

Savings Proposals Draft Equality Analysis Summary - 2024/25

Outlined below is a summary of initial equality analysis (EA) which support the budget proposals for 2024/25, and beyond. EAs are assessments that public authorities carry out and consider prior to taking decisions to implement any policies and service changes, with a view to predicting their impact on equality, and planning mitigation accordingly. The Equality Act 2010 does not specifically require an equality analysis to be carried out, although they are a way of facilitating and evidencing compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Duty requires decision makers to have 'due-regard' to matters of equality at a time when a particular policy or service change is being considered. Each summary below considers the individual and isolated impact of each budget proposal on the 'protected characteristics' as defined by the Equalities Act, as well as the additional groups identified by Southend-on-Sea City Council. However, the Council should note the wider context and resulting compounding impacts of multiple proposals on specific protected groups.

This year's budget setting exercise is proposing to review, reduce or stop some non-statutory services. The nature of the services provided by the Council means that groups who would be disproportionately impacted by changes are those who experience life with protected characteristics. Nationally, data tells us that those groups also experience a compounding issue of lower income.

Many more of the budget setting proposals seek to recover the costs of providing services and would see residents, businesses, voluntary and community groups paying more. Whilst these changes will bring Southend-on-Sea in line with many other areas of the country, this change in the context of the current financial environment adds pressure to all sectors and further squeezes the purse strings of all.

However, in many cases, some provision of service will continue to be available, and this will help to reduce the impact on those who rely on them the most. It will be important that changes are communicated in a timely way so that people have time to plan and adjust, with inclusive language through a variety of avenues, to support those with digital barriers. Where possible the Council should look to tailor remaining services so that those who most need them can still gain access, and the inequality gap does not grow as a result.

The Council is also proposing that its workforce do more with less; various teams deleting vacant posts or undertaking restructures. Staff who experience life with protected characteristics may be less well placed to cope with these changes, however support mechanisms are in place. It is important that Southend-on-Sea residents and businesses see that the Council itself is absorbing part of the financial challenges that the whole local government sector is facing, but it will be important to consider the ongoing impact on residents, especially those who may be disproportionately impacted by protected characteristics themselves.

Importantly, the proposed overall budget package continues to provide targeted support to those who experience the most vulnerabilities that society places upon them, as they will enable statutory services for adults and children to continue to operate.

Ref	Description	EA Assessment	EA Mitigation
Corporate Initiatives			
COI-01	Comprehensive Reserves and Capital Financing Requirement Review	No equality issues identified.	None needed.
COI-02	Vacancy Factor	Holding vacant posts can cause negative impacts on remaining staff as work is subsumed or tapered off. The remaining team may have different abilities to cope with a change due to their experiences from the protected characteristics.	Internal staff planning is required to mitigate the impact and understand what activity is paused and/or stopped.
COI-03	Energy inflation 2023/24 unapplied	No equality issues identified.	None needed.
COI-04	Family Centres – Review	Any reduction to the children’s centre provision and the services offered within them could have a disproportionate impact on preschool children, pregnant women and families with young children. This impact will be compounded if the household income is limited and may increase the reliance on the free or low-cost services offered by children’s centres. There is also potentially a social aspect to what’s provided which may be a lifeline to those socially isolated or with limited skills or without English as their primary language. Any reduction to the number of children’s centres in the city may contribute to widening inequality between families in need of support and their peers, some of which is focussed on school readiness therefore a decrease in these services could risk future educational attainment.	Some children’s centres will remain open and provide the same or in some cases a more expansive service provision. This could mean additional travel to access the provision. Consider the locations most used or where the need is highest, ease of public transport to those centres, services most used and how these could be delivered differently using alternative venues or online services. Further promotion of other organisations offering social clubs and gatherings in similar locations to mitigate the risk of social isolation.

