

Cumulative Equalities Assessment: Budget Proposals 2024/25 and 2025/26

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to assess the cumulative equalities impacts of the Councils budget proposals by providing an analysis of the likely impact of the council's budget savings proposals on residents, community groups and employees with 'protected characteristics' as defined by the Equality Act 2010. The nine protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, 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. Brent Council also recognises that an individual's health and income status has a significant influence on their needs and life outcomes. Although health and income status are not protected from discrimination by law, we are committed to tackling health and socio-economic inequalities in the local area. This commitment requires that equality considerations play a key role in our decision-making processes.

Approach to considering equalities

We are legally obliged to demonstrate compliance of our duty to have 'due regard' in the decision-making process and consequently, we need to understand the effect our policies, practices and decisions have on equality. Whilst the Council is not legally obliged to reject savings or growth proposals that could have negative impacts on any groups sharing a protected characteristic, it must carefully and with rigour consider the impact of its proposals on the PSED, take a reasonable and proportionate view about the overall impact on particular groups, and seek to mitigate negative impacts where possible.

Consequently, to support this process and in assessing the impact of each budget saving proposal, we operate a two stage process. Firstly, each of the budget savings proposals are subject to an Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) screening, which helps to establish any negative or

positive impacts arising, their relevance to the council's equalities duties and determine whether a full EIA is required. Where proposals identified negative or positive impacts, the second stage of undertaking a Full EIA in order to mitigate any risks or maximise potential benefits is undertaken.

Guidance was provided, and training offered to all officers on how to undertake an EIA by our equalities team. Clarification was provided that a full EIA was not required where it was clearly demonstrated that there were no negative equality impacts; and officers reminded that EIAs are living documents and as projects/proposals develop, and further evidence of impacts becomes available, or any unforeseen impacts emerge, the EIA should be reviewed.

This document highlights the equality impacts for the 10 budget proposals that have been deemed to require a full EIA. The full Equality Impact Analyses are attached as Appendix C (iii).

Overall Assessment

The majority of savings arise from rises or changes to funding streams, making better use of technology (or not replacing under-used technology), not recruiting to vacant places, service restructures, re-procuring of contracts on competitive terms, utilising underspends and expanding commercial opportunities for the council. Essentially, these will result in 'back office' changes with little or no impact on residents, community groups.

Ten proposals have been identified as requiring a full EIA.

No direct or indirect 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, however measures have been identified to mitigate this.

A substantial proportion of the proposals have the long term impact of fostering good relations.

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 [Census Data 2021](#). 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 to the Census question with '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 respondents did not answer the question on gender re-assignment, and less than half provided write-in details about their gender identity, these statistics provide 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 (43.1%) or in a registered civil partnership (0.2%), 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%. 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, this group being very diverse, including Eastern and Western European (e.g. Romanian) residents alongside a range of other groups (e.g. Brazilian, Australian). It also incorporates Brent's Irish population, which is the 2nd highest percentage nationally (2.7%) Brent's Roma population (0.7%) and Gypsy & Irish Traveller population (<0.1%) .
 - 65% are from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups (the 2nd highest rate in England & Wales). 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 have 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

- In Brent, 85.1% of adults identified as straight or heterosexual and 3.2% identified as LGB+. 11.7% of respondents 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 of 2024/25 – 2025/26 budget proposals

Initial equality screenings have been undertaken to ascertain the impact in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), a proportion of the proposals identified no impacts, - they are in their formative stages and are still to be developed or are subject to consultations, or despite not identifying an impact at present the service area have been advised by the equalities teams to keep the impact of the proposal under continuous review. Consequently, as the proposals are developed further equality analysis will be undertaken to assess the PSED. The proposals that fall into this category are summarised below:

To be kept under review

- 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 CYP03 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 RS11 Implementation of borough wide (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.

To be kept under review (in light of the potential cumulative staffing impact)

Children & Young People

- 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.

Communities & Regeneration

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

Governance

- 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.
- 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 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.

Resident Services

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

Proposals requiring a full equality assessment.

Ten 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.

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 included closure of the New Millennium Day Centre, offering people attending that centre alternative service provision.

Following consultation on the future of New Millennium Day Centre 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; The majority of people using day services have a disability and therefore the proposed changes will have a greater impact on disabled people as they are the main cohort accessing the services. Information of those accessing sessional day opportunities are below:
- Learning Disability - 209
- Physical Support and Disability – 99
- Memory and Cognition - 8
- Mental Health – 2
- Sensory Support - 2

For this 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.

- **Age:** Overall, majority of people using day services are younger disabled people (236 of the 320 service users are between the ages of 18-65). Therefore, it will be affecting a predominantly working age cohort. 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.
- **Race:** Over two thirds of the 320 people currently using day services are from Asian/Asian British (119 people) and Black/Black British (94) backgrounds. People from Asian and Black 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.

Service users of the New Millennium Day Centre: The impact of the outlined proposal changes are potentially negative for attendees of the New Millennium Day Centre, if the proposal to close the centre is approved. For some users they will experience disappointment, confusion, loss or concern about a change to their service. Some users may also be required to travel further to an alternative. These impacts will be considered as part of the consultation process and feed into the final decision making.

Potential impacts on protected groups include:

- **Disability:** For those who use New Millennium Day Centre (60 of the 68 people have a disability) the impact will be one of disruption should the centre close as people will be supported to find an alternative service. 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. Some already use the John Billam as they have part of their service each week across the two buildings. For others, workers will review their needs and work with the person and their family to find an alternative offer that meets their assessed needs. The intention is this should be flexible and offer the outcomes people need. It is also 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.
- **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 the centre close as people will need and be supported to find an alternative service. This 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, employed staff 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.

