hold responsibility for the management of buildings. Those staff will be engaged with as part of designing the

new model and changes are not expected to be significant or to impact on any specific groups.

6. Review and Sign Off

Service Manager Review

Insert any service manager comments here:

Development options for the Castlewood site have been subject to a separate EIA and included in relevant council decisions.

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed? **Yes** No

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed?

Completed 05/12/2023 and appended.

Service Manager: Amy Webb

Date: 19 January 2024

Service area: Accommodation Strategy Programme – Castlewood Transition

**Does the topic of this assessment link?
to a budget reduction proposal:** Yes – from 2025/26

Equality impact assessment owner: Alex Hearn – reviewed by Su Turner December 23

Assistant Director/Director sign off: **Amy Webb**

Date of assessment: 26th January 2022, reviewed 1st December 2023

Review date: May and August 2024

1. Equality Impacts

Please make High, Medium or Low bold as appropriate

Service User Impact

Before mitigating actions	High	Medium	Low
After mitigating actions	High	Medium	Low

Staff Impact

Before mitigating actions	High	Medium	Low
After mitigating actions	High	Medium	Low

2. The Proposal

2.1 Description of the proposal

“Castlewood Transition” is one workstream within the overall Accommodation Strategy Programme which was signed off at full Council in February 2021. Separate Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are being completed for all four of the workstreams. The “Ways of working and Invest in the Town Hall” EIA was completed in July 2022. EIA’s will also be completed for “Touchdown locations beyond the Town Hall” and “Travel and parking”.

The proposal is to agree to the transitioned closure of Castlewood in Clevedon as part of the council's core office accommodation. A detailed options analysis exercise was undertaken to recommend a preferred option for development of the site.

The proposal is set out in a report to Council 10 January 2023 “[Castlewood Redevelopment options including Commissioning Plan](#)”. Council approved the preferred option of a residential-led redevelopment with newbuild homes and small-scale commercial development”.

2.2 Summary of changes:

The Town Hall will be retained as our primary office building and reconfigured to accommodate most council staff currently based in Castlewood, current Town Hall staff and colleagues from partner and tenant organisations, as determined.

The proposal will mean that Castlewood is no longer the main place of work for approximately 738 council officers (as of 3 May 2023) modelling the adopted ‘Workstyle’ behaviours of the council’s hybrid working policy. 515 NSC staff will be re-located to the Town Hall in phases from May 2024 and space planning assumes directorate areas for the purposes of estimating capacity and to allow collaborative working. Some colleagues (approximately 220) are not included in the move because they (i) may need a presence in the north of the district or (ii) their pattern of work requires regular access to equipment and/or vehicles that cannot be accommodated at the Town Hall. Work is underway to identify alternative provision for these services, with a principle of ‘Town Hall by default’ with any exclusions explored, then finalised and agreed.

The target date for vacant possession is April 2025 as this is when savings are assumed in the Medium-Term Financial Plan. There may be a need for a small council office presence on the site from April 2025 and until alternative accommodation is delivered for

those not moving to the Town Hall, however, the aim is for the building to be decommissioned and will not generally be available to colleagues to work from.

2.3 Please detail below how this proposal may impact on any other organisation and their customers.

Tenants and partners within the Town Hall and Castlewood are included in the Accommodation Strategy proposals and have been briefed and consulted with at all stages and will continue to be so.

Agency workers, contractors and consultants working with the council and tenants/partner organisations on a long-term basis who use the Town Hall office space will also have use of the new working environment and will need to adopt the new ways of working.

Tenants within Castlewood. The Police and ICB have given notice to terminate their leases on 31 July 2023 so are unaffected by the proposals.

The remaining tenants are:

- Sirona Health
- DWP (lease expires August 2027)
- Register Services (lease expires April 2026)

The remaining partners are:

- Agilisys – will be moving to Town Hall
- Liberata – will be moving to Town Hall
- BANES – will be moving to Town Hall
- Milestone Infrastructure – will move with the Highways teams.
- Centregreat – will move with the Highways teams.