COI-05	Redesign the 'Front Door' to the Council	Moving to a more digital approach from first contact is likely to impact those with less ability to adapt or access the appropriate equipment. These groups are likely to be older people, those with limited digital skills, people from ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. People that are economically challenged may not have access to technology to allow them to fully engage in this process, access to shared venues is more difficult for those with disabilities, carers and people with English as a second language.	Directing manual support to the most complex interactions with residents will help to mitigate the impact for groups. Assessment of the local digital literacy skills will identify gaps and options for mitigation measures. Complimentary adult learning courses may address some of these basic skills. Promotion of refurbished or low cost technology equipment may mitigate cost of pressures.
COI-06	Utilisation of Education Grants	No equality issues identified.	None needed.
COI-07	Utilisation of Education Grants – High Needs (Dedicated Schools Grant)	No equality issues identified.	None needed.
COI-08	Museums Rateable Value Reductions	No equality issues identified.	None needed.
COI-09	Discretionary Rate Relief Policy Review	The Relief Policy currently supports groups including those who provide charitable services. As part of the review, consideration should be given to the potential impact on services provided to those who fall within the protected groups.	Consideration should be given to protecting services which perform a social good by supporting those with protected characteristics. This should be detailed as part of the policy review and final decision making.
Efficiency and Productivity			
EAP-01	Equipment Assistive Technology Pilots	These pilots of new technology aim to improve services for those with disabilities, carers and older people. Consideration needs to be given to additional pressures on energy consumption for example, especially for people with limited budgets. Also checking the digital literacy of users and their carers is essential in making sure the equipment is used correctly and for the intended purpose.	Sufficient time needs to be allocated to familiarise users and carers of equipment with clear lines of reporting for queries and problem solving. Pilot timescales need to be clear from the outset and future plans easy to understand so people feel confident with the new equipment and how to feedback on their use, this will mitigate potential negative impacts.

EAP-02	Operation Estate Efficiencies	Consideration will need to be given to staff who may be disproportionately impacted by a change in their workplace location. Groups could include people with disabilities older people, carers, people from minority ethnic groups and those with challenging financial situations.	Considering further protection for people in these groups would be beneficial. Additional support and promotion of wellbeing services may be useful. Clear, transparent communication as far in advance as possible would best mitigate this impact to allow the additional adjustment and planning time.
Organisation Redesign			
ORE-01	Restructure Adult Social Care Operations and Commissioning	This aims to provide a better service to users. However, any restructure of service will likely impact on the staff within the service area affected, which is likely to encompass staff from multiple protected groups. There may also be a disproportionate impact to users of the service, that may be less equipped to manage the change. This proposal is focussed on Adult Social Care Operations and Commissioning so will directly impact on users and staff in this area.	Advising staff and residents of the planned change as soon as possible would be useful in allowing people the maximum time to adjust and plan for this change. A transition period to introduce this change gradually may also be less impactful. Thought will need to be given to additional support that can be provided to individuals as part of reasonable adjustments or groups who form a protected characteristic.
ORE-02	Director Roles and Vacancies	The posts are unfilled and so the impact will be on the remaining staff within those services. Whilst the saving is adjusting to a position that is already in place, an EA should now consider the remaining impact of the permanent change. Removing vacant posts can cause impacts on remaining staff as work is subsumed or tapered off. The remaining team may have different abilities to cope with a change if they have experiences from the protected characteristics.	Internal staff planning is needed to see what activity is paused or stopped to account for being one staff member less, this will mitigate some of the impact to the remaining team members.

ORE-03	ICT Restructure	<p>This proposal outlines a full-service restructure that will clearly impact on staff and users of the service directly. The staff affected are likely to include individuals from various protected groups, some of which may find the change more of a challenge as a result. If the restructure results in a reduction of staff the resulting service delivery may disproportionately impact users that more greatly rely on ICT support, particularly those with limited digital skills, those with disabilities, those with specialist equipment and programmes necessitating more support.</p>	<p>The staff impacted will be subject to the standard support measures offered by the Council such as the talent pool, potential for ring fenced roles and redundancy packages which may mitigate the impact somewhat. The messaging and opportunities for advance engagement is key for limiting the discomfort to those affected, allowing a maximum timeframe for adjustment is essential to allow staff and users time to plan.</p>
ORE-04	Pause Graduate Programme	<p>This proposal will impact all graduates interested in the programme currently in the future. There is some risk to losing future skills. This change would impact young people to a greater degree, these people may also include those from other protected groups.</p>	<p>Advising of these changes with adequate time will allow graduates considering their options to make alternative plans. Messaging should be clear and accessible and explain other avenues or support services that can provide guidance to this group.</p>
ORE-05	Restructure the Senior Leadership Team of the Education, Inclusion and Early Years Service	<p>A reduction of staff will likely impact on remaining staff who may see increased workloads or periods of adjustment. This may have more of an impact on people already diagnosed with mental health conditions or stress and who may become overwhelmed at the additional workload. Staff already working at full capacity may struggle to take on extra.</p> <p>Considering this alongside reducing service standards from gold to bronze/silver may be beneficial, as this would likely reduce in the workloads of staff and therefore the pressure.</p>	<p>Internal staff planning is needed to see what activity is paused or stopped to mitigate some of the impact to the remaining team members.</p> <p>Communicating change in advance is vital to manage expectations and allow affected staff, residents and partners time to adjust.</p>

