

**Service and Resource Planning 2018/19- 2021/22**  
**Cross- cutting Service and Community Impact Assessment- November 2017**

**Introduction and approach to budget setting**

At the start of the budget-setting process this year, Oxfordshire County Council is in a much better financial position than many other councils in England. Despite ongoing financial pressures, we are now in a place where it is achievable that our financial strategy can be centred on investing rather making net reductions from 2020/21.

This position is a result of our forward-looking answer to the challenges facing local government at the moment. We have recognised that in changing circumstances, Oxfordshire County Council must also change the way it works to enable it to continue the essential work we do for the residents of Oxfordshire. We have created plans to adapt for the future, which involve projects to transform ourselves as an organisation, as well as working to positively shape our delivery of services and the environment in which we work.

One of the main aims of our future strategy is to manage down the current levels of rising-demand for adult and children's social care through careful evaluation of needs, early intervention and by working effectively with our partners and with communities. In this process, we will be able to reduce and redirect unsuitable use of our services to enable us to prioritise resources to support those who really need it.

Another major element of our long-term plan is to transform how we work, to deliver £15m worth of savings. Our Fit for the Future programme has already identified ways we can become more efficient as an organisation through streams including improving customer experience, collaborative working, business intelligence, taking a whole-place approach and making services digital-by-design. In the second phase of the programme consultants from PwC are working with staff and the council's leadership team to create an operational framework which will be a roadmap for how transformation work progresses.

These changes do take time and in past years we also had to make some immediate savings to balance the budget and cope with increasing demand on services and reductions in the funding available from government. Some tough decisions have had to be made in previous years about changes to our services but this has now set us in a positive position for the future.

In setting our budget for this year we have, as much as possible, avoided making budget changes which impact on services. Our medium-term financial plan describes the planned budget changes over the next four years, from 2018/19 to 2021/22. The current medium-term financial plan takes a holistic approach to create financial breathing space over the 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years while giving us time to drive forward the actions outlined above which will reduced demand.

Most of the new planned savings this year are therefore focused on using our reserves and on income generation plans, such as charging other organisations for

services provided by the council. These savings will allow us to balance our budget in the short-term without having a negative impact on services.

Since we do have to set a balanced budget, it is also necessary to make some changes to services. In doing this, there has been careful consideration about which services will deliver these efficiencies. It is judged that the proposals outlined in the report on Service and Resource planning are those which have least negative impact on people with protected characteristics and in many areas, targeting support will benefit these groups.

### **Purpose of assessment**

This report highlights the potential cumulative impact on protected groups and communities arising from the proposals for savings that will be considered by Council in February 2018.

In addition to this overarching report, impact assessments for individual proposals have been developed- assessing the potential impact on protected groups and communities from a particular saving. These individual impact assessments and the overarching report will be published on Council's website as part of budget-setting process.

A number of individual proposals are at an early stage, and more detailed impact assessments will be produced after the budget is agreed and as services develop plans for implementation. Similarly, impact assessment documents from previous years, or for policy proposals falling outside the annual budget cycle, will be updated where necessary as proposals develop. Comments on draft and initial assessments are therefore welcome and help to ensure we have fully considered the impact of decisions on communities and service users. Where potential negative impacts are identified for particular groups we will consult where appropriate to fully understand this, and/or will communicate directly with the people affected.

### **Legislation**

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 ("the 2010 Act") imposes a duty on the Council to give due regard to three needs in exercising its functions. The three needs are:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.

Complying with section 149 may involve treating some people more favourably than others, but only to the extent that that does not amount to conduct which is otherwise unlawful under the new Act.

The need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages which are connected to a relevant protected characteristic and which are suffered by persons who share that characteristic,
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and which are different from the needs of other people, and
- encourage those who share a relevant characteristic to take part in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such people is disproportionately low.
- take steps to meet the needs of disabled people which are different from the needs of people who are not disabled and include steps to take account of a person's disabilities.

The need to foster good relations between different groups involves having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

One way in which the Council can show that it has had due regard to the statutory needs is by assessing the impact of proposed budget and services changes on service users and Council-paid staff, particularly in relation to people with a "protected characteristic". These protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership

In addition to the characteristics above, the Council also considers the effect of the proposals on those in particular geographies (in particular rural and urban areas) and on deprivation.

#### Social Value

Under the Public Services (Social Value Act) 2012 the Council also has an obligation to consider how the procurement of services contracts with a life value of more than £589,148<sup>1</sup> might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the area affected by the proposed contract, and how it might act to secure this improvement. However, it is best practice to consider social value for all types of contracts, service delivery decisions and new/updated policies. In this context, 'policy' is a general term that could include a strategy, project or contract.

<sup>1</sup> [EC Procurement Threshold for Services](#)

While the Social Value Act does not have direct relevance for the majority of the proposals under consideration, the Council is committed to the principles within it. When making decisions around contracting we consider how our commissioning activity might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area.

