

Cumulative Equalities Assessment: Budget Proposals 2024/25

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this equality assessment is to provide an analysis of the likely impact of the council's budget savings proposals on residents and community groups with 'protected characteristics' as defined by the Equality Act 2010. The nine protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership¹, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity. Section 149, Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equality Act 2010 requires the council in the exercise of its functions to have regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the act;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

The council is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. It seeks to ensure that all residents, employees and stakeholders are treated fairly and receive appropriate, accessible services and fair and equal opportunities. This commitment requires that equality considerations play a key role in our decision-making processes.

Approach to considering equalities

The budget savings proposals have all been subject to an Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) screening, which helps to establish their relevance to the council's equalities duties and determine whether a full EIA is required. The screening assesses the potential or likely impact on service users and employees with protected characteristics. Guidance and training were issued to all officers on how to undertake an EIA. A full EIA was not required where it was clearly demonstrated that there were no negative equality impacts. However, EIAs are living documents and as projects/proposals develop, and further evidence of impacts becomes available, if any unforeseen impacts emerge, they should be reviewed.

This document highlights the equality impacts for the 2024-25 budget proposals. Individual EIA screenings for each proposal and full Equality Impact Analyses are attached.

Ten proposals have been identified as requiring a full EIA. The equality impacts concerned with these proposals are summarised in this report. The Council must carefully consider and have regard to the impact of its savings proposals on the PSED; and take a reasonable and proportionate view regarding the overall impact and seek to mitigate impacts where possible.

It is important to note that in some cases, assessments have indicated both a negative and positive impact. In these instances, it has been highlighted that short term impacts of the proposal may be negative for certain groups, however over time, they will bring about improvements for clients and service users.

Overall Assessment

No direct discrimination has been identified as a result of the budget proposals. A significant proportion of the savings proposals may have a negative impact on equality of opportunity and may have a negative impact on opportunities to promote good relations, however measures have been identified to mitigate this.

These impacts will be kept under review. The proposed budget saving proposals are considered reasonable and have shown due regard to the PSED.

2 DEMOGRAPHY OVERVIEW

Key facts about Brent's demographic profile are taken from the data sources [Population change in Brent](#) and the [Equality profile of Brent](#). They show the make-up of the borough, help us to identify potential impacts; and identify the increasing pressures and demand for council services.

- Brent is home to approximately 339,800 residents and is the fifth largest borough in London.
- The borough has a population density of 7,859 people per square kilometre – the 14th highest density in England, and the highest in Outer London.

- The borough's population has grown by 28,600 since the last census in 2011, a rise of 9%. This compares with an increase of 8% across London and 6% across England & Wales. This represents a new historical high in the size of the borough's population.
- In common with other London Boroughs, Brent has a younger age profile when compared with England & Wales, characterised by more adults aged 20-44 and fewer older residents. Around 12% of Brent residents were aged 65 and over compared with 19% nationally.

A summary of the key protected characteristics in Brent are as follows:

Age

- In line with wider trends, the population is ageing with 29% of residents being aged 50 or over, which is up from 25% in 2011. The number of over 50s has increased by 20,800 since 2011, a rise of 27%. In contrast, the number of children under five has fallen by -2,400, a drop of 11%. This is consistent with a downward trend in birth rates in recent years. Similar patterns are evident across London, and nationally.

Disability

- In Brent, 41,163 residents declared disability under the Equality Act. This comprises of 12 per cent of the total borough population. The largest number of people who declared disability (8,398) comes from those who declared their ethnicity as White British which are the third largest community in the borough.

Gender reassignment

- A total of 3,611 adults in Brent responded 'no' to the question 'Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?' Of this group, more than half provided no further detail about their gender identity (1,947 residents), with 782 identifying as a trans man and 613 identified as a trans woman. The transgender population has a slightly younger age profile when compared to the population generally. The percentage who are transgender was highest among the 35-44 age group (1.7%) and lowest among those aged 75 and over (0.6%). By sex, men were more likely to identify as transgender than women (1.5% of males vs. 1.1% of females).

Note: given the fact that some chose did not answer the question, and less than half provided write-in details about their gender identity, these statistics provide minimum estimates of groups within Brent's transgender population.

Marriage and civil partnership

- In 2021, just over 4 in 10 people (43.3%) said they were married or in a registered civil partnership, compared with 43.5% in 2011. The percentage of adults in Brent that had divorced or dissolved a civil partnership increased from 6.2% to 6.5%.

Pregnancy and maternity

- Brent has relatively high birth rates. In 2018, there were 4,705 births in Brent – which equates to 68.1 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 – well above the national rate (59.2). Three quarters of all births in Brent were to women born outside the UK (75%) – this is the highest rate in England and Wales, reflecting the diversity of the borough's population (awaiting update from Census 2021).

Race

- Brent has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the country. The majority of residents are from ethnic minority groups: 19% are from White minority groups and 65% are from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups (the 2nd highest rate in England & Wales, after Newham at 69%). Brent and Newham have the smallest White British populations nationally (15%).

