

# Diversity impact assessment

<b>TITLE</b>
<b>Capital and Revenue Budgets 2025/26 Overarching Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA)</b>
<b>DATE</b>
February 2025
<b>LEAD OFFICER.</b>
Katey Durkin, Chief Finance Officer
<b>1 Summary description of the proposed change</b>
What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed? How does it compare with the current situation?
<b>Overarching Diversity Impact Assessment</b> This Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) does not seek to duplicate the service specific DIAs. Instead, its purpose is to bring together their findings, summarising the cumulative impact that the budget proposals may have on people with protected characteristics within the Medway community and workforce (as defined in the Equality Act 2010).  Each service is expected to carry out a DIA to support the proposals set out in the Budget 2025/26 report to Council.  <b>Budget 2025/26</b> The Capital and Revenue Budgets 2025/26 report sets out the Council's spending plans for 2025/26 and how it intends to resource the delivery of services. In accordance with the Constitution, this will be submitted to Council for consideration and approval on 27 February 2025.
<b>2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment.</b>
E.g. Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user. E.g. Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile
Evidence used to support this overarching DIA includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital and Revenue Budget Report 2025/26</li> </ul> <b>Proposals 2025/26</b>  Budget changes have been proposed across a wide range of services as follows:  <b>Children and Adults (C&amp;A)</b> There has been significant growth in this budget in recent years and this continues with the budget for 2025/26, which reflects total growth (including Schools expenditure and pay uplifts) of £40.339million: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued increases in the complexity of need and the increasing cost of social care packages, along with the cost of transporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to school.</li> </ul>

# Diversity impact assessment

- Investment in Adult Social Care including additional resources to deliver specialist and intensive support to those hardest to reach / on the edge of care, to ensure we meet care act duties, supporting adults with Learning Disabilities and Autism, additional social worker and business support capacity and in software improvements.
- Investment in Public Health services reflecting additional costs due to inflation and increased staffing costs impacting the delivery of Public Health contracts.
- The proposals also reflect investment in Children's Services to get the OFSTED rating of our service from Good to Outstanding.

## **Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE)**

The proposed budget for 2025/26 for RCE represents an increase of £12.398million, including pay uplifts. The budget reflects:

- The impact of inflation and increase to the national living wage on contracts including waste management and disposal, and on rising utilities costs and increased business rates across the services including the corporate property estate.
- Significant additional income projections through increasing fees for services including Parking and Highways.
- Significant pressure of providing temporary accommodation in the Homelessness service, however the activity underway in the service to deliver savings through in-house provision of temporary accommodation is projected to reduce this pressure.
- Additional investment to deliver planning reforms and the Local Plan.
- A review and reprioritisation of activities delivered on green spaces via Medway Norse to enable investment in a programme of improvements in the Councils green spaces focussing on allotments and sports pavilions.
- Additional investment in staffing to deliver regeneration strategies including inward investment and growth, a river strategy and the Medway 2041 delivery plan.
- Additional investment to right size staffing resources, with investment to fund posts previously charged to capital or developer contributions, a corporate landlord project management office, staffing required to deliver statutory responsibilities and ensure safety requirements are met in facilities management and Public Rights of Way and increasing the levels of staffing in Social Regeneration, Economic Development, Town Centre Management and supporting Markets

## **Business Support Department (BSD) and Corporate Management**

The proposed budget for 2025/26 for Business Support represents an increase of £3.875million, including pay uplifts while the budget for Corporate Management represents a further £2.594million increase. The budget reflects:

- Additional investment in the communications service to meet growing demand from services to help meet income, increased demand for corporate training and the establishment of the appropriate support and

# Diversity impact assessment

resource to deliver potential programme of change associated with devolution and local government reorganisation.

- Investment in additional staffing to support the devolution and local government reorganisation agendas and a doubling of the staff learning and development budget.
- The removal of corporate savings targets until proposals are sufficiently developed to be allocated to services across the Council.