- **Race:** Of the 68 people currently accessing New Millennium Day Centre, 57% are from Black and Asian backgrounds. The impacts on these service users will be similar to those with a disability. It is likely they will experience disruption should the centre close and some people may potentially 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 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 and the means to access those 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:

- **Gender:** 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: Longer waiting times and a more limited access to the services may impact on service users as highlighted above. This will be particularly pertinent with contracts, such as the DV service where a delay in waiting times could have significant implications. To mitigate impact, the contracts will be reviewed to highlight areas of potential duplication with other services, responsibilities of other agencies including support that should be provided as part of wider housing support. Full consideration of consequences of reducing spend on these services will be conducted and the outcomes from each service will be evaluated and quality assured before proposals for reductions are brought forward for approval. Following on from this, the impact of the proposal will be monitored over time, by recording the capacity of each service including any waiting lists. Any key issues from an increased waiting list would be identified and work with the providers and other stakeholders will continue to ensure a clear pathway from these services to other support available.

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 during the transitional periods. 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. Regular monitoring will take place on a case-by-case basis.
- **Race:** 77% of this client group identify as coming from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups. 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. Regular monitoring will take place on a case-by-case basis.

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): Reduce the value of the 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 (2024/25 and 2025/26): 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 a Black, Asian and Minority 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.

Engagement with stakeholders is yet to take place, but will consider all groups, particularly those likely to be most affected. Furthermore, monitoring will be done by continually reviewing the provision in consultation with staff and users of the Nursery.

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 Department of Education (DfE) School Improvement and Brokering grant. The reduction will not impact on staffing or classroom provisions. This proposal will reduce the money available to affect strategic decisions which may improve the infrastructure and leadership of the schools that are in need of rapid improvement.

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 using the Freeman Family Centre 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 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 Minority Ethnic 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 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 have a socio-economic 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, subject to eligibility criteria, and are highlighted in under the socio-economic implications section below.

4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

It is possible that some individuals will be impacted by more than one of the proposals being put forward and therefore will be hit harder by these changes. It is advisable that, where proposals are accepted, the intersectional impacts are monitored and evaluated over time and across services. However, overall, these impacts are considered to be short-term and part of a process that will eventually bring about improvements to the same.

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, as there is a statutory duty towards the children, a level of service provision will be necessary and 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.

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	1	0	0	-1	0	ASC
Continuing sustainable long-term care and support promoting independence CHW03 -24/25	1	-1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	ASC
Procurement of contract promoting education, employment, and training for young people CYP02-24/25	1	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	1	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

5 SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

Certain groups within the population are more likely than others to live in a low income household. In Brent, our Annual Residents Survey (2021) 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 middle and 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, subject to eligibility criteria, through the following funds:

- Resident Support Fund: this is available to Brent residents who are having difficulty due to unforeseen financial circumstances. Brent residents can apply for financial support, for up to £1000, to help with energy bills and other household expenditure.
- 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.

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.

Council’s Equalities Profile

The Council has around 2600 employees. The current equalities profile is set out below. The Council as a whole has a diverse workforce both in terms of age, race and religion. We continue to encourage officers from across the Council to update their personal information through our ‘Let us Know’ campaign, so our equality data is as comprehensive as possible.

From an equalities perspective, there remains a proportion of staff who have not identified their disability status (28.93%), ethnic origin (24.89%) or religion and belief (35.15%) and this is like most London Boroughs where equalities data can be improved. Nonetheless, the current staffing equalities profile is broadly reflective of the borough’s equalities profile.

Equalities Data

By Age Band	Headcount	Percentage of Total
Under 21	12	0.46%
21-30	354	13.60%
31-40	536	20.59%
41-50	652	25.05%
51-60	739	28.39%
61-70	297	11.41%

By Gender	Headcount	Percentage of Total
Female	1673	64.27%
Male	930	35.73%
Total	2603	

By ethnic origin	Headcount	Percentage of Total
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71-79	13	0.50%
Total	2603	

By Disability	Headcount	Percentage of Total
Disabled	149	5.72%
Not Disabled	1701	65.35%
PNTS / Unknown	753	28.93%
Total	2603	

By Religion	Headcount	Percentage of Total
No religion	247	9.49%
Christian	842	32.35%
Hindu	259	9.95%
Muslim	198	7.61%

Asian	529	20.32%
Black	692	26.58%
Mixed Heritage	107	4.11%
White	584	22.44%
Other	43	1.65%
PNTS / Unknown	648	24.89%
Total	2603	

By Sexual Orientation	Headcount	Percentage of Total
Lesbian, gay or bisexual	59	2.27%
Heterosexual/Straight	1691	64.96%
PNTS / Unknown	853	32.77%
Total	2603	

Other	142	5.46%
PNTS / Unknown	915	35.15%
Total	2603	

Married or in a civil partnership	Headcount	Percentage of Total
Yes	639	24.55%
No	527	20.25%
PNTS / Unknown	1437	55.21%
Total	2603	

Care responsibilities	Headcount	Percentage of Total
Yes	231	8.87%
No	1574	60.47%
PNTS / Unknown	798	30.66%

Currently on Maternity	Headcount	Percentage of Total
No	2565	98.54%
Yes	38	1.46%
Total	2603	

Gender identity same as assigned at birth	Headcount	Percentage of Total
Yes	1885	72.42%
No	11	0.42%
PNTS / Unknown	707	27.16%
Total	2603	

Parenting responsibilities	Headcount	Percentage of Total
Yes	703	27.01%
No	1040	39.95%

Total	2603	
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PNTS / Unknown	860	33.04%
Total	2603	