Religion or belief

- The borough's three largest religious groups are Christian (39%), Muslim (21%) and Hindu (16%). Overall, 82% of residents had a religion – the fourth highest rate in England and Wales. The borough has the second largest Hindu population in England and Wales, and the 10th largest Muslim population (as a percentage of the population). Other smaller, but significant, religious groups in Brent include, Jewish (1.1%); Buddhist (0.9%); Jain (0.7%) and Sikh (0.5%) populations. Brent has the 2nd largest Jain population in England & Wales after Harrow.

Sex

- The Brent population is 49% male and 51% female. Women comprise just over half (51%) of the population but make up a higher proportion of the elderly population: 59% of those aged 80 and over are female and this rises to two thirds for the over 90s (67%)

Sexual orientation

- Statistics In Brent, 85.1% of adults identified as straight or heterosexual and 3.2% identified with a LGB+ orientation. The remaining 11.7% chose not to answer the sexual orientation question. Of all those who did answer the question, 96.4% identified as straight or heterosexual and 3.6% identified as LGB+.

3 IMPACT OF SAVING PROPOSALS

Summary 24/25 budget proposals

Although initial equality screenings have been undertaken to ascertain impact in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), some of the proposals are in their formative stages and are still to be developed or are subject to consultations. Consequently, as the proposals are developed further equality analysis will be undertaken to assess the PSED. It is important to note that several of the proposals have identified no impact on the PSED. Where a full equality impact assessment has been carried out, this is noted next to the proposal.

The proposals are:

2024-25 CHW01 Technology Enabled Care: Enabling residents to self-manage their health and well-being, including preventing and reducing the need for care and support through technology so they can stay independent and well in their homes and communities. This should be beneficial for service users and further consultation is being carried out. This will require digital confidence and specialist capability and capacity to support the programme. Although this programme should empower and support service users, it would be advisable for this assessment to be kept under review following consultation exercises and co-production with service users.

2024-25 CHW02 Managing demand at the front door, prevention and early intervention: Managing demand and complexity of support with a consistent prevention and reablement offer and a focus on Care Act statutory responsibilities including integrated market management. As part of business as usual, the service will continue to review clients currently receiving packages of care and direct payments. This will include all reviews including the clients currently receiving high cost packages of care and ensuring the packages are more proportionate and meeting wellbeing principles.

2024-25 CHW03 Continuing sustainable long-term care and support needs costs that promote independence: Reducing expenditure in mental health and learning disability including transitions so Brent benchmarks in the middle quartile with comparator authorities. **Full Equality Impact Assessment completed.**

2025-26 CHW03 Workforce Efficiency: Commitment to reducing staffing cost across the Care, Health and Wellbeing Directorate.

2025-26 CHW01 Reduction in building based provision of access to volunteering and employment opportunities: Developing a wider range of day opportunities with partners and communities and reducing building-based provision. **Full Equality Impact Assessment completed.**

2025-26 CHW02 Review of housing related support contracts and focus on Care Act duties: Reduction of contract value at 3-year break point for Homeless and ex-offenders. **Full Equality Impact Assessment completed.**

2024-25 CYPO1 Contract for the Provision of a Targeted Service that Promotes Education, Employment and Training for Young People. The service will provide information, advice and guidance and intensive support for identified vulnerable young people not in education employment and training (NEET) who would benefit from early intensive support and will impact equally on all young people irrespective of age.

The current contract ends on 31 March 2024. The planned contract value from April 2024 onwards is £565,000 per annum (reflecting a previous saving of £80K). A 10% saving is proposed when the contract is re-procured. This will be targeted at the non-statutory element of the contract. Reduction of services will be in bespoke projects for targeted groups and the ending of a service for children who arrive from overseas in Year 11 and are placed currently in specialist English as an Additional Language provisions. The assessment indicates that this will have limited impact, as the majority of 16-18 year old NEETs per year, fall into the statutory area and will continue to receive targeted support. Additionally, links with other funded initiatives in Brent that address NEET are being utilised. It would be advisable for this assessment to be kept under review to monitor and evaluate the impact of reducing the non-statutory elements of the service contract. **Full Equality Impact Assessment completed.**

2024-25 CYP02 Additional controls to better manage spot purchasing of specialist assessments required for child care proceedings cases (Localities / LACP / Early Help): Practitioners undertaking their own assessments, better due diligence of contracts, reviewing support packages.

2024-25 CYP03 Utilising DSG to fund eligible services currently funded from the General Fund. Setting and School Effectiveness / Inclusion / Early Help: A review of Early Years functions that are funded through Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) across Setting and School Effectiveness, Early Help and Inclusion Service is being undertaken to reduce duplication. This will result in some DSG savings (1FTE equivalent) which will be repurposed to fund capacity in the Performance Management and Information Team that is eligible to be funded by DSG.

2024-25 CYP04 Reduction in school improvement funds in Setting and School Effectiveness Service. Setting and School Effectiveness: Reduction in budget identified for targeted school improvement activity. Could impact on available support for planned work with schools in relation to disproportionality. The general fund contributes to the team following the loss of the School Improvement and Brokering grant. **Full Equality Impact Assessment completed.**

2024-25 CYP05 Freeman Family Centre – contact activity Early Help / LACP: The Young Brent Foundation are taking over tenancy of the Freeman Centre. The current contract with Barnardo's is ending and there is scope to reduce this by £50k as part of new arrangements with YBF. The other £50k will be found by reducing allocated growth to the existing contact service for children in care which operates from the Freeman Family Centre. **Full Equality Impact Assessment completed.**

2024-25 CYP06 Offsetting overheads/management costs within Early Help through delivery of the Best Start for Life programme. (Early Help): The 3 year programme started in April 2023. There is scope to offset general fund management costs that support the volunteer programme and the centralised co-ordination of the parenting offer. When the programme ends there will be a 70k budget gap that will need to be filled from the service through other service reductions or other grant funding available at that time.