3. What Do We Know?

3.1 Customer/staff profile details – what data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be, affected?

Data sources are available that can inform consideration of people or groups who may be affected by the moving of services out of Castlewood and its eventual development. These include:

- Demographic data about the North Somerset population
- Customer contact with the council through different channels when Castlewood provided Gateway services.
- Results of the Customer Services pilot
- Anonymised demographic data about the council's workforce
- Data of where the council's workforce live and travel from
- Current usage of Castlewood and the Town Hall

These are considered below.

3.2 What does the data or evidence tell us about the potential impact on diverse groups, and how is this supported by historic experience/data?

Pre-pandemic, the Castlewood site provided some limited public facing customer services such as being able to make general enquiries from a telephone, access computers or to meet council officers or members for pre-arranged appointments.

The predominant use of the building is as an office for professional teams within the council, its partners and commercial tenants. Some equipment and vehicles are stored on the site while important business continuity infrastructure is also housed on site. The Department of Work and Pensions has a public facing Job Centre plus on the site with a tenancy until summer 2027. This will remain open on the site until then or will be relocated to somewhere suitable with their agreement.

Both Castlewood and the Town Hall benefit from step free access to all floors and on-site disabled parking. Both buildings are serviced by bus services that connect them to the wider district and region, although there is greater frequency and more service

availability in and around the Town Hall. The Town Hall is an approximate 8-minute walk to the railway station that provides connections to local stations within North Somerset and then further afield. The station benefits from step free access on each side of the track.

Workers and visitors in both Castlewood and the Town Hall can access free local car parking and secure cycle parking with changing and showering facilities. In Weston, Locking Road Car Park is an approximate 8 minute walk from the office. The car park is in the council's ownership, and it is not part of the planned redevelopment for mixed use development.

Customers

Data from a typical month of September 2019, showed that only 1.5% of all face-to-face enquiries occurred at Castlewood, with the majority of contact with the council being made through the website and telephony. The council's customer service strategy is for self-serve first and customers are encouraged to use the website and contact centre.

A six-month Customer Service pilot from August 2022 made use of Library facilities for six months to test demand for and quality of services that can provided in this way. The summary findings are that:

- 24% of the available appointment capacity was used.
- Council tax, housing and blue badges were the top 3 services required.
- Demand for complex enquiries is extremely low.
- Cost per visit is over £144 which significantly higher than an industry standard benchmark of £8.76.
- High levels of customer satisfaction

As a result of the pilot and review of the findings, a new approach has been implemented that equips library colleagues to provide the most frequently required face to face customer services. More complex enquiries will be addressed by engagement through appointment.

In the case of Clevedon, it is worth noting that the library is in a more central location accessible by multiple modes of travel and close to shops and services and has benefited from a recent capital investment to improve facilities and accessibility at the

building. Monitoring of customer usage of the new approach will be undertaken, but it is anticipated that this will provide a greater coverage of customer service for settlements in the north of the district than Castlewood was ever able to.

Staff

The council's establishment is circa 1550 (although this does change as teams grow or contract or externally funded projects come to fruition such as BSIP). 69% of the workforce work in the wider built-up area of Weston-super-Mare and rural villages, while 31% live in the built-up areas of Portishead, Nailsea, Yatton and Clevedon. 9%, or 137, of the workforce live in Clevedon.

We know that there are number of staff living outside of North Somerset in the wider West of England area, Somerset, Wiltshire and Wales.

Our colleagues have a primary place of work identified within their contracts, and in most cases, this is either the Town Hall or Castlewood. This is consistent with our hybrid working policy, even if colleagues tend to work from home more often than not. Of the 137 colleagues that live in Clevedon, 35 of these (2.3%) of the overall workforce have Castlewood named as their primary workplace.