ORE-06	Centralisation of Project Managers	This is an internal change intended to streamline the project management function, relocating staff to a corporate team and potentially reducing the number of roles/projects. This change could result in a reduction of the project management function, and an EA is needed to assess the impact of affected staff.	Advising staff and residents of the planned change as soon as possible would be useful in allowing people the maximum time to adjust and plan for this change. A transition period to introduce this change gradually may also be less impactful.
ORE-07	Corporate Strategy Staffing Restructure	<p>When considering a reduction or removal of vacant posts, this will likely impact on remaining staff who may see increased workloads or periods of adjustment. This may have more of an impact on people already diagnosed with mental health conditions or stress and who may become overwhelmed at the additional workload. Staff already working at full capacity may struggle to take on extra.</p> <p>Considering this alongside reducing service standards from gold to bronze/silver may be beneficial, as this would likely reduce in the workloads of staff and therefore the pressure.</p>	<p>This refers to SCC staff so there are HR support services in place for restructures such as support sessions, talent pool, ringfencing, redundancy packages and ongoing HR/Union support. Staff also have access to wellbeing services to reduce the impact to their health.</p> <p>Internal staff planning is needed to see what activity is paused or stopped to mitigate impact to the remaining team members.</p> <p>Communicating change in advance is vital to manage expectations and allow affected staff, residents and partners time to adjust.</p>
ORE-08	Service Restructures Excluding Library Restructure	<p>This refers to multiple restructures which will directly impact staff and indirectly impact on users, both groups will almost certainly encompass multiple protected groups. Service delivery may include changes such as delays or changes to processes to allow for staff reductions which will impact on users in a variety of ways.</p> <p>When considering a reduction or removal of vacant posts, this will likely impact on remaining staff who may see increased workloads or periods of adjustment. This may have more of an impact on people already diagnosed with mental health conditions or stress and who may become overwhelmed at the additional workload. Staff</p>	<p>It is advisable to give staff and users as much prior notice of this change as possible so considerations can be given to allow for the change. Standard council support measures such as redundancy packages, ringfenced roles and access to the talent pool will be in place for staff which will reduce the impact to some degree.</p> <p>Internal staff planning is needed to see what activity is paused or stopped to mitigate impact to the remaining team members. Considering this alongside reducing service standards from gold to bronze/silver may be beneficial, as this</p>

		already working at full capacity may struggle to take on extra.	would likely reduce in the workloads of staff and therefore the pressure. Communicating change in advance is vital to manage expectations and allow affected staff, residents and partners time to adjust.
ORE-09	Environment and Place Leadership Team Restructure	<p>This change affects a small group of staff, it is likely that that this will include some from protected groups, some of which may experience the impact to a higher level than others. There may also be a further impact to users of the service if the change results in changes to service delivery or process change.</p> <p>When considering a reduction or removal of vacant posts, this will likely impact on remaining staff who may see increased workloads or periods of adjustment. This may have more of an impact on people already diagnosed with mental health conditions or stress and who may become overwhelmed at the additional workload. Staff already working at full capacity may struggle to take on extra.</p>	<p>Giving staff as much advance warning of the change as possible, will best allow them to adjust to the change and plan for the impact. The communication of this change will need to be as clear and inclusive as possible where staff are given every opportunity to be consulted with and advised of the support measures in place.</p> <p>Internal staff planning is needed to see what activity is paused or stopped to mitigate impact to the remaining team members. Considering this alongside reducing service standards from gold to bronze/silver may be beneficial, as this would likely reduce in the workloads of staff and therefore the pressure.</p>
ORE-10	Post Reduction: Workforce Practice Management	<p>Removing vacant posts can cause impacts on remaining staff as work is subsumed or tapered off. The remaining team may have different abilities to cope with a change if they have experiences from the protected characteristics.</p>	<p>Internal staff planning is needed to see what activity is paused or stopped to account for less staff members, this will mitigate some of the impact to the remaining team members.</p>
ORE-11	Post Reduction: Operational Performance and Intelligence		
ORE-12	Post Reduction: Procurement		
ORE-13	Reception Staffing Reduction		
ORE-14	Post Reduction: People and Organisation		