2025-26 CYP01 Reduce provision from Council-run Willow Nursery (Early Help): Reduce provision from 98 to 68 children, focusing solely on provision for children with SEND. This could result in the deletion of 7 posts achieving a saving of £250k. Other vacancies in the local early years sector should be able to absorb the impact of the service reduction for those families affected. Further detailed consideration will be given to the impact on the existing staffing structure and current leadership arrangements which may reduce this saving. **Full Equality Impact Assessment completed.**

2025-26 CYP02 Set up and run new residential children's home. (Forward Planning Performance and Partnerships / Looked After Children and Permanency): Reduce allocated growth to the department for children's placements.

2025-26 CYP03 Reduction in management capacity within Early Help and Localities. Redefining early help and bringing early help practitioners under the management of social care teams – particular focus on restructuring edge of care work. (Early Help / Localities):

This will entail a restructure and HR consultation. This will result in fewer handoffs for families and a more seamless step up and step down. Equivalent of up to 6 FTE. Review will also consider replacement of some social work posts with business support replacements where safe to do so.

2025-26 CYP04 Short breaks – selling increased respite bed nights at the Council-run Short Break Centre to other local authorities. (FPPP/Localities): Income generation. Current income target is £140k. Ensure centre capacity is managed effectively to allow an increase of bed nights sold by an additional 52 nights per annum.

2025-26 CYP05 Reduce the Family Wellbeing Support service contract by 10% when it expires. (Early Help): Contract currently operated by Barnardo's that provides a range of support services for families from the FWCs including general advice and parenting support. Contract expires in November 2024. **Full Equality Impact Assessment completed.**

2025-26 CYP06 Reduce general fund contribution to commissioned services that support children's school readiness and health and wellbeing through a joint commissioning approach within the ICP. Contribution towards speech and language therapy contract for delivery within Family Wellbeing Centres (FWCs). Also, contribution towards targeted mental health support contract. This may be a combined health/public health input to reach this target.

2024-25 CR01 Volunteering Platform: Not to procure a new Volunteering Platform.

2024-25 CR02 Review of Directorate staffing structures to identify efficiencies: Review of Directorate staffing structures to identify efficiencies.

2024-25 FR01 Increase Civic Centre Car Park Charging Tariffs in line with inflation/local prices The current Civic Centre Car Park charging tariffs were introduced in September 2022: There is an opportunity to increase the car park charging tariffs in line with inflation and the rates charged at other car parking facilities within the vicinity of the Civic Centre from April 2024.

2024-25 FR02 Property Strategy to maximise rental return on council assets: A new Property Strategy will allow the council to maximise the opportunity of increasing revenue from its assets. A starting target which we would endeavour to increase over time.

2024-25 FR03 Deletion of three vacant posts: The current finance establishment has a number of vacancies. It is proposed to delete three posts that are currently filled by agency workers. Digital transformation will lead to improvements in self-service to enable further transactional activity to be reduced.

2024-25 G01 Training budget reductions: Local training budgets have not been fully utilised in several teams and for the Member Development Programme. It is proposed to reduce these budgets accordingly. In both cases there has been an increase in in-house provision of training and therefore less dependence on purchasing from external organisations.

2024-25 G02 Member allowances: A reduction to reflect the reduction in the number of councillors as a result of the boundary review.

2024-25 G03 Elections Legal provision: Currently the elections team have budgets to fund the extra legal support that might be necessary were there to be a challenge related to electoral registration or an election. Most years this has not been used. It is proposed in future to rely on the reserves that have been established for elections and call on those should such a challenge occur.

2024-25 G04 Misc overheads: This reduction is to reflect existing underspends on stationery and mail.

2024-25 G05 Review of support arrangements in Executive and Member Services: There is scope to reduce the amount of administrative support provided within the service.

2024-25 G06 Legal Services change approach to training posts: Currently Legal Services has three traditional graduate level trainee solicitor posts. It is proposed to reduce this to one post. As trainees are a valuable source of recruits to qualified posts, it is proposed over time to convert two existing Legal Assistant posts to solicitor apprentice posts. These require a lower level of qualification, and the Apprentice Levy can be used to fund the qualification element of the training.

2024-25 G07 Increase income target for services to schools and for legal charges to third parties: Income from these sources has increased, for example through more schools buying into the services available from the Governance Department and work undertaken in relation to developments.

2024-25 G08 Realign graduate budget: The number of graduates recruited under the council's programme is variable and as appointments are made part way through the financial year the precise costs are unpredictable. A smoothing reserve has therefore been established to manage this issue and it proposed that the core budget be reduced accordingly. The proposed reduction for 2024/25 is part of an overall £15k reduction already partly implemented.

2024-25 G09 Discontinue use of underutilised IT on-line systems/services: A review has identified several underutilised resources across the Governance department and ceasing to subscribe to these will enable savings to be made.

