

DRAFT – FOR FINALISATION AFTER BUDGET CONSULTATION HAS CLOSED

Oxfordshire County Council

Budget and Business Planning 2023/24

DRAFT Overarching Equality Impact Assessment

Context and Purpose

Oxfordshire County Council's vision is to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county. This includes working to ensure that our policies and services support equality and inclusion.

This assessment sets out the equalities impact of our revenue budget proposals for 2023/24.

We can look to legislation to support our understanding of the council's equalities impacts. The Equality Act (2010) states that all public bodies need to take extra steps to stop discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations: this is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Act defines discrimination as the less favourable treatment of a person because of a protected characteristic, as compared to others who do not share that characteristic. The legislation also applies where there is a belief that the person who is disadvantaged has a particular protected characteristic, even if it is not the case.

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

Including Everyone – an inclusive Oxfordshire

The council has set out its approach to equalities, diversity and inclusion, including how we meet the Public Sector Equality Duty, in the [Including Everyone](#) framework.

DRAFT – FOR FINALISATION AFTER BUDGET CONSULTATION HAS CLOSED

Including Everyone sets out how the council goes further than the protected characteristics in the Equality Act by also considering the impact our decisions might have on:

- People living with social deprivation
- Rural communities
- Those leaving care
- Carers
- Those in our armed forces community

This Overarching Equality Impact Assessment shows how our budget proposals might impact the nine protected characteristics and the five additional areas above, and what we are doing to reduce or remove any potential negative impacts.

Equality Impact Assessments

All council decisions are reviewed for equality impact at the appropriate level of detailed analysis, depending on the potential service impact of the proposed change. This allows for the review of the potential impacts of new and updated policies and service delivery decisions on those with protected and/or additional characteristics. Where there is potential for material service impact, a formal Equality Impact Assessment is completed.

This Overarching Equality Impact Assessment is made in support of the council's whole Budget and Business Planning proposals for 2023/24. It provides summary information on the equalities impacts which the council's budget proposals might have if the proposals are approved and implemented. It also gives an indication of how we might mitigate any potential negative impacts.

Assessing equality impacts does not guarantee that a change will never have a negative impact. Rather it is intended to ensure that our policies are designed and implemented to meet the diverse needs of individuals, groups and communities in Oxfordshire. Equality Impact Assessments also help to ensure that the outcomes of a proposal are carefully considered, with the potential benefits maximised and possible challenges mitigated, within the overall funding available.

Overarching Equality Impact Assessment – approach

The following pages show how we have approached the assessment of impacts on equalities and diversity, setting out at a summary level what impacts our total budget proposals might have on each characteristic listed above.

DRAFT – FOR FINALISATION AFTER BUDGET CONSULTATION HAS CLOSED

Where a potential material service impact has been identified, an initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. These individual Equality Impact Assessments are available as part of the background papers. Following the public consultation, impact assessments will be reviewed and updated as necessary to take into account consultation responses.

Background Papers

One detailed Equality Impact Assessment has been published with the Budget Report as a background paper:

- Increase in parking income due to factors such as usage fees and locations

Public Consultation

Public consultation is one of the tools which OCC uses to help understand and mitigate the potential impacts of our savings on equalities (the nine protected characteristics) or wider community areas (rural communities, areas of deprivation, carers, care leavers, armed forces community, social value). Achievement of the savings proposed would be dependent on the outcome of any public consultation.

At present there are no public consultations planned on individual 2023-24 savings proposals.

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Directorate / Service Area	All Directorates and Service Areas
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed change).	This assessment sets out the overall impact that the revenue budget and business planning proposals have on a range of equality and diversity characteristics, including the nine protected characteristics defined under the Equality Act 2010. The assessment also summarises any mitigations that have been planned or put in place to reduce or remove any potentially negative impacts.
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	This impact assessment provides an overview of the 2023/24 revenue budget and business planning proposals and so comments on existing programmes as well as new proposals.
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?	<p>This assessment covers the overall revenue budget and business planning proposal for Oxfordshire County Council for 2023-24. It seeks to highlight key evidence and intelligence that the council has used to assess the impact of its budget proposals on the nine protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>In line with our equalities, diversity and inclusion (EDI) framework, the council has also assessed the impact on those living in rural areas, those living with social deprivation, armed forces communities, carers and those leaving care, and Social Value.</p> <p>This assessment has not identified any bias, unfair advantage or disadvantage to any groups or individuals. Where potential negative impacts have been identified, mitigations have been put in place to reduce impact.</p> <p>A summary of the impacts of the budget proposals on climate change outcomes have been set out in a separate overarching Climate Impact Assessment.</p>
Completed By	Steven Fairhurst Jones
Authorised By	Chloe Taylor
Date of Assessment	November 2022