Service Offer Changes			
SOC-01	Parks Service Review	Reductions in maintenance is described a minor change, however such changes are likely to disproportionately impact those with protected characteristics if they involved access to space or ease of mobility within parks.	Introducing a priority system for maintenance may be useful in mitigating impact on protected groups, giving greater urgency to access areas, pathways or visibility as they may pose the greatest risk to those whose mobility is impacted. Advance notice of the changes in a clear, inclusive way will help people plan their visits according to their needs.
SOC-02	Micro Enterprise Work	No equality issues identified.	None needed.
SOC-03	Telecare Responder Service	This change will directly and disproportionately impact on service users who experience vulnerabilities due disability, carers and older age. Some plans appear to be in place to reduce the risk to users of the service, if this is at an additional cost, consideration should be given to compounding issues faced by those with challenging financial situations and limited support networks.	Some mitigation measures seem to have already been considered. Giving people the maximum time possible to allow them to plan and adjust to these changes will be vital and the messaging to communicate the changes needs to be clear and inclusive. Understanding pressures caused by additional costs to service users could support in planning additional mitigation such as lead in times, and payment plans.
SOC-04	Cultural and Pier Services Review	Limiting the hours of these low cost or free venues would impact those on limited incomes, as they are likely to be relied on for leisure. This could include young people and students using facilities for homework, people with disabilities and carers for day trips and visits, families with young children who participate in reading circles and parenting groups, socially isolated that may use these services as a gathering place. People from ethnic minority groups that may rely on these resources to build confidence, and those from challenging financial situations that may use these venues to engage children or use internet access.	The impact is reduced by a service continuing to be available. Selecting the hours with least usage would further mitigate as well as signposting to local services with similar facilities.

SOC-05	Concert Series	This change will impact the people that attend the concerts greatest, these are likely to include older people, carers and people with disabilities.	Promotion of other similar evening events may mitigate some of this impact, as would promotion of similar events in neighbouring boroughs. Communicating change in advance is vital to manage expectations and allow affected residents time to adjust or make alternative arrangements.
SOC-06	Review of Existing Library Provision (Deferred)	This initiative will require a full EA at the appropriate time.	None needed at this time.
Third Party Payments / Contractual Arrangements			
TPP-01	Concessionary Fares Scheme	The saving itself results from underspend, which would have no impact and therefore need no EA. Concessionary fares support some protected groups reduce barriers in accessing transport options. The underutilisation of this service disproportionately impacts on protected groups. Funding future demand needs to be accounted for.	Funding future demand needs to be considered.
TPP-02	Transitional Supported Housing	This change could create a disproportionate impact to some people from protected groups. These will include people who experience vulnerabilities but are not covered by Care Act eligibility, including older people, people with disabilities, carers, prisoners, people with care experience, veterans' people with substance abuse issues and is further compounded by having a lack of financial means.	Consideration and analysis would be useful to identify the groups impacted that don't have care needs as outlined in the Care Act. Some prioritisation may be useful on the remaining groups based on the disproportionately negative experience they may have. Communication needs to be timely, clear and inclusive to mitigate impact and allow time for people to adjust.