2025-26 G01 Review of support arrangements in Executive and Member Services: There is scope to reduce the amount of administrative support provided within the service.

2025-26 G02 Legal Services change approach to training posts: Currently Legal Services has three traditional graduate level trainee solicitor posts. It is proposed to reduce this to one post. As trainees are a valuable source of recruits to qualified posts, it is proposed to over time to convert two existing Legal Assistant posts to solicitor apprentice posts. These require a lower level of qualification, and the Apprentice Levy can be used to fund the qualification element of the training.

2025-26 G03 Increase income target for services to schools and for legal charges to third parties: Income from these sources has increased, for example through more schools buying into the services available from the Governance Department and work undertaken in relation to developments.

2025-26 G04 Changes to the Health and Safety team: It is proposed to reduce the health and safety team by one post to reflect lower demand due to changes in the way training on Health and Safety is delivered and to the type of incidents in which the central team are required to be involved.

2025-26 G05 Discontinue use of underutilised IT on-line systems/services: A review has identified several underutilised resources across the Governance department and ceasing to subscribe to these will enable savings to be made.

2024-25 RS01 Increased use of automation: Based on 3 complex and 5 simple processes per year across all Resident Services departments (focusing on transactional services) with efficiencies cashed through reduction in posts and/or increase in income.

2024-25 RS02 Business support efficiencies (link to £57K saving in Customer Access): Reduction in business support posts through alignment of support functions across Resident Services combined with improved forms and integration with back-office systems. Approximate 4 FTE staffing reduction.

2024-25 RS03 Mobile telephony contract: Saving through new contract for mobile telephony.

2024-25 RS04 Licensing: Savings through application rationalisation and license management.

2024-25 RS05 Registration and Nationality – Income generation: Fee Increase 24/25 following an income freeze for 23/24.

2024-25 RS06 Libraries and Heritage - realignment of managerial responsibilities and posts: The restructure will focus on maximising income generation and delivering savings in 2024/25 – 2025/26.

2024-25 RS07 Community Hubs - Reduction in provision: Reduction in provision by 0.5 FTE S01 Hub Advisor.

2024-25 RS08 Revenue and Debt deletion of vacant posts: The drive to improve the self-service portal will enhance the customer experience reducing the need for the vast majority of residents to telephone the Council or visit community hubs. It would be advisable for this assessment to be kept under review, whereby the impact of reduction in posts can be monitored and evaluated over time.

2024-25 RS09 Customer Services and Assessments: Reduction in Benefit Assessment processing costs due to impact of Universal Credit. It is anticipated that there will be a case load reduction in Housing Benefits.

2024-25 RS10 Customer Access Improvement and Performance: Restructure and pooling of administrative functions across Resident Services. Approx 2 FTE Reductions.

2024-25 RS11 Implementation of boroughwide (except Wembley Park) selective licensing scheme: This is extra income into the General Fund and therefore has no negative impact on staff and service users. However, it is dependent upon approval by the Secretary of State.

2024-25 RS12 Increased subscription to the bulky waste service: This accounts for an increase in demand for this service from around 350 requests when Veolia were operating the bulky waste service to around 650 requests per month currently.

2024-25 RS13 Increased subscription and £5 charge increase with respect to the garden waste service: To increase the annual subscription price from £60 to £65 an 8% increase to generate an additional income of about £100,000. **Full Equality Impact Assessment completed.**

2024-25 RS14 Commercialisation of parks/events: Create a programme of commercial events in parks to include a revision of fees and charges.

2024-25 RS15 Rental of Parks building space: To commercialise existing unused property space within parks.

2024-25 RS16 Licensing / sponsorship schemes in Parks: Offer space for commercial advertising in parks.

2024-25 RS17 Increase tennis/sports bookings: Create and advertise a revised sports booking programme that encourages better take up and which offers new activities.

2024-25 RS18 Grave tending / additional vaults in cemeteries: Offer a paid for grave tending service for families that may not be able to access the Brent cemeteries.

2024-25 RS19 Mortuary / Bereavement / Funeral Initiatives: An aggregation of a number of small-scale commercialisation opportunities relating to the funeral service.

2024-25 RS20 Cashless Parking opt In Reminders: The Council generating income through optional text reminders, which is expected to generate income in the region of £80k per annum.

2024-25 RS21 RLS Contract Efficiencies Post Year 1: Review of savings and efficiencies potential once the new contract operations have settled after year 1.

2024-25 RS22 Removal of vacant posts: An ongoing assessment of the need to recruit to vacant posts and whether these can be removed and the tasks accounted for in different ways.

*Council Tax: An increase Council Tax by 4.99%, where 2% is ring fenced for Adult Social Care and 2.99% is a general increase. **Full Equality Impact Assessment completed.***

Proposals requiring a full equality assessment.

The proposed savings look to generate income for the Council, or to reduce or restructure service delivery for service users. Nine proposals completed a full equality impact assessment due to the potential impact they may have on service delivery through the reduction or change in the service being provided. Attached to this report are the supporting EIA screenings for each savings proposal as well as the full Equality Analysis (the latter of which are summarised below).

