

INTEGRATED PLAN

PART F – EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Summary

This report sets out the approach taken to consider the cumulative equality impact of Hertfordshire's Integrated Plan proposals from 2021-22

The process for Equality Impact Assessments is an evolving one, with assessments updated as projects and proposals develop. We have reviewed the proposals that are being carried forward from [2019-20](#) and [2020-21](#) and we continue to monitor these equality implications. This cumulative assessment assesses potential equality impacts on the new savings targets for 2021-22.

Hertfordshire County Council sets out guidance and support for staff on taking a proportional and meaningful approach to paying due regard to equality duties both in the design and delivery of policies, services and staff restructures.

The Council will also be conducting a survey with Hertfordshire residents in relation to the Integrated Plan and will seek to engage with the wider community including those who may be hard to reach and engage.

1. Equality approach

- The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to foster good relations and promote equality of opportunity between those with a protected characteristic and others. This work is implicit in all of our services.
- During formative stages of the budget planning process, and as part of business case development, individual Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA's) are required to be presented with each major policy proposal to help decision makers consider the impact that would be felt by the community if a service change was implemented. Available data from national and local sources is used to inform decision-making - in particular, community profile and staff diversity data.
- The appropriate consultation, monitoring and review process for each project has been planned or carried out with stakeholders, staff, partners and the public where appropriate. This information has been or will be used to feed into the equality analysis.
- Organisational policy and protocols exist for managers carrying out staff restructures. Specific guidance on equality impacts is available as part of this. Diversity Board and departmental Equality Action Groups monitor representation of different groups in HCC's workforce and have strategies in place to tackle under-representation.

The table below summarises the equality impact analysis of individual projects that collectively deliver the savings outlined in the Integrated Plan that may have an equality impact. Individual EqIA's for key policy decisions are considered ahead of formal council decisions.

2. Potential equality impacts identified by Integrated Planning proposals and the mitigating action either carried out or proposed.

Service area and potential for impact on people from protected groups	Budget Status	How we will mitigate against any possible impacts
CHILDREN'S SERVICES		
<p>Home to school transport</p> <p>A Personal Travel Budget (PTB) is a transport option available to parents or carers of children/young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), who are eligible for travel support. Where the family chooses to do so, the council will provide funding to help families arrange their own transport to school/college and allows families to make flexible travel arrangements rather than travelling in a vehicle provided by the council.</p>	New Policy Choice	<p>The impact is likely to be low as the intention is to provide an enhanced level of service and better prepare children for adulthood. The following mitigating actions to be taken are aimed at minimising any negative impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving a PTB is a choice for families that are entitled to transport. • Appropriate engagement and consultation will ensure the views of service users, carers and groups that represent them are considered. • Monitoring of impacts on vulnerable groups, including people with learning disabilities.
ADULT CARE SERVICES		
<p>Pay rate for Care workers</p> <p>The council recognises the important work that care workers provide to vulnerable people and the council will ensure that all care workers, at a minimum, will be in receipt of the national living wage. By recognising care workers across the sector, we will be in a competitive advantage to attract high calibre care workers into Hertfordshire and retain a workforce that benefits the residents of the County.</p>	Pressure	<p>The impact is likely to be low as the intention is to provide an enhanced level of service with potential positive implications for Service Users. The following mitigating actions to be taken are aimed at minimising any negative impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust contract management and monitoring of commissioned care services.

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<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>As a public sector authority, we have a duty under the Care Act to ensure that we that we meet our statutory duties and responsibilities to safeguard vulnerable adults. The additional resource proposed will strengthen our response to safeguarding and enable the council to have dedicated team to help meet our legal obligations.</p>	Pressure	<p>The impact is likely to be low as the intention is to provide an enhanced level of service. The following mitigating actions to be taken are aimed at minimising any negative impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate engagement and consultation will ensure the views of service users, carers and groups that represent them are considered. • Monitoring of impacts on vulnerable groups.
<p>Strengthening our support for the Voluntary and Community Sector</p> <p>The COVID pandemic has highlighted the strength of partnership working with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). Learning from the establishment of the Volunteering and People Assistance Cell (VPAC), additional resource will be provided to help the council to continue to make proactive links with both district and borough councils and the voluntary sector and develop a co-designed VCS strategy going forward that will focus on digital inclusion, system support and better co-ordination of the VCS offer.</p>	Pressure	<p>The impact is likely to be low as the intention is to provide an enhanced level of service. The following mitigating actions to be taken are aimed at minimising any negative impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate engagement and consultation will ensure that Hertfordshire’s diverse communities are both involved and engaged in future partnerships and targeted interventions. • A full EqIA will be carried out at the point of strategy development to inform priority areas and place-based projects.

