

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

BUDGET SAVING PROPOSALS

Summary

This report sets out the approach taken to consider the cumulative equality impact of East Herts Integrated Plan proposals for 2022.

The process for Equality Impact Assessments is an evolving one, with assessments updated as projects and proposals develop. This cumulative assessment assesses potential equality impacts on the new savings targets for 2021 - 2022.

East Herts sets out guidance and support for staff on taking a proportional and meaningful approach to paying due regard to equality duties both in the design and delivery of policies, services and staff restructures.

1. Equality approach

- The Public Sector Equality Duty also requires the District to foster good relations and promote equality of opportunity between those with a protected characteristic and others. This work is implicit in all of our services.
- During formative stages of the budget planning process, and as part of business case development, individual Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) are required to be presented with each major policy proposal to help decision makers consider the impact that would be felt by the community if a service change was implemented. Available data from national and local sources is used to inform decision-making - in particular, community profile and staff diversity data
- The appropriate consultation, monitoring and review process for each project has been planned or carried out with stakeholders, staff, partners and the public where appropriate. This information has been used to feed into the equality analysis.

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- Specific guidance on equality impacts is available as part of this.

The table below summarises the equality impact analysis of individual projects that collectively deliver the savings East Herts Budget Proposal.

2. Potential equality impacts identified by East Herts Budget proposals and the mitigating action either carried out or proposed.

Service area and potential for impact on people from protected groups	Impact Level	How we will mitigate against any possible impacts
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Membership fees		
<p>The focus of this budget proposal looks to withdrawing funding from various schemes and activities including the London Stansted Corridor, the Digital Innovation Zone, Central Zone Alliance, and Visit Herts.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>In consultation between the Equalities Officer and the Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy the equalities impact of a reduction to membership fees was discussed.</p> <p>The Dragon's Apprentice Programme works directly with younger people at primary and secondary school ages to develop business and entrepreneurial skills. Withdrawing funding means the scheme is likely to stop unless the CVS can find alternative provision through private sector partners. However overall numbers taking part in the scheme is relatively low (usually one group from 10-12 schools per year so perhaps up to around 40 young people a year would be affected). However, the programme is delivered within school time so this would be replaced by other learning/ activities within the relevant school curriculum. No data on the characteristics of those who take part are collected.</p> <p>The Dragon's Apprentice Programme does enable young people to work with a local charity and raise funds on their behalf. In the past this has been relatively successful and has included the Muscle Warriors (who support people with muscular dystrophy), Breathe Easy and Bury Rangers (All Inclusive). Total funds raised</p>

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		<p>over the past years are around £3k for these groups. Withdrawing funding from the scheme will mean some groups have less capacity to undertake fundraising however the amounts are small and do not affect any core funding or fundraising activity (the Dragon's Apprentice scheme is effectively an "extra" means of generating money).</p>
<p>Housing and Health</p>		
<p>RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP: Emergency Planning-related contracts – Hertfordshire Resilience Partnership</p>		
<p>This efficiency proposal looks to reducing payment to the Hertfordshire Emergency Planning/ Resilience Partnership from £26,000 to £16,000 to reflect the reduction in hours devoted by the Partnership to East Herts that has already been made. At the same time, incorporate any remaining functions into the work of already existing East Herts Officers.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>In consultation between the Equalities Officer and the Head of Housing and Health, the equalities impact of a reduction in payment to Emergency Planning and Resilience Partnership was discussed.</p> <p>From the impacts and external reports and findings below, it was found that the impact on residents as a result of this change is likely to be minimal. This is due to the mitigation of East Herts Officers taking up the responsibility where the partnership is reduced and therefore no equalities impacts were identified from reducing the budget.</p> <p>After consulting the Hertfordshire Risk Register published by Hertfordshire Resilience, the Equalities Officer assessed any impact of this budget cut across the nine protected characteristics and raised that there could potential age-based</p>