CHW01 (25/26): Reduction in building based provision to support individuals to access services more tailored to meet their needs and interests

There are two elements to the proposal. Firstly, a strategic shift to promote a sessional use of day opportunities and a more flexible offer. Individuals and their families, dependent on their care needs, will have the choice of support through building based and/or more community-based offers. Secondly, the proposal includes closure of the New Millennium Day Centre, offering people attending that centre alternative service provision.

The consultation on the future of New Millennium has concluded and it has been agreed that the New Millennium Day Centre will remain open. However its use will change as it will become the new location for the community wellbeing project that is currently being delivered from Bridge Park. Further work will be done in the coming months with users at New Millennium to determine how adult social care services will continue to be delivered from the site, using valued resources such as the art room and kiln, but being co-located with the community wellbeing project. A further consultation and engagement exercise will be planned to do this work, and service users will be properly informed of this plan in the coming weeks.

Sessional day opportunities: Promoting the use of sessional day opportunities and providing a more flexible offer for the wider group of people attending day services (who do not access New Millennium Day Centre) the impact will be very limited as the plans do not involve existing service users changing their service unless at a future review they choose to access a different offer. However, potential impacts include:

Disability & Age: Overall, majority of people using day services are younger disabled people (under 65). Therefore, the impact will be predominantly for this working age cohort.

Race: Two thirds of the 320 people currently using day services are from an ethnic minority background. People from ethnic minority backgrounds will therefore be impacted by the proposals, but the intention is that many of these impacts will be positive – offering people more choice and flexibility in future should they have a preference for a different service. The proposal aims to provide access to services

which can better meet people's cultural needs. A move from the traditional model of day services should better meet some of the needs of people who currently do not, or cannot, attend services because they are not seen to meet their needs appropriately. This will include some of the more recently emerging communities in Brent.

Service users of the New Millennium Day Centre: The impact of the outlined proposal changes could potentially be negative for attendees of the New Millennium Day Centre. Although the centre will not close, its use will change. For some people they will experience disappointment, confusion, loss or concern about a change to their service. Some people may also be required to travel further to an alternative. Potential impacts on protected groups include:

Disability & Age: For those who use New Millennium Day Centre (19 of the 68 people are 65 and over) the impact will be one of disruption should they not be able to use the centre as they do not and be supported to find an alternative service. Any change to service provision will be completed following a person-centred review and will continue to meet the person's assessed care and support needs. Some of the people will be able to continue to be supported by Direct Services' remodelled offer (using John Billam and the wider community) and therefore may feel less disrupted as some of the staff will be familiar, for example. For others, workers will review needs and work with the person and their family to find a suitable alternative. It is possible that some people may have further to travel to their new service depending on choice and availability. These impacts will be considered as part of the consultation process and feed into the final decision making. As New Millennium Day Centre will remain open, some if not all current service users will in all likelihood be able to continue using the building in some form once the review of their care needs has taken place.

Race: Of the 68 people currently accessing New Millennium Day Centre, 57% are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The impacts will be the similar to those with a disability, including disruption should the centre close and some people potentially having further to travel to their new service depending on choice and availability. These impacts will be considered as part of the consultation process and feed into the final decision making and the mitigations will be the same in terms of the support that will be offered to find appropriate alternatives. The intention remains that the alternatives should be positive with more choice and flexibility, with services able to meet needs within local communities.

Overall impact: The potential negative impacts relate to those 68 people currently accessing the New Millennium Day Centre. However, for the wider group of people attending day services (who do not access New Millennium Day Centre) the impact will be less and in some instances positive, as the plans do not involve existing service users changing their service unless at a future review they choose to access a different offer. The positive impacts relate to a greater choice and flexibility for people who use services. To enhance these, the intention is to ensure there is a good source of information, advice and guidance for people seeking a new service offer. This should be accessible to all service users including those who want to use their Direct Payments and also to staff who will be guiding and supporting service users to find an appropriate service or activity in the community.

The mitigation for negative impacts will be that individual reviews will be undertaken with people and the workers will ensure that the Council continues to fulfil its statutory obligations to provide access to an appropriate service. People will continue to get their needs met and workers will consider the location of alternative services when helping people plan.

CHW02 (25/26): Review of housing related support contracts and focus on Care Act duties

The council is currently funding six-housing related support (HRS) contracts: Homelessness and ex-offenders, Generic Floating Support, Handyperson Service, Mental health accommodation-based Services, Domestic violence refuges and single women with complex needs, and young person's accommodation-based services. The proposal is to review these contracts to see where there are areas that could be streamlined, contracts reduced and / or funded from other sources to enable the department to focus spend on Care Act responsibilities.

Although all these contracts are non-statutory services, individuals who may be referred or self-refer will have a degree of vulnerability and risk. Due to the nature of the services being provided, the impact on any changes to specific contracts could include increased waiting times to be able to access a service which may, in turn, increase the level of need and therefore when services are accessed, they are required for longer. Additionally, this could impact on the length of time an individual may have to wait to access these support services particularly if there were to be a spike in demand. They could also be potential impact on the following protected characteristics:

Age: The majority of support hours and accommodation provided from the HRS contracts is for individuals between 18-60. Two contracts provide a service for older individuals, these being, one up to the age of 65 (Mental Health) and one with no upper age limit (Handy person). The Young person's contract only supports individuals between 18-20. The two contracts at each end of the spectrum in terms of age (Handy person and young person's service) also have smaller amounts of support and could therefore be disproportionately affected should these contracts be reduced in any way.