69% of our workforce between the ages of 41 and 65 or over, with the rest between the ages of 16 and 40. 59% of our colleagues work full time and 41% part time. Colleagues that identify as women make up 73% and men 27% and 13% of our colleagues identify as having a disability. Exactly in line with our population, 4.3% identify as Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and 'white other' ethnic group. (This has reduced to 4% as at 01.12.23)

Recent data of staff accessing the Town Hall and Castlewood demonstrates a daily occupancy of approximately 30% of the capacity of the buildings. There is also evidence that people are also working in a 'touchdown' way from time to time, making use of other places and assets to work on their way to and from the office or to meetings, suggesting that the organisation has significantly adjusted to many jobs being delivered in a hybrid way.

The council has a hybrid working policy which is available on the intranet and all managers are advised to signpost their staff to its contents and all staff have been allocated a workstyle and had the opportunity to have their workstyle amended, including for personal reasons.

Since the start of the pandemic there has been continual staff engagement to understand views on changes to ways of working and wellbeing. This engagement has been primarily through the staff survey and the introduction of a pulse survey which ran twice in 2020 and asked questions around wellbeing and ways of working. A Ways of Working inbox is publicised and monitored daily, and questions are taken at all staff webinars.

To conclude, the withdrawal of customer services from Castlewood will have impacted a small minority of customer contacts with the council, and this should be mitigated by the newly agreed investment into enable local people to access services through their local library as opposed to traveling to Castlewood.

Additionally, the workforce predominantly resides in neighbourhoods away from Castlewood, and only a very small number live in Clevedon and have Castlewood identified as their primary office location.

3.3 Are there any gaps in the data, for example across protected characteristics where information is limited or not available?

Adequate information is not available about transgender, sexual orientation and religion and belief, although it is worth noting that it is not expected that this change will have a negative impact on any of these groups, the improved facilities available in the refurbished Town Hall will have a positive impact. The free text responses to the staff survey questions and questions raised at webinars have also been considered, although a breakdown by protective characteristics is not available for these.

3.4 How have we involved or considered the views of the people that could be affected?

- Regular updates at staff webinars with opportunity to ask questions.
- Regular messaging via Jo's weekly message and The Knowledge.
- Ways of Working inbox monitored daily.
- Regular updates at union meetings.
- Regular updates to Leadership Delivery Team with request to share information with teams and feedback to the Ways of Working group.
- Regular attendance at tenants' stakeholder engagement group.
- Engagement with Sustainable Travel Team.
- During March and April 2022, we asked team leaders to validate workstyles for each role and to inform us of any specific individual needs or exemptions. These have been incorporated into final designs.
- Members have also had regular briefings – Informal Exec, EM briefings? PCOM Steering Group. Member Advisory Group

A consultation with affected staff took place over a three -month period ending 17 October 2023. 35 individuals and Unison responded to the consultation. A separate report summarising the outcomes of the consultation, main issues etc. was presented to the Accommodation Strategy Board in November 2023 and decisions made and recommendations included in the report. This included confirming there will be no changes to the way staff currently claim business mileage, seeking to house pool cars throughout the district to make it easier for staff to access them and to explore touchdown work and meeting locations and publicise further to staff. As a result of the consultation all staff identified to move in May 2024 will do so. Further consultations will be undertaken with individual staff and recognised unions for staff who need to move from Castlewood.

3.5 What has this consultation told us?

Challenge/impact	Mitigation
Additional mileage costs for individuals to travel to work	No change will be made to the mileage policy. The issue was raised by only 11 individuals during the consultation process (4% of those consulted). However, impact is significantly mitigated by the introduction of home working and flexibility and can be used by individuals to offset any impact. In addition, alternative modes of travel have been encouraged and signposted to staff.
Access to pool cars	The Accommodation Strategy Project Board has decided to explore and implement the provision of pool cars across the district, to ensure not all pool cars are stored at the Town Hall site.
Touchdown work locations/meeting space	During such time as Castlewood is decommissioned meeting rooms will remain open. A list of additional meeting rooms/workspace available to staff has been collated and shared (November 2023).
Costs of working from home	This is not a comment that is specific to the closure of Castlewood but is due to the increased level of homeworking. Staff are still able to ask for changes to their workstyle that would allow them to work in an office location rather than home. The council also covers the cost of all ICT and associated equipment and pays a contribution towards the purchase of a desk for home. The level of control offered to the individual mitigates against this impact.