DRAFT – FOR FINALISATION AFTER BUDGET CONSULTATION HAS CLOSED

DRAFT

DRAFT – FOR FINALISATION AFTER BUDGET CONSULTATION HAS CLOSED

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>Oxfordshire County Council's vision is to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.</p> <p>We want to make sure that everyone in Oxfordshire can take advantage of what the county has to offer. Our strategic plan explains our nine cross-cutting priorities and commitments to achieve our vision and sets out our areas of focus.</p> <p>Our nine priorities are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.2. Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.3. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.4. Support carers and the social care system.5. Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network.6. Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces.7. Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.8. Play our part in a vibrant local democracy.9. Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit. <p>In recent years Oxfordshire County Council has delivered significant savings both in response to reductions in government funding and in order to release funds to reinvest in meeting rising demand. This budget and business planning round has been impacted due to the financial pressures on the council and local authorities as a whole, given the national and international economic situation. All local authorities face significant increases in inflation that are driving up costs and price increases in energy, fuel and materials. This year, the Government is not expected to update budgets in light of soaring inflation, so we are facing a significant funding shortfall in 2023-24.</p>
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DRAFT – FOR FINALISATION AFTER BUDGET CONSULTATION HAS CLOSED

	<p>The council is also facing other demand-led pressures, which include the growing nationwide costs of supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities; the rising cost of social care and care placements for both children and adults; and a national shortage of social care workers leading to a reliance on agency staff and higher costs.</p> <p>The recent Census also confirms Oxfordshire has a growing and ageing population, which will continue to increase demand on services.</p> <p>In addition, the financial impact of implementing the government’s adult social care reforms is unclear and could add to these pressures. Finally, on top of this, the long-term financial impact of supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities, particularly those with high needs, remains uncertain. The support is managed by the council but is funded separately through the government’s dedicated schools grant, which has been consistently less than the sum required in Oxfordshire.</p>
<p>Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>This impact assessment covers all savings proposals across:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health and Community Safety • Adult Social Care • Children’s Services • Environment and Place • Customers, Culture and Corporate Services <p>Details of proposals are set out in the main Budget and Business Planning papers.</p>
<p>Evidence / Intelligence List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and</p>	<p>In considering the impact of budget proposals before they are formally agreed, the council undertakes a detailed process of democratic and community engagement. For equalities this includes:</p>

DRAFT – FOR FINALISATION AFTER BUDGET CONSULTATION HAS CLOSED

<p>stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) of health and wellbeing needs, and the associated Equalities Briefing, to consider the impact of proposals as they are drawn up and in the development of this overarching assessment. The council’s JSNA can be found here; Using data and intelligence gathered through implementing our Including Everyone Framework on equalities, diversity and inclusion, which can be found here; Directorates follow the council’s approach to undertaking Equalities Impact Assessments (EIA). This includes considering at an early stage what impacts each proposal might have on the nine protected characteristics or on wider community groups, and subsequently setting out greater detail, including any actions identified to mitigate negative impacts. Where potential impacts are assessed as significant, individual Equalities Impact Assessments have been published to aid understanding and outline mitigations. A public consultation process is being undertaken for the budget proposals. EIAs will be updated as necessary following the budget consultation to take account of responses. A democratic process including agreement of proposals by Cabinet, analysis and comment on those proposals by Performance Scrutiny Committee, and adoption of a budget by Full Council. Each of these stages provides an opportunity to invite comment and engagement from the public and representatives of particular organisations or population groups.
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Section 3: Impact Assessment

<p>Assessing the evidence and impact on those with the protected and additional characteristics</p>	<p>Demographic data has been taken from the Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2022 unless otherwise stated.</p> <p>Age: As of mid-2020 there were a total of 696,800 residents in Oxfordshire (49.9% were male and 50.1% were female). Compared with England, Oxfordshire had a higher proportion of residents aged 15-19 (40,702), 20-24 (49,745) and 75+ (62,782) but a lower proportion of 30-34 year olds (41,419). There were</p>
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DRAFT – FOR FINALISATION AFTER BUDGET CONSULTATION HAS CLOSED

18,620 people aged 85+ which is 0.2% higher than the England average. The 65+ population is predicted to increase by 18% by mid-2030. Oxford's two universities had 35,260 full time students registered for the academic year 2020-21 which will account for some of the residents in the younger age profile.

No specific issues relating to age have been identified as likely to arise as a result of these proposals.

Disability: In 2020-21 around 20% of people in the South East region have a disability, equating to an estimated 153,300 people in Oxfordshire. For children the most common impairments are social or behavioural, while mobility impairments are the most common in adults. In November 2021 there was a total of 49,653 disability-related benefits claimed in Oxfordshire, and 1,661 adults receiving long-term social care for learning disabilities from the council's Adult Social Care services as of April 2022.

The proposal to increase parking income includes better management of on-street parking demand in central locations could initially result in reduced parking availability for people with disabilities. The relevant service team will address this with mitigation as set out in the detailed EIA.

Gender Reassignment: In 2021-22, there were 802 applications for gender recognition certificates in the UK (up from 466 in 2020-21), but this will be under-representative of those whose gender identity does not match the sex they were registered with at birth. There is limited information available on gender identity at a local level, but a research study suggests that there were 56 referrals for treatment of gender dysphoria made between 2004 and 2009 to the Department of Psychological Medicine at the John Radcliffe Hospital.

No specific issues relating to gender reassignment have been identified as likely to arise as a result of these budget proposals.