Sex: Out of the six contracts only one is gender specific: the Domestic violence refuges and single women with complex needs service. This contract provides 200 support hours per week across 32 units to vulnerable women. The impacts would be similar to age in that a reduction in service may lead to longer waiting times and potentially increase the level of support required when accessed.

Disability: In addition to the issues of longer waiting times, which may also increase the level of needed when services are accessed, for disabled service users, there may be impact on their income if they have to pay more towards their care.

Overall impact: The review of the contracts is to identify efficiencies such as duplication of services and it is not anticipated that any service will cease in its entirety but possibly reduce or be delivered and accessed in a strength-based model. Nevertheless, longer

waiting times and a more limited access to the services will impact on service users as highlighted above. Steps will be taken to minimise the impact on individuals, as outlined in the EIA, and services will continue to be provided but this may be achieved in a different way and outside of the current contract.

CHW03 (24/25): Continuing sustainable long-term care and support needs costs that promote independence

Supporting people with Learning Disabilities and Mental Health to live as independently as possible and assisting them through sustainable long-term care. This includes right sizing care to reduce high expenditure packages in mental health and learning disability, including transitions that also offer more choice and control.

Proposal suggests reviewing current packages of care with clients, their family members, carers and statutory partners with the aim of identifying alternative packages where deemed appropriate. Savings will be achieved by supporting clients to step down from high cost, high support environments into less intense, lower supported environments.

Disability: All clients in this group will have a diagnosed mental illness or a learning disability. Therefore, there may be a period of initial deterioration. However, clients will be supported throughout the process, with the aim that they will be able to move away from dependence on adult social care and are empowered to take increased control of their lives, where appropriate.

Race: 77% of this client group identify as Black, Asian and any other ethnic minority group. Therefore, the impact of the changes proposed will impact on those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds considerably more than those from White British backgrounds. However, the aim of the proposal is to empower clients, providing them with more choice and control – therefore, it is suggested, that in the long term the impact of this proposal will be positive.

Overall impact: Changes to the services are likely to have a negative impact on client users at the beginning. This would be due to potential discomfort for users in the way their care is managed and how the services are being delivered. However, the primary aim of the project is to empower individuals with a mental health or learning disability diagnosis to have more control over their lives. This will be done by moving them away from a maintenance model and supporting their personal and emotional growth. Through regular monitoring of the changes, it is hoped that in the longer term, these proposed changes will have positive impacts on the client group.

CYP02 (24/25): Procurement of contract that provides a targeted service that promotes education, employment, and training for young people

The proposed new commissioned service will deliver a full tracking service to meet the Local Authority's statutory responsibilities to ensure young people who are not in education, employment and training (NEET), aged 16-18 years old and up to 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) receive relevant information, advice and guidance in order to be supported to a successful transition into post 16 education, employment and/or training. Additionally, the service will also deliver an intensive targeted service to promote Education, Employment and Training (EET) to vulnerable groups.

Overall impact: The service will provide information, advice and guidance and intensive support for identified vulnerable young people not in education employment and training (NEET) who would benefit from early intensive support and will impact equally on all young people. This proposal has a positive impact on all NEET young people aged 16-18 years old and up to 25 with an EHCP.

CYP01 (25/26): Review the Willow Nursery delivery model to ensure the provision is sustainable without funding from the General Fund

It is proposed that Willow Nursery's delivery model is reviewed to ensure the provision is sustainable without funding from the General Fund as well as with the proposed reduction of the funding from the High Needs Block.

Age: The proposed model would impact children under 5 by reducing access to good quality childcare and specialist nursery provision.

Sex: Women are highly represented in the staff complement at the Nursery. Any potential reduction in staff numbers is likely to disproportionately impact on female staff members.

Race: Over 90% of the children that attend the provision are from an ethnic minority background. Any reduction in the number of places will have a disproportionate impact on children from an ethnic minority background.

Disability: Willow Nursery includes a SEND provision. The proposed model would impact children with SEND negatively. The setting also has places for Children in Need and children on the Child Protection register.

Overall impact: This proposal has a potentially negative impact on the community and users of the Nursery as the proposed delivery model will lead to a reduction in not just the number of universal places available, but also the specialist SEND & Children in Need places. It may also impact on female staff negatively as they form the majority of the workforce. Additionally, any reduction in childcare capacity, at a time when the government is expanding the free entitlement offer, may make it challenging to meet targets once they are set. Furthermore, it is suggested that there are strong sentiments regarding the Nursery within the local community and any changes could result in negative publicity and reputational damage for the Council.

CYP05 (24/25) : Reduction in school improvement funds in Setting and School Effectiveness Service

The proposal is to reduce school improvement funds in the Setting and School Effectiveness Service. The general fund contributes to targeted school improvement activity following the withdrawal of the DfE School Improvement and Brokering grant. The reduction will not impact on staffing, it will reduce the money available to support schools that need to improve rapidly.

Overall impact: This fund is used to fund some of the necessary school improvement activity if the school does not have enough funds in their own budget. Without this funding there may be a negative impact on the quality of some schools that are already struggling to meet required standards. Over time, this may indirectly impact on the students within the school. It is advised that regular monitoring and evaluation of the impacts of this reduction in funds will be necessary.