3.6 Are there any gaps in our consultation, what are our plans for the future?

We will consult with Directorates on the proposed accommodation changes and make any changes needed to accommodate team and individual requirements.

We will continue to seek views from all recognised unions and staff forums – Disabled Staff, Carers, REACH, LGBTQIA and Young Persons group.

Continued regular attendance at staff webinars, tenants' engagement meetings and union meetings.

A formal HR consultation process will take place with any affected staff.

Section 4 - Assessment of impact

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups?

Insert X into one box per row, for impact level and type.

H = High, M = Medium, L = Low, N = None

+ = Positive, = = Neutral, - = Negative

Impact Level	Impact Type							Summary of Impact
	H	M	L	N	+	=	-	
Disabled people		x					x	Specific IT and furniture need in flexible office space/home; all office areas accessible; noisy working environment – there would be a negative impact if needs not met.
People from different ethnic groups			x		x			
Men or women (including pregnant women or those on maternity leave)		x			x			Women more likely to have caring/school run responsibilities – easier to manage work/life balance if have a more flexible workstyle. People who are pregnant are more able to work from home. An Infant Feeding Room is being built in the Town Hall Gateway which will assist those who return to work whilst feeding/expressing milk.
Lesbian, gay or bisexual people				x		x		

Impact Level	Impact Type							Summary of Impact
	H	M	L	N	+	=	-	
People on a low income		x					x	People on lower incomes may be less supportive of hybrid working. Cost of utility bills working from home may be more expensive than commute to work for some. Those who live closer to Clevedon will be adversely affected. They may be less likely to own a car/afford travel.
People in particular age groups								Negative impact for younger people who live close to Clevedon who may find it more difficult to travel to Weston as tend to have a higher preference for working in the office. If they find it more difficult or too expensive to travel to Weston and have a mobile/flexible workstyle, they may decide to work at home more.
People in particular faith groups				x		x		Positive impact as there is no multi faith room in Castlewood but a new facility is being built in the Town Hall.
People who are married or in a civil partnership				x		x		
Transgender people								
Carers and parents			x				x	May need to leave the office at short notice or do school runs, impact on working day, making up time. There could be a negative impact if this is easier to do from Castlewood rather than Town Hall but has a positive impact on those who find it easier from Town Hall.

4.1 Explanation of customer impact

Please see the table above for the detailed list of potential impacts on NSC staff. The recommendations of the Council report are to agree to transition the workforce out of the Castlewood building and to prepare detailed options related to the sites future use.

The actual closure of the building as a place of work will not be immediate and will be a phased transition within the context of an overall flexible working policy. A separate piece of work is underway to develop a new Customer Service Strategy for adoption by the council this year.

Further work will be required to understand the impact level and impact type of options and a preferred option. The future use of the site may provide opportunities for positive impacts on some groups of people.

Does this proposal have any potential Human Rights implications?

Yes No

Could this proposal have a Cumulative Impact with any other budget savings?

Yes No

This is an impact that appears when you consider services or activities together; a change or activity in one area may create an additional impact somewhere else.

If 'yes', please describe?

