

# 2021/22 Budget Savings Proposals for Consultation - Equality Analysis

---

The Council's budget is under significant pressure and is no longer fully balanced or deliverable. The impact of Covid19 has led to a reduced level of income, increased costs, and the inability to deliver some of the savings that were approved in the 2021/22 budget.

Croydon is proud to be home to 386,710 people, all of whom have needs and aspirations, and at every stage of the budget development process and delivery we will consider how the decisions we make will affect them. We have taken great care in putting this cumulative impact assessment together, and as we get new information and our proposals develop we will refine this further.

We are facing huge financial challenges and some of the decisions we are looking to make will be difficult. All have been considered with the interests of our residents at heart, and the work that we have done to strengthen communities and understand the needs of our residents will help us to support them in the years to come.

## 1. Our approach to equality impact assessing our 2021/2022 budget savings proposals

### Scope of this assessment

This assessment identifies those areas within the 2021/22 savings proposals for consultation which are relevant to equalities and seeks to describe their potential equalities impact when taken together. Our approach for assessing the equalities impact of savings proposals is an ongoing process. At this stage the analysis is indicative and as individual proposals are further developed and implemented they will be subject to further assessment.

### Our legal duties

In April 2011 the Equality Act (2010) introduced a new public sector duty which extends the protected characteristics covered by the public sector equality duty to include age, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and religion or belief.

Section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to have **due regard** to the need to:

- **eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having **due regard** means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. This means that decision makers must be able to evidence

that they have taken into account any impact of the proposals under consideration on people who share the protected characteristics before decisions are taken – this includes decisions relating to how they act as employers; how they develop, evaluate and review policy; how they design, deliver and evaluate services, and how they commission and procure from others.

In the context of major reductions being required we have therefore endeavoured to ensure that:

- The process followed to assess the equality impact of financial proposals is robust; and
- The impact financial proposals could have on equality groups is thoroughly considered before any decisions are taken.

By law an assessment must:

- Contain sufficient information to enable a public authority to show it has paid “due regard” to the equalities duties in its decision-making; and
- Identify methods for mitigating or avoiding any adverse impact

Assessing the impact of proposed changes to policies, procedures, services and organisational change is not just something the law requires; it is a positive opportunity for the council to ensure it makes better decisions, based on robust evidence.

Our approach is to ensure quality information about the equality impact of savings proposals are considered as part of the process and financial decision making and is therefore designed to demonstrate that the Council has proper regard to these aims, in accordance with its statutory equality duties. It seeks to ensure that even in this time of economic challenges the substantial savings are identified and delivered in an informed, balanced and sustainable way. At the end of the process we seek to ensure that going forward our budget is better targeted and that money is spent where it will have the greatest effect.

As an organisation we are committed to protecting the most vulnerable in our communities and to ensure that in making difficult decisions about funding we maintain an absolute commitment to tackling inequality and disadvantage and promoting equality for everyone who lives and works in the borough.

## **Context**

Croydon Council faces a financial crisis of unprecedented severity. It has been experiencing rising financial and service demand pressures for a number of years. The coronavirus pandemic has exposed serious underlying weaknesses in the Council’s financial resilience and governance. In accordance with the Local Government Act 1988, the Council is required to “manage its budget within the approved estimates”. This means that it cannot spend more than it has available to fund those costs, and if it appears that expenditure in the year is going to exceed available resources then action needs to be taken immediately to ensure spend is reduced and the budget is balanced and therefore remains lawful.

The council is currently forecasting an overspend at the end of the 2020/21 financial year in excess of £30m despite the approval of in-year savings on 28 September. While additional savings in current and future years are proposed, further risks are likely to arise which could result in an overspend in the region of £66m. This is several times in excess of the Council’s unrestricted reserves, which now stand at £7m (subject to external audit). The council does not currently have a deliverable plan to balance its budget this year as required by law. In view of

this, the Director of Finance, Investment and Risk (Croydon Council's Section 151 Officer) issued of a S.114 notice by on 11 November 2020.

The new administration has provided a framework of priorities for 2021-24 and ways of working to inform the task of reshaping the council and refocusing its work which is required in order to put it on a stable financial footing and ensure that the most vulnerable residents are protected from the impacts of the covid pandemic. The three priorities are:

- To live within our means, balance the books and provide value for money
- To focus on tackling ingrained inequality and poverty in the borough
- To focus on providing the best quality core service we can afford, in particular social care for the most vulnerable people and keeping streets clean and safe. This means we will stop delivering some services.

### **Our Approach**

In undertaking the cumulative equality analysis we have focused on the following:

- As the proposals have developed they have been screened for potential impacts on those with protected characteristics (race, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and age), as well as non-statutory equalities considerations: language, socioeconomic and health and social wellbeing.
- We will not complete separate EAs on each proposal. We will undertake a screening of all savings proposals and identify those that are relevant to equality and thereby need to be assessed - for the most part these will be assessments that focus on the potential for the proposals to affect staff, residents and/or service users.
- The impact of the proposals on staffing is addressed through Equality Analysis undertaken as part of the HR process except where a savings proposal involves the deletion of a service in its entirety and the impact on staff of redundancies is clear.
- Initial analysis of the potential cumulative equalities impacts has been carried out, and is reported here along with the potential impact of the budget proposals on the Council's equality objectives.
- This cumulative EA report will be considered by Cabinet alongside the budget

### **Consultation**

The specific duties require listed bodies to meet the engagement provisions as part of assessing the impact on people with protected characteristics. This will help listed bodies to better understand the impact of their proposals on the different characteristics.