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<p>ACS Capital Programme</p> <p>The Capital programme ensures that the council provides provision for accommodation-based services, property maintenance for care homes, day services and extra care housing development. This resource will help the council to both improve nursing capacity in response to a potential increase in demand for nursing care provision.</p>	Capital	No direct impact on service users as focus is on increasing service capacity. Support and access to services will continue to be available through traditional channels for service users needing to access these services with continual monitoring and consultation with staff and service users.
RESOURCES		
<p>Review of Council Property</p> <p>The council undertook an Equality Audit of all its main sites and service facing buildings. The report indicated a number of rectifications to be actioned in ensure compliancy under the Equality Act.</p>	New Policy	Potential positive implications for both staff and service users who use council buildings as the proposed investment sets out a programme of work to make council buildings more accessible for all.
<p>Reduction in printing</p> <p>The cessation of printing of hard copy for council meeting including agendas, reports and other associated paper documents.</p>	New Policy	<p>The impact is likely to be low though the following mitigating actions to be taken are aimed at minimising any negative impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If requested, the council will endeavour to provide relevant document in braille and/or in alternative formats.
<p>Website accessibility</p> <p>The Government introduced new website accessibility legislation (WCAG 2.2) on the 23 September 2020. The council undertook service user testing to ensure compliance of accessibility standards as outlined under legislative requirements.</p>	New Policy	The impact is likely to be low as investment into accessibility standards has been implemented. On-going service user testing will be continued to ensure adherence to legal requirements.

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<p>Your Hertfordshire</p> <p>With an increase in demand for more online and digital services, the council has reduced its production of the hard copy Your Hertfordshire publication over a period with a further proposal to cease publication of the yearly Your Hertfordshire Publication from March 2022.</p>	New Policy	<p>Though the impact of reducing hard copies of Your Hertfordshire is low, Hertfordshire has an aging population who may require additional support in accessing digital services. The Council currently provides concessions on digital training programmes to help individuals access council online information pages and will continue to monitor and promote digital training programmes.</p>
<p>Councillor expenses</p> <p>The pandemic has accelerated new ways of working including working more remotely. This is expected to reduce councillor travel and therefore the levels of corresponding expenses they will need to claim.</p>	New Policy	<p>The impact is likely to be low. Less travel could potentially provide councillors with a better balance between work, home and council working. This in turn could in time encourage more diversity in those who seek to stand for election.</p>
<p>Community Protection</p>		
Service area and potential for impact on people from protected groups	Budget Status	How we will mitigate against any possible impacts
<p>Impact of leaving EU on trading standards.</p> <p>The Council has been working with District Councils and other key partners to ensure that residents and businesses are fully informed on Government guidance in relation to the UK's new trading relationship with the EU.</p> <p>Regulatory Services Team are in the early stages of working to understand and engage with businesses owned by those from BAME backgrounds with a</p>	Pressure	<p>The impact of a new regulatory and trading relationship with the EU could potentially impact business, including smaller business owners who may be from a BAME background. To mitigate this, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that information is available in a variety of formats and translations available if required and that this is promoted to under-represented groups • Ensure that services do not indirectly or directly discriminate against any protected characteristic through the vocabulary and imagery used to promote and deliver the service

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<p>focus on breaking down the barriers to those businesses meeting satisfactory compliance level.</p> <p>The Council will continue to work with its partners in the county's Better Business for All partnership, including Districts and the Growth Hub to provide a supportive environment for regulatory advice to businesses.</p>		

3. An analysis of any potential cumulative impacts that spans services

The potential for compounded impacts on particular groups are identified in individual equality impact assessments, which generally involve engagement and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. The process uses available data from national and local sources identified as relevant to the individual equality impact assessment as well as the results from any local consultation. Action planning and monitoring is part of the process, with the impact of any new policy or service only realised following implementation.

In response to the Public Sector Specific Equality Duty to publish this information, a report that gives further examples of how we are complying with the Duty is available at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/equalities. Also available on that page is our Equality Strategy and our annual workforce profile which provides breakdowns of the workforce diversity profile. The council is currently consulting on the development of a new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The council's internal Departmental Diversity Boards are responsible for monitoring equality impacts across HCC and to ensure delivery and compliance with legal and policy requirements. The table below summarises analysis of potential impact on services and service users.

Project / Review	Age	Race	Gender Reassignment	Disability	Carers	Religion and Belief	Pregnancy and Maternity	Sex	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Sexual Orientation	Impact after mitigation
Key: ✓ = Potential impact; x = No impact; NK = Not known – insufficient evidence											
CHILDREN'S SERVICES											
Home to school transport	✓	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	x	X	x	Low
ADULT CARE SERVICES											
Care Workers	✓	✓	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	x	x	Low
Safeguarding	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Low
VCS	✓	✓	x	✓	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	Low
Workforce	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Low
ACS Capital Programme	✓	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	Low
RESOURCES											
Council Property	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	✓	x	x	x	Low
Printing	✓	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	Low
Website	✓	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	Low
Your Hertfordshire	✓	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	Low
Councillor expenses	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x	✓	x	x	x	Low

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Key: ✓ = Potential impact; x = No impact; NK = Not known – insufficient evidence											
Customer Service Centre	✓	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	Low/Medium
Community Protection											
EU and businesses	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Low/Medium