Timing of savings yet to be determined:

- c£1m of accommodation costs associated with release of Castlewood site.
- Energy inflation cost avoidance.
- Repairs and maintenance cost avoidance for Castlewood site
- Reassessment of ICT equipment budgets to support new workstyles (may be added cost)
- Reduced requirement for office furniture - shift to home working allocations

5 – Action Plan

Where you have listed that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

<u>Action taken/to be taken</u>	<u>How will it be monitored?</u>
Disabled staff – where staff have identified that they have a disability	This information has been collected for every service and addressed by

and adjustments needs – these will be captured and fully addressed to avoid any negative impact.	the Ways of Working group, in liaison with the individual and their manager. This is regularly updated to take account of any new starters.
Staff will be offered more flexibility around working hours, workstyles.	Hybrid working policy and homeworking policy have been introduced. Workstyles are all being captured on iTrent, and every individual has been offered the opportunity to ask for a change to their workstyles. Workstyles are checked every month by the HR team to ensure no new starter information is missed. Bandwidth working times have been extended to 7am to 7pm.
Consider any requests to remain in Castlewood until closure.	No requests received to date; these will be dealt with by HR on a case by case basis.

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

Negative impact could remain for a few individuals once Castlewood closes if they need to visit the office and incur additional travel costs. However, these will be minimal and are largely offset by mitigating actions.

Please set out how you intend to communicate these changes with your customers.

All changes are communicated via Jo Walker's weekly staff message, The Knowledge, to individuals/managers where appropriate, via staff webinars.

TWWW03 - The way we work - managing our finances.

Budget Reference	Budget Proposal
CSD02	Savings following a review of capital financing costs and investment strategy opportunities. Various options being modelled that are linked to current borrowing requirement, cash-flow forecasts and interest rates.

Medium Term Financial Plan Equality Impact Assessment of Budget Proposal 2024/25



1. The Proposal

Budget Theme:	The way we work - managing our finances.
Budget reference:	TWWW03
Budget proposal 2024/25 (£):	£4,735,000

The following savings are included within this Theme:

Budget Reference	Service Area	Budget Proposal	2024/25 Budget reduction
CSD02	Capital Financing	Savings following a review of capital financing costs and investment strategy opportunities. Various options being modelled that are linked to current borrowing requirement, cash-flow forecasts and interest rates.	£4, 735,000

Theme Narrative:

The council will seek to achieve a net reduction in the amount it pays for its capital financing costs and increase the investment yields it achieves on its external investments by making appropriate choices to manage the changes in interest rates.

Summary of changes:

The council currently generates interest on its surplus cash balances by investing these sums in accordance with the approved treasury management strategy; the council also incurs expenditure when borrowing money to fund the assets that are being delivered through the capital programme. The combination of these two things results in a net cost to the council's annual revenue budget.

It is anticipated that a lower net cost could be achieved by changing the strategy that covers these areas to integrate decisions associated with borrowing and investments, largely because of the changes and volatility being seen within interest rates.

Examples of potential changes could mean that the council may not borrow funds externally but would instead utilise surplus cash balances which would save interest

costs. The scale and mix of investments would also be reviewed to ensure that levels are optimised within the context of the council's risk profile.

Is any of the proposals within this theme a continuation of a previous medium-term financial plan saving?

Yes **No**

If yes, please insert reference number and year of assessment?

Budget Proposal	Year of assessment	Budget Reference
Net reduction in capital financing costs and increase in investment interest returns	2023/24	CSD21+22

If yes, please describe what steps you have taken to review the equality impacts from previous years?

There are no specific impacts on any of the defined groups.

2. Customer equality impact summary

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups?

Insert X into one box per row, for impact level and type.

H = High, M = Medium, L = Low, N = None

+ = Positive, = = Neutral, - = Negative

Impact Level	Impact type						
	H	M	L	N	+	=	-
Disabled people (Including consideration of neurodiversity)				X			
People from different ethnic groups				X			
Men or women (including those who are pregnant or on maternity leave)				X			
People who are LGBTQ+				X			
People on a low income				X			
People in particular age groups				X			
People in particular faith groups				X			
People who are married or in a civil partnership				X			
People who are undergoing gender reassignment				X			
Other specific impacts, for example: carers, parents, armed forces community, impact on health and wellbeing. Please specify:				X			

3. Explanation of customer impact

There should be no impact on customers either internally or externally as these decisions relate to the council's processes and risk management framework.