Pregnancy and maternity: There were 6,931 live births in Oxfordshire in 2020. The county has an above average proportion of births to older mothers.

DRAFT – FOR FINALISATION AFTER BUDGET CONSULTATION HAS CLOSED

No specific issues relating to pregnancy and maternity have been identified as likely to arise as a result of these proposals.

Marriage and civil partnership: At the time of the 2011 Census there were 128,400 married households in Oxfordshire and 682 registered same-sex civil partnerships. Same-sex marriage became legal in 2014. In 2019 in Oxfordshire there were 2,880 marriages of opposite-sex couples and 64 same-sex marriages.

No specific issues relating to marriage and civil partnership have been identified as likely to arise as a result of these proposals.

Race including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality: In the 2011 Census, 107,000 people in Oxfordshire were of an ethnic minority background. This was an increase of 60,900 from 2001. The JSNA highlights that around 16% of the county's population is from an ethnic minority background. More recent data from January 2022 highlights that 29% of pupils in primary schools in Oxfordshire were from an ethnic minority background; this rose to 58% of children in primary schools in Oxford. The top first languages other than English were Polish, Urdu, Portuguese, and Arabic.

No specific issues relating to race have been identified as likely to arise as a result of these proposals.

Religion or Belief: JSNA data on religion and belief is based on the 2011 Census where this question was voluntary. The proportion of Oxfordshire residents who responded stating that they had a religion was 65%. Of these respondents, 93% said they were Christian, 3.7% were Muslim, 0.9% were Hindu, 0.8% were Buddhist, 0.4% were Jewish and 0.3% were Sikh.

The proposal to increase parking income includes better management of on-street parking demand in central locations, which could initially result in restricted availability to uncontrolled parking around religious sites. The relevant service team will address this with mitigation as set out in the detailed EIA.

DRAFT – FOR FINALISATION AFTER BUDGET CONSULTATION HAS CLOSED

Sex: As of mid-2020 there were 347,569 (49.9%) males and 349,311 (50.1%) females living in Oxfordshire.

No specific issues relating to sex have been identified as likely to arise as a result of these proposals.

Sexual Orientation: There is limited data on sexual orientation, defined as people who identify as heterosexual/straight, gay / lesbian, bisexual or another sexual orientation. The JSNA estimates that there was a total of 18,446 people aged 16+ in Oxfordshire identifying lesbian, gay or bisexual in 2020.

No specific issues relating to sexual orientation have been identified as likely to arise as a result of these proposals.

Rural Communities: 85 out of 407 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Oxfordshire are ranked within the most deprived 10% nationally on the geographical access to services (defined as road distance to a post office, primary school, GP and supermarket) in 2019. People aged 65+ made up 20% of the population in Oxfordshire's four rural districts, compared to 13% of the population in the city centre (18.8% of the overall population).

The proposal to increase parking income could impact both positively and negatively on rural communities. The relevant service team will mitigate impacts as they are identified.

Armed Forces: In April 2021 there were 9,480 regular armed forces personnel stationed in Oxfordshire and in March 2021 there were 6,606 recipients of pensions/compensation under the Armed Forces Pension Scheme, War Pension Scheme and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme in the county.

No specific issues relating to the armed forces have been identified as likely to arise as a result of these proposals.

DRAFT – FOR FINALISATION AFTER BUDGET CONSULTATION HAS CLOSED

Carers: In 2020-21 there were a total of 4,275 carers in Oxfordshire who were registered and receiving a service in the form of a carer’s assessment or direct payment from a pooled budget. The 2011 Census estimated that there were 61,100 unpaid carers in Oxfordshire and as of March 2022, the county council was supporting 271 young carers (aged between 0-15).

The proposal to increase parking income could impact both positively and negatively on carers. The relevant service team will mitigate impacts if they are identified.

Care leavers: As of March 2021, Oxfordshire has 301 care leavers aged 19-21. Care leavers face many challenges as they move into adulthood, such as those relating to careers, education, accommodation and personal change. Our Care Leavers Local Offer explains the services which can be accessed by those who have been in OCC’s care.

This impact assessment has identified no specific impact of our budget and business planning proposals on Care Leavers.

Areas of Social Deprivation: Oxfordshire has low levels of deprivation relative to England. However, there are nine areas in Oxford City, six in Banbury and one in Abingdon which fall within the 20% most deprived areas in the country, with one of the Oxford City areas falling within the 10% most deprived. These communities are often more frequent users of many public services.

The overall budget proposals have been developed with the objective of effectively targeting services so that we continue to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and fulfil our statutory duties, with most impact on those living with social deprivation.

The proposal to increase parking income could impact both positively and negatively on areas of social deprivation. The relevant service team will mitigate impacts if they are identified.

DRAFT – FOR FINALISATION AFTER BUDGET CONSULTATION HAS CLOSED

	<p>The overall budget proposals have been developed with the objective of effectively targeting services so that we continue to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, including those living with deprivation, and fulfil our statutory duties. All proposals that will have an impact, positive or negative, on any protected characteristic or on rural communities, armed forces, carers or areas of social deprivation, will have an individual Equality Impact Assessment completed alongside policy development, to ensure full compliance to our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.</p>
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