TPP-03	Decommission Dementia Community Support Team	This change could have significant implications for users of the service, which directly impacts those with dementia, those with additional health concerns, people with disabilities, older people, their families and carers. Difficulty in processing the change alongside the compounding proposals impacting social care may further increase the impact to this group.	Promotion of similar support services locally, including online support will mitigate some of this impact. However, there is likely to be an increase in demand for external organisations which may be difficult to manage. Advance notice of this change is key as groups effected require extra time needed to process this change.
TPP-04	Utilisation of Education Grants – Early Years (DSG)	No equality issues identified.	None needed.
TPP-05	Printing Resources	This change is responding to a change in demand. Therefore, the overall impact is reduced. However, consideration should be given to remaining staff who may have sight impairments, people with disabilities, older people and the digitally excluded as they will face a disproportionate impact, with less capacity to adapt to a change.	As mentioned, the impact is reduced. However, further mitigation could include support for the groups identified including clear and inclusive communication with options for digital champions to support staff with alternatives.
TPP-06	Southend Business Improvement District (BID) Service Level Agreement (SLA)	Consideration to be given as to whether the post holder or those using the office space are detrimentally impacted due to a protected characteristic.	Consideration to be given as to whether the current post holder would benefit from tailored support in response to any protected characteristics they may experience. Likewise, for those who use the office space to be supported with information about the change in a clear and inclusive way.
TPP-07	Essex County Council (ECC) Transferred Debt	No equality issues identified	None needed
TPP-08	Internal Audit Resourcing	No equality issues identified	None needed
TPP-09	Connectivity Savings	No equality issues identified	None needed
TPP-10	Remove the ATM from Civic One	This change is responding to a change in demand; therefore, any impact will automatically be reduced. With several other ATMs within 1/2 mile of Civic 1 there is no reason to believe that this will disproportionately impact any particular group. No EA needed.	None needed

TPP-11	Consolidation of Low Value Third Party Payment Items	<p>This proposal combines several potential changes including 1) a reduction of unused telephone lines, 2) cleaning in libraries and 3) ownership of the Garron's Netball Courts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) As the lines are not in use and this proposal is responding to demand, no EA required. 2) Reduction in cleaning could impact residents as there is potential for slip and trip hazards as well as unhygienic environments. This will disproportionately impact on those mobility issues such as older people, people with disabilities, carers and parents with young children. 3) This proposal may impact on netball players currently using the service, however if the service remains but under different ownership, there may be no impact at all. Any changes to fees or service delivery will require an EA. It is likely that there will be a disproportionate impact to females (who have less traditional public sports facilities than males) and young people. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) None needed 2) Establishing the less busy days may help mitigate the impact as a lack of cleaning can be best planned ahead of those. Having a cleaning list of tasks and adjusting these to account for a days cleaning absence may reduce some of the mess and risk. 3) Understanding what the future plans would be if returned to NGT would be useful in advising users so they can plan for the change. Clear and transparent messaging at the earliest stage will mitigate the impact to a degree.
TPP-12	Community Grants (Deferred)	This initiative will require a full EA at the appropriate time.	None needed at this time.
Income Generation Capabilities			
IGC-01	Reversal of Reduction in Investment Income	No equality issues identified.	None needed
IGC-02	Investment Income Growth	No equality issues identified.	None needed
IGC-03	Full Cost Recovery for Council Services Provided Externally	<p>It is likely that those using services have adjusted to the concessions provided by the Council. Negative impacts on traded entities may generate onward externalities to the service they provide to residents. Of whom could fall within one or more of the protected characteristics (such as adults and children who experience disability).</p>	Working with entities to understand how the removed concessions could, in part, be redirected and targeted back to those who experience the most vulnerabilities in society, could prevent ongoing externalities.