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		<p>impact. Hertfordshire Resilience Partnership describes some of the risks to the County on their Risk Register:</p> <p>‘Infectious outbreaks and diseases, such as a flu crisis, could have a significant impact on health, particularly amongst the young and elderly’</p> <p>One of the positive impacts of the proposal was that there were no significant reductions to public services foreseen, due to the prediction that these duties can be absorbed into the existing East Herts Staff base.</p> <p>One of the negative impacts of this proposal was the potential increase in pressure on existing East Herts District Officers.</p> <p>The ‘Opinions and Wellbeing Survey’ from the Office for National Statistics describes that 45.8% of adults over 70 have their wellbeing affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, compared with all adults at 53.1%.</p> <p>(Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk))</p> <p>However, due to the sharing of resources across the district officers, any external impacts of this budget reduction should be mitigated.</p>
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COMMUNITY TRANSPORT: Grant support to operators of community transport		
<p>This budget reduction looks to reduce council funding towards the start-up of community transport schemes.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>In consultation between the Equalities Officer and the Head of Housing and Health, the equalities impact of a reduction towards community transport schemes was discussed.</p> <p>Prior to this consultation, the Equalities Officer undertook research with the Community Protection Manager, who shared that data on community transport via resident protected characteristic was not held centrally in their department.</p> <p>It was also discussed that those with protected characteristics could be over-represented in the passengers of community transport, however mitigations to these issues were discussed, such as: the Lynx bus service, a demand responsive transport service in the north of the district, greater support from parish councils and access to the council's community grants to aid the transition to no council subsidy.</p>
BED AND BREAKFAST CHARGES		
<p>The current service provision includes bed and breakfast accommodation as temporary accommodation for single people when the council's hostels are full. The budget change here is to increase the charge for single people in bed and breakfast from £110.40 per week to £129.33, which represents the maximum</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>In consultation between the Equalities Officer and the Head of Housing and Health, the equalities impact of a subsidised fee for bed and breakfast charges was discussed.</p> <p>It was recognised that the increase in housing benefit coverage would not be visible to anyone placed in bed and breakfast accommodation as the housing benefit payment, which is</p>

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<p>that can be funded in full from government housing funds.</p>		<p>funded from resources made available by national government, is paid directly to the Housing Service to in part cover the charges levied by the bed and breakfast hotels to the council. When a member of the public is placed in bed and breakfast, the cost is met in full from the council, with, as noted above, some of the cost recovered from housing benefit, although the amount recoverable is capped by government.</p> <p>Moreover, the number of households in the UK that are now. In East Herts there are 2,039 households on the waiting list for social housing.</p>
<p>GRANTS: Revenue Grants to third sector/voluntary organisations to support the council's priorities</p>		
<p>For 2021/2022 the funding for both the council's revenue and capital community grants comes from the council's revenue budget. Thus, the two pots can be considered as one with, for the first time, members being able to determine the split between revenue and capital grant expenditure.</p>	<p>Low/Medium</p>	<p>In consultation between the Equalities Officer and the Head of Housing and Health, the equalities impact of reduced revenue grants to third sector and voluntary organisations were discussed.</p> <p>It was concluded that given the council's grants policy, a number of recipients with protected characteristics could be disproportionately impacted in an adverse way, notably older people, those with physical disabilities and those with learning difficulties.</p> <p>The mitigating actions discussed for this were; (a) for Council to consider further prioritising those with protected characteristics with the council's grant giving policy so as to minimise such residents' exposure to grant reductions, (b) for officers to further publicise grant availability among community</p>

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		<p>group serving those with protected characteristics so as to maximise awareness of future funding grants. Other actions discussed with the Head of Housing and Health involve the council continuing to support the Citizens Advice Service's bids for external funding.</p>
<p>Operations</p>		
<p>BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS TO PARKING</p>		<p>In consultation between the Equalities Officer and the Head of Operations, the potential equalities impact of the following were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the price of Resident Parking Zone permits • The introduction of standard car park tariff charges on Sundays across Council managed car parks • An annual uplift in parking charges from April 2023
<p>PARKING – RPZ PERMITS</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>In consultation between the Equalities Officer and the Head of Operations, the potential equalities impact of an uplift on RPZ permits were discussed.</p> <p>There are approximately 1200 permits in the district currently compared to around 60,000 households in East Herts. Therefore the impact will only be felt by a relatively small proportion of residents. No equalities data is collected on the residents.</p> <p>Price increases are not considered significant compared to the overall cost of running a vehicle compared to the benefit of being able to park more conveniently closer to home.</p>

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		<p>However, the increase in charges will be implemented via a Notice of Variation and will be effective on the 1st April 2022. This will ensure adequate communication to all effected residents in good time.</p>
PARKING – SUNDAY CHARGING	Low	<p>In consultation between the Equalities Officer and the Head of Operations, the potential equalities impact of introducing a standard car park tariff charge on Sundays across Council managed car parks was discussed.</p> <p>Due to the timing of the proposal on a Sunday, the Equalities Officer noted that there could be an equalities impact on those for whom religion or religious belief is a protected characteristic of the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Those potentially affected include Sunday worshippers, however there are a range of faiths and non-believers within East Herts including: Christian (6.31%), Buddhists (0.32%), Hindu (0.45%), Jewish (0.33%), Muslim (0.72%), Sikh (0.12%), Other Religions (0.32%), Non-religious (27.75%). Not all faiths have Sunday as their day of religious observance. So, those individuals who for example observe Friday or Saturday as a religious day have to pay for parking and by introducing Sunday charges we are not treating one religious group more favourably than another. Through the Statutory Consultation process we will receive feedback and clarity on advantages or disadvantages of Sunday charges in car parks to update our EIA further and review objections.</p>