### **Evidence/ Intelligence**

The council holds and uses a significant amount of information about the residents of Oxfordshire, in order to understand their needs and plan services accordingly. A key summary of this evidence is the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which is an annual report providing data about Oxfordshire's population and the factors affecting health, wellbeing, and social care needs. This is available online<sup>2</sup> at the Oxfordshire Insight website.

There is also regular consultation and engagement work with residents which helps us to understand their priorities and experiences. We organise regular resident's surveys, and a citizen's panel called Oxfordshire Voice. We have information about the impact of proposed changes to social care through our developing approach to coproduction of services, the annual social care service user survey and the Carers' Survey which happens every two years.

### **Overarching Impact Assessment**

#### **Age and disability**

Oxfordshire has a large number of older residents and people aged 50 and over made up 35% of Oxfordshire's population as of mid-2015 (the latest information available). Older people are the main users of both short-term and long-term care services. The highest disability rates are also found in older people and particularly frequent types of disability in this age group are physical impairment and mobility issues.

Changes to the charging policy for adult social care would therefore have a greater impact on older people than other age groups, although the policy will be applied equally to everyone needing adult social care. There will be a full public consultation on any proposed changes to ensure the impact on individuals is fully identified and considered before any changes are made. The risk of negative impacts for this group will be mitigated further by plans for the council to directly contact those who are likely to be negatively affected by any proposals, to provide information and alternative options for their care, as well as offering a full reassessment of their finances.

People with disabilities will be impacted by the project to move adults with learning disabilities to in-county supported living placements. This is expected to have a positive impact on most people because living within the community will be

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<sup>2</sup> <http://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk>

beneficial. However, there is a risk that some moves may be unsuccessful and this might be disruptive to some people. To minimise the risk of negative outcomes, a dedicated commissioned service will oversee the transitions and will consider whether moving is in each individual's best interests. They will also continue to provide support after the move and will work to solve any problems that arise.

Children and young people are also a group who should be considered separately and people aged under 18 made up 21% of Oxfordshire's population as of mid-2015. Children will particularly be affected by changes to children's social care, including the plans to reduce the number of children entering and staying in care through demand management. However, this is expected to have a positive impact on children as focusing on early intervention will mean that more individuals are able to have other, more positive outcomes, whilst continuing to ensure that support is available to those who need it.

Those children with disabilities will also be affected by the proposed review of Home to School transport for children with special educational needs. Much of the impact will be positive as many children will be able to be more independent. Steps will be taken to avoid any negative impacts by working with children and their families on a case-by-case basis to ensure that each child has a transport plan which is suitable for their individual needs and they are supported to the necessary extent.

## **Race**

Race is a protected characteristic and the Equalities Act also includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality when describing this characteristic. Oxfordshire is made up of a range of different people and in the latest census there was a total of 107,000 residents from an ethnic minority background (other than white British) in 2011, equivalent to 16% of the population

People from a different national origin may be disproportionately affected by changes to policies, such as the Adult Social Care charging policy, if they speak no or little English and can't understand the changes. At the time of the Census 2011 survey there was a total of 5,500 people in Oxfordshire who could not speak English or speak English well. However, in line with council policy, all publications will be made available in alternative languages where requested and interpreters will be used to communicate with people as necessary.

## **Sex**

Women may be affected more by changes in adult social care because in older age groups there are more women than men. More care is provided by women than by men in Oxfordshire meaning that women will be more greatly affected by changes to SEN transport and to children's services. This means that the cumulative impact of budget changes may be greater for women. However, as set out above, care will be taken to communicate fully with anyone likely to be impacted by proposed changes, to fully understand the potential impact and to mitigate as far as possible.

Just under 70% of the council's workforce is female with even higher proportion of female employees in some service areas such as children's services where over 85% of staff are female. This means that more women might be affected by changes which affect staff members, including restructuring of teams in the council and changes to the ways people work through our transformation programme. Full consideration of this, and any other potential implications, will be built into the project planning and consultation on any proposed changes.

The council operates an Equalities Policy and will carefully monitor impact of changes, ensuring employment policies relating to equality are understood and applied fairly. The Council annually publishes a review of its progress in promoting equality of opportunity within the workforce and will be able to continue to assess the impact on different groups.

### **Rural and urban communities**

As at mid-2015, a third of the total population of Oxfordshire lived in areas defined as "rural" by the Office for National Statistics. Changes to Home to School transport for Children with SEN could have a greater impact on rural communities as there are more limited transport options available to these. This is unlikely to be significant as the project aims to find the best travel plan for each child on a case-by-case basis and will consider the local transport options for their situation.

### **Deprivation**

Despite the relative affluence of Oxfordshire, income deprivation is an issue in urban and rural areas, affecting 14,000 children and 13,500 older people. Deprived communities and individuals often need use services more so are more likely to be more affected by demand management work in children's social care. However, in this work there will be careful consideration of safeguarding implications to ensure that vulnerable children continue to be protected and that all children are equally supported according to their need.

### **Other protected characteristics**

At this stage we have not identified any specific impacts of our proposals on people sharing the protected characteristics listed below, beyond those issues discussed above:

- Gender reassignment
- Religion or belief
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Sexual orientation