			Communicating change in advance is vital to manage expectations and allow affected partners (and therefore residents) time to adjust or make alternative plans.
IGC-04	Fees and Charges Increase	An increase to fees will disproportionately impact those with limited financial means and lower household incomes, or those with higher outgoings. This is likely to include people from minority ethnic groups, larger families, people with disabilities and those on welfare benefits.	Mitigating factors may include offering a variety of ways to pay, including instalments. There may need to be a financial assessment to establish the disposable income, and close links to support services that may be able to offer grants or contributions. Communicating change in advance is vital to manage expectations and allow affected residents and partners time to adjust or make alternative plans.
IGC-05	Increase Planning Charges	Whilst these increases are national and will affect people from all over the country, a number of protected groups will be disproportionately impacted by these changes, particularly those with a limited household income. However, as these changes came into effect on 6/12/23 an EA would only be retrospective.	None needed
IGC-06	South Essex Property Services (SEPS) Dividend	No equality issues identified.	None needed
IGC-07	Increased Cremation Charges	Increases will impact the families of lost loved ones and will disproportionately impact groups who more commonly experience reduced incomes including carers, people with disabilities and older people.	Consider if any concessions can be applied or multiple ways to pay to alleviate any of the additional cost for protected groups. Inclusive communication about alternative options will be important to support families of the bereaved.
IGC-08	Pier Charging	Increasing the price of tickets is likely to impact all users, some of which will be from protected groups. The people likely to be disproportionately impacted are those groups who commonly experience a reduced income such as people with disabilities, carers, families with young children, those with limited financial resource and older people on day trips.	Communicating change in advance is vital to manage expectations and allow affected residents and partners time to adjust or make alternative plans.

IGC-09	Beach Hut Terms	This change would result in more consistency. No equality issues identified.	None needed
IGC-10	Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Opportunities	Installation of EV charging points may reduce the surface area on pavements, which reduces the space available, which would likely cause a disproportionate impact to those with mobility issues, people with disabilities, older people, carers, parents of young children in pushchairs. The positive impacts of improved air quality will be proportionately felt by those with long term chest related illness and children.	Clear, easy to understand signage is vital to minimise the risk of trips or falls. Also giving people as much notice as possible if the changes will allow people the time to plan routes and mitigates the impact somewhat.
IGC-11	Increased Burial Charges	Increases will impact the families of lost loved ones and will disproportionately impact groups who more commonly experience reduced incomes including carers, people with disabilities and older people.	Consider if any concessions can be applied or multiple ways to pay to alleviate any of the additional cost for protected groups. Inclusive communication about alternative options will be important to support families of the bereaved.
IGC-12	Review Environment Protection Enforcement Model	Changes in enforcement could disproportionately impact on the groups who experience communication barriers, learning disabilities or motivations to crime through experiences of poverty.	Clear, transparent, and inclusive communication and signage about changes in enforcement will support groups who commit these crimes due to experiences of poverty or a lack of understanding of the law (consideration should be given to language barriers).
IGC-13	Private Sector Leasing	This change would benefit customers as it would speed up the wait for suitable housing. The people that would be significantly impacted would be those on the housing list, those with immediate housing needs or the homeless. This would encompass several protected groups, including people from minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities, carers, families, people with substance misuse issues, people with care experience and those with limited financial resource.	The change is likely to be a positive one. Clear, transparent communication is needed to explain where the benefits are.

IGC-14	Introduce Penalties for Council Tax Reduction Scheme	Consideration should be given as to whether penalties will further marginalise those who may have had less capacity to understand the initial claim, due to experiences of disability, older age, trauma, or ill health through financial instability.	Changes and consequences of penalties will need to be communicated in a clear, transparent and inclusive way. Consideration should be given to additional support for groups who experience less capacity. Feedback from users on the new application process will be useful and could mitigate future impact.
IGC-15	Consolidation of Low Value Income Generation Items	No equality issues identified.	None needed.
Agreed Savings from Prior Years			
EAP-06	System for management of sickness absence	A change in the way information is recorded will require staff to be informed and offered training if required. No EA required.	None needed.
IGC-16	Long Term Empty Premium/Second Home Premiums	This change may provide an incentive to increase the available housing stock thereby creating a positive impact for those seeking accommodation. Protected groups who may be negatively impacted could be families whose estates are not resolved following a death, however two years are allowed to resolve issues before the fee is introduced.	None needed.
IGC-18	Review allotment rents	There are many health benefits for having an allotment so the impact may be greater for the disabled, carers and those with low incomes that may want to grow their own fruit and vegetables.	Clear, transparent, and inclusive communication and signage about changes in advance is vital to manage expectations and allow affected residents and partners time to make alternative plans. Consideration to be given to concessions for certain groups where the impact is disproportionate.