Please describe how you will communicate these changes to your customers.

N/A

4. Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal?

Yes

No

Explanation of staff impact

None

6. Review and Sign Off

Service Manager Review

Insert any service manager comments here:

None

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed?

Yes

No

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed?

Service Manager:

Melanie Watts

Date:

19 January 2024

WAST01 – Waste Service

Budget Reference	Budget Proposal
PD07	Waste collection frequencies and optimisation of rounds
PD08	Garden waste optimisation of rounds (Garden Waste collected on a different day to other collections)
PD09	Find efficiency savings within the waste collection contract
PD10	Expand commercial waste service
PD12	Re-procurement of waste disposal and haulage contract
PD13	Reduction in engagement and composting budget

Medium Term Financial Plan Equality Impact Assessment of Budget Proposal 2024/25



1. The Proposal

Budget Theme:	Waste Transformation
Budget reference:	WAST01
Budget proposal 2024/25 (£):	£1,035,000

The following savings are included within this Theme:

Budget Reference	Service Area	Budget Proposal	2024/25 Budget reduction
PD07	Waste	Waste collection frequencies and optimisation of rounds	£200,000
PD08	Waste	Garden waste optimisation of rounds (Garden Waste collected on a different day to other collections)	£100,000
PD09	Waste	Find efficiency savings within the waste collection contract	£150,000
PD10	Waste	Expand commercial waste service	£50,000
PD12	Waste	Re-procurement of waste disposal and haulage contract	£400,000
PD13	Waste	Reduction in engagement and composting budget	£135,000
Total			£1,035,000

Theme Narrative:

Transformation programme linked to the Waste Strategy which will ensure that the council's waste services are efficient and deliver value for money to residents. The programme will review polices and service delivery models to help the council move towards meeting carbon reduction targets through increasing recycling and reducing emissions where possible.

Summary of changes:

PD07 - Waste

Waste collection frequencies and optimisation of rounds

Recycling and waste collection rounds were last routed over 5 years ago by the previous waste contractor, Biffa. There are opportunities to rebalance the rounds to improve efficiency and to take account of property growth. The re-route will provide a more efficient delivery model where a number of crews work in the same geographical area and are able to assist each other if required. This will lead to a more efficient and reliable service and will reduce vehicles and mileage travelled.

It will have a positive climate emergency impact and reduce carbon. The frequency of recycling and food waste collections will continue a weekly basis to allow smelly waste to be collected at this frequency. Consultation is proposed to commence on collecting residual waste every 3 weeks across North Somerset, with the intention to use the consultation results to propose a new collection frequency

PD08 - Waste

Garden waste optimisation of rounds (Garden Waste collected on a different day to other collections)

Garden waste is collected on the same day as recycling and residual waste. This makes it inefficient as some days are much busier than others due to garden waste demand being spread out differently to the other services.

De-coupling garden waste from the same day of collection will allow for the service to be re-balanced with collections being spread out evenly across the fortnightly collection period and will reduce the number of rounds.

PD09 - Waste

Find efficiency savings within the waste collection contract.

This is a reduction in the payment made to NSEC with the contract amount being adjusted accordingly. NSEC will make efficiencies to cover the required budget saving. It is anticipated that these savings will be made with no impact to the service.