Consultation must be carried out with relevant public bodies, voluntary, community, trade union and other interest groups, such as staff, with an interest in the matter. It needs to be proportionate and relevant.

For our services to meet the needs of local residents, and of the community at large, it is essential that our plans and policies take into account the views of local people and others who use our services.

We will ensure we consult citizens, including equality on the budget proposals as they are developed in more detail. This will help us to take account of the potential impact of the proposals on these groups, and to mitigate these impacts where possible

### **Our approach to consultation**

We will use a broad range of consultation methods to ensure as far as possible that people have sufficient information to comment, as well as the time and necessary support they require to have their say. All feedback gathered will be collated and carefully considered as part of the decision making process.

### **Staff implications**

A significant number of savings as presented in the savings proposals for consultation will include the restructure of teams and service areas. To ensure that in delivering the savings required by the reduction in the Council's budget, we maintain our focus on promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination for our workforce, we have taken steps to monitor the impact of staffing changes and retain a focus on promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination for our workforce.

At this stage the equalities impact on staff is unknown. Each of the proposals which impact on staff will undergo an EIA to identify which staff will be affected and to put forward mitigating actions as part of the HR process except where a savings proposal involves the deletion of a service in its entirety and the impact on staff of redundancies is clear.

We will undertake meaningful consultation with both employees and the trade unions. The contribution of the trade unions will be important in the council achieving its key aims and objectives particularly in these challenging times. Officers and members will continue to consult widely with them in all aspect of service design and delivery.

Staff supported by the proposals in this budget will be supported as appropriate throughout the process and the number of compulsory redundancies will be minimised wherever possible

Proposal	Type of change	Who is affected	Potential Equalities Impact	EA Status	Savings
<b>Place Dept.</b>					
<b>Libraries</b>					
Close libraries	Service change (stop service)	<p>Service users – parents</p> <p>Impact on specific groups/communities – age (all ages) , disability, gender, race</p>	<p>Potential breach of statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service.</p> <p>Need to carry out an assessment of local needs to determine accessibility needs including physical,</p> <p>Public consultation required with current service users.</p> <p><i>Race</i> – free internet access allows user to access information in different languages. Libraries also provide books in other languages</p> <p>Disability – Travelling further to the nearest library can limit the frequency of visits by disabled users. There may be additional transport costs associated with having to access services further away</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of access to computerised technology and provision of specialist equipment</li> </ul> <p><i>Age (older people)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of ability to connect with others on the web which keeps their mind busy and prevents them from developing dementia</li> </ul> <p><i>Age (younger people)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of activities - story time, holiday activities, homework</li> <li>- Loss of opportunities to socialise, learn socialising skills,</li> <li>- Fewer opportunities to form a connection between pre-school and</li> </ul>	Consultation and EA pending	

			<p>school could have a negative impact on literacy and attainment levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children from underprivileged and low income families could be more affected more seriously by the reduction in opportunities to have access</li> <li>- Reduction in number of libraries in buildings, school-age children could lose 'safe' havens during after school hours before parents return from work</li> <li>- Fewer opportunities for younger and older generations to mix could lead to more social rifts and a lack of understanding between generations</li> </ul> <p><i>Gender</i> – more female than male use the library service. People who are 65 years old and over and who live alone are more likely to be women</p> <p><i>All Groups:</i> Loss of opportunity to contact with others/socialise –could lead to social isolation and loneliness</p> <p>Loss of opportunity to have access to computers and the internet which may restrict access to information, services, participation in activities e.g. story time, holiday activities, research and connect with others on the web</p> <p>Withdrawal of services could impact on social inclusion and access to specific support services e.g. books on prescription resources for people with mild to moderate emotional or psychological issues</p> <p>Loss of opportunity to offer promotional material, including signposting to</p>		
--	--	--	---	--	--