CYP06 (24/25): Reducing allocated growth to the existing contact service for children in care that operates from the Freeman Family Centre

Proposed savings of £100k will be achieved in two ways. Firstly, the current contract with Barnardo's is ending and there is scope to reduce this by £50k as part of new contract arrangements. Secondly, a further 50k reduction is proposed by reducing allocated growth to the existing contact service for children in care which operates from the Freeman Family Centre. This area of saving is likely to be challenging due to pressures in this area relating to demand outstripping capacity. Facilitating contact between children who are looked after and their birth family is the local authority's statutory duty under the Children Act 1989, and therefore any savings made will be reliant on getting the best value for money rather than reducing services to children and families.

Age: Services are provided for children and young people aged 0-18 years, and therefore any impact of this proposal will affect this demographic more substantially. Potential adverse impacts include being:

- Unable to provide the necessary contact supervision for children and their family, resulting in children not being able to see their birth family and complaints, legal challenge/Judicial Review, reputational damage for the council.
- Delays in providing contact, resulting in children not being able to see their birth family and complaints, legal challenge/Judicial Review, reputational damage for the council.
- Increased pressure on social work teams to facilitate and/or source external contact supervisors and venues where this cannot be managed by the Contact Team within their given resource.

Race: As highlighted in the Equality Impact Assessment, the majority of children and young people are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, so are disproportionately impacted by the suggested proposal.

Overall impact: Reducing service provision is likely to negatively impact on children and young people as outlined above and those from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups. However, providing contact for children and families is a statutory duty for the local authority, therefore this will mean that the savings identified will have to be achieved in the way in which we organise, staff, and commission services moving forward, not by ceasing or stopping the provision of contact.

CYP05 (25/26): To reduce the Barnardo's Family Wellbeing Centre (FWC) support service contract by 10%

It is proposed that the reduction in the support service contract will focus on the crèche provision. The existing crèche support service provides care of young children during parenting programmes, participation forums and information, advice and guidance sessions. Reduction of this service will allow the integral supports offer to continue (e.g. provide Brent's Early Help offer and linked DfE Supporting Families, Family Hub and Best Start for Life programmes), whilst making the required savings. Potential impacts include:

Age: The crèche provision enables parents to participate in FWC support services. A reduction in this service could have a negative impact on families with young children who do not have alternative care options meaning some services and support may not be accessible.

Sex: The majority of parents accessing the creche are women. A reduction in creche support could prevent women accessing services and support from the Family Wellbeing Centre

Race: A significant proportion of parents accessing the creche are from Black, Asian and other ethnic minority groups. A reduction in creche support is likely to negatively impact users from particular ethnic groups to a greater extent and potentially prevent them from accessing support and services from the Centre.

Overall impact: The crèche provision enables parents to participate in FWC support services. A reduction in this service could have a negative impact on families with young children who do not have alternative care options meaning some services and support may not be accessible. It is also likely to have a larger impact on women from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds. However, this option enables the other provisions to continue without any reductions, therefore have the least impact on service users and the Family Wellbeing Centre delivery model.

RS12 (24/25): To increase the annual subscription price for garden waste collections from £60 to £65, an 8% increase to generate an additional income of £100,000

It is proposed to increase the garden waste fee from £60 per annum to £65 per annum, resulting in a £5 increase for each household that subscribes. With 20,000 subscribers, this will raise an additional £100,000 that will contribute to the Council's corporate savings programme. The service itself is long-established and will remain unchanged.

Age: In some cases elderly residents have a lower income and there is a risk that the cost increase would impact on them. It is also assumed elderly residents may be less able to transport garden waste for composting and so may be more reliant on this collection service as an alternative to transporting waste themselves for composting.

Disability: In some cases disabled residents have a lower income and there is a risk that the charge increase would impact on them. It is also assumed disabled residents may be less able to transport garden waste for composting and so may be more reliant on this collection service as an alternative to transporting waste themselves for composting.

Overall impact: As highlighted above, there may be potential negative impact on service users who are elderly or disabled or from lower socio-economic backgrounds. In mitigation, and to account for individual circumstances and any difficulty in meeting costs, a 20% discount already applies if customers are in receipt of certain benefits (the full list available in the EIA document).

Increase in Council Tax by 4.99% in 2024/25: In order to deliver a legally-required balanced budget, it is proposed to increase Council Tax by 4.99%, where 2% is ring fenced for Adult Social Care and 2.99% is a general increase. The proposal will generate an additional £7.5m of recurring income for the Council and therefore avoid having to make further savings to key council services such as adult social care and children's services.

Impact on protected groups: The increase in Council Tax will impact on all residents within Brent who are eligible to pay Council Tax. As the increase has universal application, no particular group is targeted. However, although no protected characteristic is impacted upon more so than another it is likely that some residents who do not qualify for support (i.e. do not meet the threshold to receive financial support), will struggle to pay the additional Council Tax amount.

Overall impact: Although the overall impact has been suggested as neutral, an increase in Council tax will impact on residents and potentially affect those from protected groups harder. However, for the most vulnerable residents, the Council Tax Support scheme will partially or fully mitigate this impact for those households who are living on low incomes and are eligible for Council Tax Support.

