

**CABINET**  
**21 DECEMBER 2010**  
**BUSINESS STRATEGY & SERVICE AND RESOURCE**  
**PLANNING 2011/12 – 2015/16**

**Cross Cutting Community Impact Assessment – First Assessment  
December 2010**

**Introduction and approach to budget setting**

1. Oxfordshire County Council is facing a very significant reduction in Government funding over the next 4 years.
2. The Council's budget proposals were published on 10th December 2010 in papers going to Scrutiny Committees. Comments from Scrutiny Committees will be fed back to Cabinet for consideration on 25 January 2011. The final budget will be set by the Council on 15 February 2011.
3. In proposing the budget the Council's Cabinet have had to make tough choices. These have been based on principles to prioritise business efficiency and productivity and to streamline back office functions in order to protect vital frontline services. However the scale of budget reduction will inevitably impact significantly across a number of service areas. As far as possible the Cabinet is proposing to protect provision of children's social care, the fire service and preventative activity in social care. By necessity budgets for other services therefore face proposals for more significant cuts.
4. As stated in HM Treasury's assessment of the equalities impact of the 2010 spending review, reducing spending will not necessarily mean increased inequalities if the same services can be provided more efficiently, or if resources are better targeted at those who need them most<sup>1</sup>. However the council is conscious that the proposed budget includes some very significant changes and that these may have an impact on communities and particular groups defined in equalities legislation. This report provides an indicative qualitative assessment of these possible implications and sets out the work underway to mitigate the potential effects.
5. It should be noted that the report focuses on proposed budget changes and possible service impacts for 2011/12. There are other proposals in the budget for 2012/13 and beyond, some of which are not yet fully developed. These areas require further consultation and assessment of potential impacts and this work will be done in the months ahead. For 2011/12 the most significant service and organisational changes that the proposed budget reductions will impact on are:
  - Youth services
  - Libraries
  - An existing and ongoing programme to transform adult social care through provision of personal budgets. The programme includes a review

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spend\\_sr2010\\_equalities.htm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spend_sr2010_equalities.htm)

of the services directly provided by the Council (e.g. home support) as well as a review of many services contracted by the Council as there will be fewer contracts as a result of personal budgets. It is now proposed that there should be less funding to deliver this overall programme of change.

- Staffing levels

### **The Council's Assessment Process**

6 Under equality legislation local authorities are required to consider the impact of budget and service changes in relation to:

- **Age** (people of different age groups)
- **Disability** (e.g. physical or sensory impairments, long-term illnesses and conditions, hidden impairments such as a heart condition, frailty, learning disabilities or mental health problems)
- **Gender** (men/women)
- **Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic groups** (including Gypsies & Travellers)
- **Religion/belief** (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)
- **Sexual orientation**
- **Marriage/civil partnerships**
- **Pregnancy & Maternity**

In addition to the issues above we have also considered the impact of changes on particular communities (e.g. urban, rural, deprived).

7. The assessment process the Council is undertaking involves:
- a. A high-level Council wide assessment of the broad impacts on the groups and interests defined above. This paper provides this initial assessment.
  - b. An individual service-level assessment of the potential impact on vulnerable groups for each proposal, where a significant change to the service is proposed.
  - c. We will produce a final version of this paper setting out the cross cutting impact and mitigating actions, for consideration by Cabinet on 25 January 2011 alongside the budget report.
  - d. The current proposals may change as a consequence of political process or consultation with service users and residents. We will therefore revise this assessment as required once formal decisions on individual service changes are taken.

### **Early Assessment of possible implications of proposals**

#### **Communities**

8. Four of our districts are classified as rural, and almost one-third of our population (28%) lives in settlements of fewer than 10,000 people. Nearly half of the population (49%) live in the market towns with more than 10,000 people. The largest settlement is Oxford with a population of close to 150,000 (23% of the county population).
9. Oxfordshire has generally low overall levels of deprivation. However there are ten areas in Oxford City and two in Banbury which fall within the 20% most deprived areas in the country. It should be noted that deprivation extends beyond these specific areas, but may be hidden within the overall affluence of an area potentially making the impact on individuals even greater.
10. Possible impacts of the proposals on different communities:
  - A number of proposals may affect service provision and access to services from rural areas. These include:
    - Proposals to deliver youth services through the new early intervention service which is mainly concentrated in the seven market town/city hubs.
    - Proposals for closure of 13 rural libraries in areas where the population is below 10,000.
    - As part of the adult social care transformation programme there are proposals to concentrate the building based health and wellbeing resource centres in the seven market town/ city areas as part of a new day opportunities service
  - The proposed changes to library services within Oxford City and rural areas are likely to impact mostly on older people, parents with children and adults who are less mobile (e.g. older people, people without their own transport, disabled people). Good transport links are available within Oxford City and should ensure that most residents are still able to access libraries and youth facilities.
11. Mitigation:
  - We hold and actively use data and other evidence to ensure that the council, as far as is possible, is aware of and able to serve the needs of particular communities and groups in Oxfordshire. For example our strong Joint Strategic Needs Assessment<sup>2</sup> is a critical tool, being used across adults and children's services to identify groups where particular needs are not being met and who are experiencing poor outcomes. We also have a Needs Analysis focusing on children and young people that supports the council's Children and Young People's Plan. We will use these tools as a guide to support individual service level impact assessments and ensure that decisions that are being taken, as far as possible, protect services for those most in need.
  - The Council intends to provide pump priming funding to support 'community self help' options and we will seek to work with voluntary and community sector partners to stimulate community run library and youth provision in cases where funding ceases.