<p>PD10 - Waste Expand commercial waste service.</p> <p>The commercial waste service provides collections predominately to Small Medium Enterprise's (SMEs) and micro businesses. The business model has been successful, and the service has expanded. To expand the service further and to increase income, the service needs to employ another member of staff to carry out sales, customer services, account management and service liaison with the service provider.</p>
<p>PD12 - Waste Re-procurement of waste disposal and haulage contract</p> <p>The existing Waste Disposal Contract ends on 29 February 2024. The contract has five elements which are presently combined into one contract. These have now split into different contracts. Overall, the combined cost of the new contracts is expected to be below the existing contact value.</p>
<p>PD13 - Waste Reduction in engagement and composting budget</p> <p>As part of the garden waste subscription service, part of this money is used to encourage home composting by providing subsidised compost bins, training for master composters, and having a fund where communities can bid for an allocation of money to set up a community composting facility. Although engagement and subsidies will continue, the fund is being reduced.</p>

Is any of the proposals within this theme a continuation of a previous medium-term financial plan saving?

Yes No

If yes, please insert reference number and year of assessment?

Budget Proposal	Year of assessment	Budget Reference

If yes, please describe what steps you have taken to review the equality impacts from previous years?

2. Customer equality impact summary

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups?

Budget Proposal	Equality Impacts – Please consider any potential equalities impacts based on the protected groups below. Please answer High (H), Medium (M), Low (L) or None (N)										Positive (+) or Negative (-)
	Disabled People, including neurodiversity	Race	Men or Women, including those who are pregnant	Sexual Orientation	People on a low income	Age	Religion or belief or none	Marriage or civil partnership	Gender reassignment	Other, for example parents, carers or the Armed Forces. *	
PD07	L	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	L	Negative
PD08	L	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Both
PD09	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
PD10	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
PD12	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
PD13	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	

3. Explanation of customer impact

<p>PD07 - Waste Waste collection frequencies and optimisation of rounds</p> <p>Optimisation of rounds will make the service more reliable. The frequency of residual collections may impact large families or individuals who require more residual waste space for absorbent hygiene products, this could have a low impact on disabled people and families. This will be mitigated by offering a larger bin and using targeted questions in the consultation to understand any other impacts to provide mitigations. In areas where there are insufficient storage space alternative arrangements will be made which may include retaining the existing collection frequency. The assisted collection for those who are unable to present their waste bins for collection will be retained.</p> <p>Recycling and food waste collections will continue as a weekly service, with food waste provided to all flats.</p>
<p>PD08 - Waste Garden waste optimisation of rounds (Garden Waste collected on a different day to other collections)</p> <p>There may be a very low impact by having to place out and return containers on more than one occasion (residual bin and recycling containers/food waste on one day and garden waste bin on another), which could be an inconvenience for those with mobility issues. For residents who have an assisted collection, this will remain so there should be no impact.</p> <p>An alternative day of collection could reduce the number of containers placed on the highway over the week and provide clearer access for pedestrians.</p>
<p>PD09 - Waste Find efficiency savings within the waste collection contract</p> <p>This is a reduction in the payment made to NSEC with the contract amount being adjusted accordingly. NSEC will make efficiencies to cover the required budget saving and should have no impact on the service provided.</p>
<p>PD10 - Waste Expand commercial waste service.</p> <p>There should be no impact for existing customers and a positive impact for new customers who will sign up for the service.</p>
<p>PD12 - Waste Re-procurement of waste disposal and haulage contract</p>

There should be no impact as this concerns haulage and treatment of waste once it has been collected from residents.

PD13 - Waste

Reduction in engagement and composting budget

There should be no impact as subsidised compost bins and the master composting programme will continue. Access to funding for setting up community composting schemes will still be available although, as there has been minimal access to this over the last two years, this is the budget element being reduced and put forward as a saving.

Please describe how you will communicate these changes to your customers.

A change in frequency will be the subject of consultation. Optimisation of rounds and changes of day of collection will be communicated via letters, bin hangers, social media, web, emails, North Somerset Life, ELife, liaison with Town & Parish councils.

4. Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal? Yes No

Explanation of staff impact

The changes to collection rounds could impact in a reduction of staff, but this will be managed by NSEC through normal staff turnover.

6. Review and Sign Off

Service Manager Review

Insert any service manager comments here:

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed? Yes No

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed?

Service Manager: Colin Russell
Date: 19 January 2024