## Appendix C

			appropriate educational opportunities and providers of advice e.g. Further education		
Combining posts across Museum and Libraries	Service transformation on staffing	Could affect staff across all 9 protected characteristics	Proposal could have negative impact on different groups pending the equality data of staff in scope	Consultation and EA pending	
<b>Growth, Employment and Regeneration</b>					
Economic Development Team Streamlined Service	Service transformation on staffing	Could affect staff across all 9 protected characteristics	Proposal could have negative impact on different groups pending the equality data of staff in scope	Consultation and EA pending	
Move to Streamlined Regeneration Team	Service transformation on staffing	Could affect staff across all 9 protected characteristics	Proposal could have negative impact on different groups pending the equality data of staff in scope	Consultation and EA pending	
Reduce/remove services	Service transformation on staffing	Reduce our capacity to deliver services that around community safety	This could have a negative impact in relation to socio-economic inequalities: - employment - jobs for local people (inc construction jobs) - housing - new homes - environment/public realm - public squares & spaces	Consultation and EA pending	
<b>Parks</b>					
Merge parks and green spaces	Service transformation on staffing	Could affect staff across all 9 protected characteristics	Proposal could have negative impact on different groups pending the equality data of staff in scope	Consultation and EA pending	
<b>Public Realm</b>					
Cease Specialist Nursery Transport	Service change (stop service)	Young people (age), disability, socio-economic	It would be problematic for a small number of families who this service supports.	Consultation and EA pending	
Reduce the Antisocial Behaviour Team	Service transformation on staffing	Could affect staff across all 9 protected characteristics	Proposal could have negative impact on different groups pending the equality data of staff in scope	Consultation and EA pending	
Reduce Functions and Team in the VRN	Service change (reduction provision) Service transformation on staffing	Could affect staff across all 9 protected characteristics	Proposal could have negative impact on different groups pending the equality data of staff in scope  Reduce our capacity to deliver services that around community safety/keeping residents safe	Consultation and EA pending	

<b>Children Families and Education</b>					
Restructure children's EDT service	Service transformation on staffing	Could affect staff across all 9 protected characteristics	Proposal could have negative impact on different groups pending the equality data of staff in scope	Consultation and EA pending	
Options to reconfigure Early Help	Service transformation on staffing	Could affect staff across all 9 protected characteristics	Proposal could have negative impact on different groups pending the equality data of staff in scope	Consultation and EA pending	
Reconfigure across the adolescent, youth and YOS services	Service transformation on staffing	Could affect staff across all 9 protected characteristics	Proposal could have negative impact on different groups pending the equality data of staff in scope	Consultation and EA pending	
Review CWD care packages	Service change (reduction provision)	Age – young people	Reduction is support provided to children with disabilities and their families	Consultation and EA pending	
Reduce the numbers of children in care	Service change (reduction provision)	Age – young people	<p>Covid 19 has seen a significant rise in domestic violence, this will also impact on young people affected by this in particular as well as other children at immediate risk of harm and those in need of help and protection</p> <p>Could impact on care and support for children and young people where there is evidence that they have suffered significant harm or are at immediate risk of significant harm</p>	Consultation and EA pending	
Reconfigure children's centres	Service transformation on staffing and reduction in provision	<p>Age – young people</p> <p>Socio-economic Families</p> <p>Staff working in children's centres</p> <p>Health Practitioners such as Health Visitors and Midwives</p> <p>Provision provided by VCS and Faith sectors</p> <p>Schools due to impact on school readiness</p>	<p>Inability to offer support to the children and families who need it most</p> <p>Reduce mechanism to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in child development and school readiness, parenting aspiration and parenting skills, child and family health chances</p> <p>Reputational risk to Council</p> <p>Consultation required</p>	Consultation and EA pending	
<b>Health, Wellbeing and Adults</b>					

## Appendix C

Reduction in Welfare Rights	Service change (reduction provision)	Vulnerable residents	Service is integral to our strategy of supporting vulnerable adults and low income/benefit dependent families in Croydon particularly as the financial landscape of the borough continues to be impacted by Covid-19. Service is pivotal to our strategic and operational response to impacts of Covid and recovery of our residents to financial and housing stability and resilience. This service has seen an increase in demand of 300%	Consultation and EA pending	
Review of Contracts - OBC Commissioning, Working Age Adults	Procurement/Contract	Age- Older People	Could put vulnerable adults at risk and push more residents into statutory services costing more further downstream	Consultation and EA pending	
Contact centre and Access Croydon: Reduction in line management	Service transformation on staffing	Could affect staff across all 9 protected characteristics	Proposal could have negative impact on different groups pending the equality data of staff in scope	Consultation and EA pending	
<b>Resources Dept</b>					
VCS Small Grants	Service change (reduction provision)	Vulnerable residents  Communities including those who share protected characteristics	Reduce our ability to support VCS organisations and grass roots projects.  Negative impact on our VCS relationships and partnership.  Reduction in grass roots VCS activity	Consultation and EA pending	
Policy Team Reduction	Service transformation on staffing	Could affect staff across all 9 protected characteristics	Proposal could have negative impact on different groups pending the equality data of staff in scope	Consultation and EA pending	
Communities Team Reduction	Service transformation on staffing	Could affect staff across all 9 protected characteristics	Proposal could have negative impact on different groups pending the equality data of staff in scope	Consultation and EA pending	
Community Fund Reduction	Service change (reduction provision)	Vulnerable residents  Communities including those who share protected characteristics	Reduce our ability to support VCS organisations and grass roots projects.  Negative impact on our VCS relationships and partnership.  Reduction in grass roots VCS activity	Consultation and EA pending	
Reduce staffing in Mayor's Office	Service transformation on staffing	Could affect staff across all 9 protected characteristics	Proposal could have negative impact on different groups pending the equality data of staff in scope	Consultation and EA pending	

Appendix C

Staffing reductions	Service transformation on staffing	Could affect staff across all 9 protected characteristics	Proposal could have negative impact on different groups pending the equality data of staff in scope	Consultation and EA pending	