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.oxfordshirepct.nhs.uk/your-health/jsna.aspx>

- We intend to design the proposed new early intervention service to ensure that the hubs provide services covering all localities for families with multiple problems. Initial locality mapping shows that there is scope to make better use of existing resources and deliver better outcomes for young people and families.
- We will seek to ensure that library services are accessible in Oxford and rural areas via proposals to introduce an eBook and eAudio loan service; extend the home library services provided by volunteers and targeted at older people and others who are unable to leave their homes; and provide support for people who would like to be more confident on public transport.
- The proposed day opportunities development would be supported by mobile health and wellbeing services that would specifically be targeted at older people in rural areas, alongside community based options that people can bid for in their local community. Wherever they live, people will be encouraged to use their personal budget in their local community to meet their needs.
- We will be prepared to make available existing Council buildings for community use where suitable sustainable and financially viable proposals are put forward. However the Council has costs and liabilities for these buildings and will need to reduce this financial burden as part of its budget reduction strategy. A combination of building and community solutions like the home library service will make this more affordable.
- Particularly in rural areas we recognise that access to services can be a problem for some groups, notably older people who do not drive and people with disabilities. The Council subsidises rural bus services in many areas although some limited changes may impact in 2011/12. However more broadly we will continue to promote and support community transport provision. Existing accessible community transport is extensive in Oxfordshire but there is scope for further development and we will be working to generate improvement in Oxford, market towns and in rural areas
- We are planning 14 locality reviews to understand the impact of proposed changes, options for self help and opportunities for rationalisation of buildings. Pilot reviews in Banbury and Faringdon areas are planned to start shortly.
- We are developing a framework to enable the 'Big Society' to flourish in Oxfordshire. We know that we have a healthy voluntary and community sector in the county and that there are many individuals and organisations who will want to take an active role in their communities. We will work with them to limit the impact of any service changes and ensure that individuals and communities are able to help themselves.

### **Age and disability**

12. 18% of the population is over pension age (males 65 years, females aged 60 years) and this is expected to increase to over 20% by 2031. Numbers of the very elderly (85 years plus) are projected to more than double by 2031. At the

time of the 2001 Census 13% of residents reported having a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability which limited their daily activities or work.

13. As well as those issues identified in the 'Communities' section above, possible impacts of the proposals on older people and those with a disability include:

- Older people and those with disabilities are more likely to be users of social care than the rest of the population. Proposals for changes to the payment regime for aspects of adult social care to a combination of means testing and flat rate charging may lead to increased costs for those in receipt of social care.

14. Mitigation

- The council's approach to social care is moving towards self directed support. This means that individuals will take responsibility for their own care and will be able to arrange the provision of services most beneficial to them. As the commissioner of services in future the council will play a role in clustering suppliers and managing the costs of services.

## **Gender**

15. Possible differential impacts of the proposals on men and women:

- Women use some public services more than men. For example there are more women in old age than men and therefore women are more likely to need social care.
- The proposals for changes to adult social care funding assume a greater dependence upon informal carers to continue caring. We know that two thirds of carers are women (carers survey 2009).
- Over 80% of the Council's workforce are women (rises as high as 96% in some services such as Early Years). Services that are most likely to see high reductions in staffing numbers as a result of the budget proposals are those with very high levels of female employees (e.g. the youth service, libraries, home support and early years). Job losses may therefore affect women in greater numbers. The scale of the savings required will make job losses necessary and the only alternative to staff redundancies will be to transfer cuts in services to customers.

16. Mitigation

- As far as possible we are proposing to protect our spending on adult social care, moving towards self-directed support as set out above.
- Spending on carers has been protected in the proposals in recognition of their contribution
- We will carefully monitor the impact of changes to the workforce as a result of the budget proposals, to ensure employment policies are applied fairly and to minimise any disproportionate impact on any particular groups. The Council annually publishes a review of its progress in promoting equality of opportunity within the workforce.

## **Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic groups**

17. Black, and minority ethnic groups or those of other white backgrounds account for 13% of the county's population (varying from 7% in West Oxfordshire to 27% in Oxford City).
18. As well as those issues identified in the discussion above, possible impacts of the proposals on different minority groups include:
  - Many minority ethnic groups will be only occasional users of universal services but there are some groups with specific needs such as refugees, recent migrants and victims of racial harassment. A possible risk to this group is around proposals to alter the school improvement offer and changes to the way schools receive funding for specialist support to speakers of other languages, travellers and others, which in future they will receive directly.
  - People from minority ethnic groups are more likely than average to be in households on low incomes.
19. Mitigation
  - Schools will continue to receive funding to commission services directly thus mitigating the impact of the proposed changes. However there may be some impact on schools with low numbers of ethnic minority young people who therefore struggle to achieve economies of scale.
  - We will use our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and other evidence to ensure that as far as possible we protect service provision for those most in need.
  - The wider provision of personal budgets will provide greater choice in the way all people who use adult social care services are able to meet their individual needs.
20. At this stage we have not identified any particular impacts of our proposals on the groups below, beyond those issues discussed above.
  - **Religion/belief** (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)
  - **Sexual orientation**
  - **Marriage/civil partnerships**
  - **Pregnancy & Maternity**

**Stephen Capaldi Assistant Chief Executive**

Contact Maggie Scott, Corporate Policy Manager, Tel: 01865 816081

**14 Dec 2010**

14 Dec 2010