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		<p>Pregnant women and women with babies younger than 6 months old are more likely to be reliant on cars for travel. They may therefore be negatively impacted by increased charges and maternity pay is less than full pay so it may have a disproportionate affect. However, the introduction of Sunday charges is relatively low when compared to the overall cost of keeping and using a car</p> <p>However, a formal consultation is required to implement the change of substance in East Herts car parks via Traffic Regulation Order and has not been carried out. This consultation would also assist the identification of equalities impacts amongst residents.</p>
<p>PARKING - ANNUAL PRICE INCREASE</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>In consultation between the Equalities Officer and the Head of Operations, the potential equalities impact of an annual uplift in parking charges from April 2023 was discussed.</p> <p>The Equalities Impact Assessment will be further updated following feedback from the statutory consultation process as part of the Off-Street Parking Places Order.</p> <p>Pregnant women and women with babies younger than 6 months old are more likely to be reliant on cars for travel. They may therefore be negatively impacted by increased charges and maternity pay. However, the increase in permit charges is relatively low when compared to the overall cost of keeping and using a car</p> <p>It was concluded that the uplift may cause a socioeconomic</p>

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		<p>issue for some residents, however as socioeconomic factors are not protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, then no legal equalities issues were forecasted in this instance.</p> <p>However, the increase in charges will be implemented via a Notice of Variation and will be effective in April 2023 ensuring communication to those who use the car parks is undertaken in good time.</p>
PLAYGROUNDS	Low	<p>In consultation between the Equalities Officer and the Head of Operations, the potential equalities impact of transferring 6 play areas in East Herts was discussed.</p> <p>The Equalities Officer consulted the Head of Children’s Services for research data on any impacts, which were not found, and looked at the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, which states, ‘We will focus on our parks being: Attractive & Accessible to all Promoting equality and access for all whether its walking in our open spaces, accessible equipment in play areas or learning more about historic monuments in our parks and open spaces’.</p> <p>A transfer would have no impact.</p>
PAPER RECYCLING BOXES	None	<p>In consultation between the Equalities Officer and the Head of Operations, the potential equalities impact of removing 45 litre paper recycling boxes and replacing them with 55L recycling boxes were discussed.</p> <p>Due to the larger capacity that this may impact elderly due to the box being heavier. The mitigation is our assisted collection scheme</p>

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CHARGING FOR BIN DELIVERY	None	<p>In consultation between the Equalities Officer and the Head of Operations, the potential equalities impact of charging for new bin delivery and for the replacement of wheeled bins were discussed.</p> <p>It was concluded that the uplift may cause a socioeconomic issue for some residents, however as socioeconomic factors are not protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, then no legal equalities issues were forecasted in this instance.</p>
PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND CTS	Medium	<p>In consultation between the Equalities Officer and the Head of Operations, the potential equalities impact of transferring the Buntingford toilets to a third party or closing and ceasing the community toilet scheme.</p> <p>The Equalities Officer raised the challenge of accessibility issues for people with disabilities, older people and pregnant women, who would be likely to rely on the community toilet schemes in these areas.</p> <p>Public awareness of the community toilet scheme is low and no data on users is collected. Despite the small impact due to the limited public awareness of the scheme, there could be an equalities implication here, unless the mitigating action of signposting and wayfinding to alternative nearby public conveniences is provided.</p>

Head of Strategic Finance and Property

This is a proposal to reduce the number of audit days purchased from the Hertfordshire Share Internal Audit Service (SIAS).	None	No equalities implications were foreseen for this proposal.
Head of Planning and Building Control		
This is a proposal to reduce the planning support required for the Gilston Area within the District Plan.	None	In consultation between the Equalities Officer and the Head of Planning and Building Control, the potential equalities impact of reducing the planning budget for the Gilston Area were discussed and no equalities implications were foreseen for this proposal.

3. An analysis of any potential cumulative impacts that spans services

The potential for compounded impacts on particular groups are identified in individual equality impact assessments, which generally involve engagement and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. The process uses available data from national and local sources identified as relevant to the individual equality impact assessment as well as the results from any local consultation. Action planning and monitoring is part of the process, with the impact of any new policy or service only realised following implementation.

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Project / Review	Age	Race	Gender Reassignment	Disability	Carers	Religion and Belief	Pregnancy and Maternity	Sex	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Sexual Orientation	Impact after mitigation
Key: ✓ = Potential impact; x = No impact; NK = Not known – insufficient evidence											
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT											
Resilience Partnership	✓	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	Low
HOUSING AND HEALTH											
Resilience Partnership	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Low
Community Transport	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Low
Bed and Breakfast	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Low
Grants	✓	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	Low/Medium
OPERATIONS											
Parking - RPZ Permits	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	None
Parking - Tarrif alignment	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	Low
Parking - Price Increase	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	None
Playgrounds	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	Low