Where appropriate Directorate Management Teams have coordinated the completion of DIAs to support these proposals, ensuring any adverse impacts have been identified and actions implemented to mitigate these where appropriate.

### 3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

Is it likely to:

Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups

Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

**(insert Yes when there is an impact or No when there isn't)**

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age	Yes	Yes	Yes
Disability	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gender reassignment	No	No	No
Marriage/civil partnership	No	No	No
Pregnancy/maternity	No	No	No
Race	No	No	No
Religion/belief	No	No	No
Sex	No	No	No
Sexual orientation	No	No	No
Care Experience	Yes	Yes	Yes

# Diversity impact assessment

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Other (eg low income groups)	Yes	Yes	Yes

## 4 Summary of the likely impacts

Who will be affected?

How will they be affected?

### Positive impact:

Budgets have been proposed to deliver the aspirations of the Administration, to deliver the Council Plan and preserve those services that are most important to residents.

The budget proposals are based on analysis and assurance from members of the Council's senior leadership team. Portfolio Holders have worked with their respective Directors and Assistant Directors throughout the budget setting process. Overview and Scrutiny Committees have been consulted on the proposals as set out in the Draft Budget.

### Adverse impact

Any adverse impact due to proposed budget changes is identified by Directorates through the completion of a service specific DIAs, which also supports services to make more informed choices about solutions which may mitigate potential adverse impacts.

### Fees and Charges

The budget proposals have been formulated on an assumption that fees and charges would generally increase by 8% to account for the impact of increasing National Living Wage and staff pay along with inflationary uplifts on the cost of service delivery, however the principle is that fees and charges should cover the cost of the service delivered and where market conditions allow, greater increases have been applied. Any new charges or changes to service provision have been considered through the completion of service specific DIAs.

## 5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?

Are there alternative providers?

Can demand for services be managed differently?

### Consultation

Following the decision on the budget for 2025/26, in some circumstances services will need to carry out consultation with service users. This will inform

# Diversity impact assessment

how specific services or programmes should be redesigned to meet user needs, balanced against the Council's financial resources.

## **Equality duty**

The Council is committed to having due regard to s149 Equality Act 2010 as an integral part of its decision making. Carrying out DIAs helps to anticipate the likely effects of budget proposals on different communities and groups, and thereby assists the Council to comply with its equality duties when discharging its public function of budget setting. DIAs will be undertaken (or the existing DIA will be updated) before any final decisions that could impact on people with protected characteristics, are made through the Council's processes. This will enable services to make more informed choices regarding solutions which may mitigate potential adverse impacts.

## **Performance Review**

In addition, the Council will continue to review the performance of services as part of the existing quarterly monitoring process to take account of the impact on people with protected characteristics when making decisions in future about services.

## **Action Plans**

Where potential adverse impacts are identified, an action plan which sets out how the service will mitigate the impact will be included in the service specific DIAs. All DIAs and associated action plans are approved by Assistant Directors.

## **Council Equalities and Workforce Polices**

Existing council equalities and workforce policies are used to minimise or avoid negative impacts on staff, especially those with protected characteristics.

## **6 Action plan**

Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Deadline or review date</b>
Directorate Management teams (DMTs) to review cumulative risk of DIAs once completed and ensure action plans are completed	DMTs	End of Q2 Sept 2025 (6 months)

# Diversity impact assessment

## 7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be: to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate, consider alternatives, gather further evidence.

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

The budget decision will be made by Full Council on 27 February 2025.

### Recommendations:

- Where decisions are yet to be made on how to implement cost savings, for specific services, DIAs will be undertaken (or updated) before such decisions are made. Consultation will be undertaken (where appropriate) to inform service specific DIAs.
- Directorate Management Teams to continue to monitor equalities impact of changes to services and assess cumulative impact of service changes across Directorates, including the delivery of DIA actions.

## 8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that the recommendation can be implemented, sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned, the Action Plan will be incorporated into the relevant Service Plan and monitored

### Assistant Director

Phil Watts

### Date of authorisation

February 2025