Furthermore, single households will have the impact mitigated by the 25% discount offered to single households. Further mitigating actions are also available for residents and are highlighted in under the socio-economic implications section.

4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The table overleaf summarises the potential negative cumulative impacts on groups which have a protected characteristic.

Seven of the Equality Impact Assessments have identified potential for negative impacts. Age and disability, being the most predominant groups impacted upon (6 proposals indicate negative impact), followed by race and sex. Additionally, when reviewing the Equality Impact Assessments, where data is available, it has indicated that a large proportion of service users are from Black, Asian and other ethnic minority backgrounds. It is, therefore, more likely that this protected group will be impacted to a greater extent, by a reduction or change in services than other users.

Given the nature and number of the proposals put forward impacting these groups, consideration needs to be given to the cumulative impact of all these proposals. As highlighted, it is possible that some individuals will be impacted by more than one of the proposals being put forward and therefore will be more affected by these changes. It is advisable that, where proposals are accepted, the intersectional impacts are monitored and evaluated over time and across services. For example, six proposals indicate an impact on disability, age and are likely to potentially impact on race, and these are spread across Children & Young People, Adult Social Care Directorates and Resident Services. It is possible that some service users belong to more than one protected group and are impacted by more than one of these proposals. Additionally, they may also be affected by the increase in Council Tax.

Reductions in children services including Willow Tree Nursery, Freeman Family Centre and reduction of crèche facilities at the Family Wellbeing Centre also suggest potential negative impacts, particularly with regards to age, disability and race. However, where there is a statutory duty towards the children, the savings identified will have to be achieved in the way in which staff, and commissioned services are provided, not by ceasing or stopping the provision for this cohort.

It is noted that a large proportion of these proposals aim to create sustainable long-term care and support needs. These will, over time, have a positive impact as they aim to provide greater independence to clients. However, these proposals may adversely impact current users in the shorter term.

Proposal	Age (e.g. children & elderly)	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage or Civil Partnership	Pregnancy or maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation	Service Area
Reduction in building based provision to support individuals to access services more tailored to meet their needs CHW01-25/26	-1	-1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	ASC
Review of housing related support contracts and focus on Care Act duties CHW02-25/26	-1	-1	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	ASC
Continuing sustainable long-term care and support promoting independence CHW03 -24/25	0	-1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	ASC
Procurement of contract promoting education, employment, and training for young people CYP02-24/25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	CYP
Review the Willow Nursery to ensure provisions sustainability without funding from the General Fund CYP01-25/26	-1	-1	0	0	0	-1	0	-1	0	CYP
Reduction in school improvement funds in Setting and School Effectiveness Service CYP05-24/25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	CYP
Reduction of allocated growth to the existing contact service for children in care from the Freeman Family Centre CYP06-24/25	-1	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	CYP
Reduction of the Barnardo's Family Wellbeing Centre (FWC) support service contract by 10% CYP05-25/26	-1	-1	0	0	0	-1	0	-1	0	CYP

Increase the annual subscription price for garden waste collections RS12-24/25	-1	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	RS
Council Tax increase	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Council wide

5 SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

Certain groups within the population are more likely than others to live in a low income household. In Brent, survey analysis shows that those living on lower incomes are more likely to be from Black ethnic groups; residents with a disability or long-term illness; older residents; those with no qualifications; those who are not in work; and those who live in social housing.

The proposal regarding increasing council tax has the potential to negatively impact on families and residents from lower socio-economic groups. This will be mitigated by early and accessible communication with residents affected, continuing to offer support for vulnerable residents, and more effective working with partners to ensure resources are used effectively.

The Council is aware of the cumulative impact of the cost-of-living crisis and the support that our residents and service users may require at this time. The following support has been made available:

Financial Support: households across Brent can access financial assistance through the following funds:

- Resident Support Fund: this is available to Brent residents who are having difficulty due to unforeseen financial circumstances.
- Discretionary Housing Payment: A one off payment can be provided to assist with rent shortfall, rent deposits and rent in advance if a Brent resident needs to move home.

Certain eligibility criteria needs to be met to access financial support.

Support and Advice: Brent Hubs can provide support and advice to Brent residents who are struggling to pay their utility bills this winter. This can include assistance with completing funding applications for support from local and national schemes, including the Brent Resident Support Fund, referral routes to other advisory agencies who specialise in energy support such as Green Doctors and SHINE,

referral routes to food banks and emergency supermarket vouchers and urgent support with topping up pre-payment gas and electricity meters.

6 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

Of the budget proposals that were subject to an equality screening, several have staffing implications arising from staff restructures or service redesign. Where there are staffing implications for a third party, the council will work with the third party organisation to ensure that the equality implications are understood and appropriate steps taken to minimise any adverse impacts.

To mitigate against compulsory staff redundancies, a number of the proposals will achieve a reduction through giving up vacant posts or through natural turnover. In these cases, it is considered that there will be no impact on characteristic groups.

Whenever the council is required to undertake compulsory redundancies, full EIAs will be undertaken as part of the consultation process. For proposals that include a reduction in the number of posts and redundancy implications, a meaningful assessment on the equality impact is not possible at this stage as no individuals (and therefore protected characteristics) have been identified for assessment. Equality Impact Analysis in these cases will be carried out closer to the commencement of any proposed restructure.