

Budget 2024/25 Equality Impact Assessment

Overview

This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) assesses the proposed council budget for 2024/25 which is being considered by Council. This EIA specifically assesses the potential impact of the proposal to increase Council Tax, the proposal to increase fees and, the proposal to review the venue and streaming of council meetings. The EIA considers the potential impacts arising from budget management proposals on those with protected characteristics. Given the close links between vulnerability and socioeconomic inequality, the EIA also considers the impact of proposals from this perspective. Torbay ranks the 38th most deprived upper tier local authority in England out of a total of 151 local authorities, according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019.

This EIA does not fully assess Revenue Savings Plans for each department as these will be further assessed as the proposals develop and go through the decision-making cycle independently. Where departments are receiving additional funding, for example, through the Events Reserve, attention will be given to ensure that equality considerations are factored into spending decisions.

The Revenue Savings Plans currently being considered as part of the budget setting and the ongoing management of budget pressures throughout 2024/25 include:

Children's services

- Children Social Care Placement
- Home to school transport

Adult and Community Services

- Integrated Adult Social Care Contract
- Focus on prevention and relief of homelessness

Pride in Place

- SWISCO contract fee
- Optimisation of council assets
- Events

Corporate Services

- Legal services
- Venue and streaming of council meetings

Council Tax

In determining the funding settlement for local authorities, the government has assumed that councils would increase council tax by a maximum of 2.99% with an additional 2% increase for the adult social care precept. In recognition of the ongoing significant spending pressures facing adult social care and to support the integrated arrangement with the NHS, it is proposed that the 2% adult social care precept is charged in 2024/2025.

Recognising the cost-of-living pressures that our residents continue to face, the Cabinet is proposing to increase Council Tax below the government cap with an increase of 2.75% rather than the 2.99% cap. This will allow us to increase the support that is available to support the communities who need it the most and to continue to invest in services while minimising as much as possible the financial impacts for our residents.

Whilst it is not possible to fully mitigate the impact of Council Tax increases, Torbay Council operates a Council Tax Support Scheme which limits the amount of Council Tax that eligible recipients are required to pay to up to 75%. The current Council Tax Support Scheme caseload has been analysed to help identify if there may be an indirect impact on one or more groups with protected characteristics because of the proposed increases to Council Tax. Where available, this information has been included in the evidence for each group of people with protected characteristics below. Other data included within the EIA has been sourced from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Fees and charges

It is proposed that fees and charges across Council services will generally increase in line with estimated inflation for 2024/25, by 4%. This will include car park charges, with increased levels of income offsetting increased prices and cost pressures within the service. There will be some exceptions, in particular planning fees where national rates will result in more significant increases.

Budget consultation

Cabinet published its draft budget proposals in January 2024 for consultation. During the consultation period, feedback was gathered through an online questionnaire and an engagement event held at St Marychurch as from Torbay Council's social media channels. To ensure that those who participate in our engagement activities are representative of the local community was asked for demographic information from respondents to help us identify any patterns in our engagement activities. Where appropriate, data for each protected characteristic has also been included from the budget consultation.

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act	Data and insight	Equality considerations including any adverse impacts	Mitigation activities	Lead department and timeframe
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none">18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old.	Revenue saving plans Due to their overrepresentation as service users, older people could be	Revenue saving plans Services will continue to take a case-by-case approach and person/ child centred approach in	Director of Adult and Community Services and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old. • 27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older. <p>This age profile can lead to significantly higher demand for health and care services tailored towards an older population.</p> <p>Council Tax Support Scheme caseload data Pension age households represent just over 44.7% of the current Council Tax Support caseload.</p> <p>Budget consultation 37.36% of those who responded to the budget consultation were aged 65 or over.</p>	<p>disproportionately impacted by revenue saving plans in Adult Social Care.</p> <p>Due to their overrepresentation as service user children and younger people could be disproportionately impacted by revenue saving plans in Children’s Services especially around home to school transport budget decisions.</p> <p>Council Tax and fees and charges Older people may be disproportionately impacted by increases to Council Tax and fees and charges due to the increased likelihood of them experiencing poverty during retirement. Younger people may be disproportionately impacted by increases to Council Tax due to the increased likelihood of them experiencing low earnings.</p>	<p>their delivery of services to ensure that individuals receive support tailored to their individual needs and circumstances. To ensure that equality is fully considered, individual decisions will be further assessed as proposals develop and go through the decision-making cycle independently. In addition, where relevant existing council policies will continue to be followed to ensure that service delivery is equitable.</p> <p>Council Tax and fees and charges A Council Tax Support Scheme is in place which limited the amount that eligible applicants are required to pay to 75%. The Exceptional Hardship Fund is also available to provide financial support to eligible applicants facing exceptional financial hardship.</p>	<p>Director of Children’s Services to assess the impact of budget savings within their departments.</p> <p>Financial Services Continue to raise awareness of the Council Tax Support Scheme.</p>
<p>Care experienced individuals</p>	<p>Torbay has a higher proportion of young people with care experience when compared to the rest of the Southwest and England.</p>	<p>Revenue saving plans Due to their overrepresentation as service user children and younger people could be disproportionately impacted by revenue saving plans in Children’s Services especially</p>	<p>Revenue saving plans Services will continue to take a case-by-case approach and person/ child centred approach in their delivery of services to ensure that individuals receive</p>	<p>Director of Children’s Services to assess the impact of budget</p>

		around home to school transport budget decisions.	support tailored to their individual needs and circumstances. To ensure that equality is fully considered, individual decisions will be further assessed as proposals develop and go through the decision-making cycle independently. In addition, where relevant existing council policies will continue to be followed to ensure that service delivery is equitable.	savings within their departments
Carers	At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care. Although, it is generally accepted that the 2021 Census under-identified carers. Torbay has a much higher than average number of carers providing over 20 hours of care. Torbay is the 6th highest in England for carers undertaking 50+ hours of care. Unpaid carers require support to help deliver this care and to look after their own health and wellbeing. Extensive and ongoing engagement has taken place with local carers. In addition, the National Carers' Survey shows that carers' quality of life is	<p>Revenue saving plans Due to their overrepresentation as both direct service users and service beneficiaries' carers may be disproportionately impacted by revenue saving plans in Adult Social Care and Children's Services provisions.</p> <p>Council Tax and fees and charges Carers may be disproportionately impacted by increases to Council Tax and fees and charges due to the increased likelihood of them experiencing poverty.</p>	<p>Revenue saving plans Services will continue to take a case-by-case approach and person/ child centred approach in their delivery of services to ensure that individuals receive support tailored to their individual needs and circumstances. To ensure that equality is fully considered, individual decisions will be further assessed as proposals develop and go through the decision-making cycle independently. In addition, where relevant existing council policies will continue to be followed to ensure that service delivery is equitable.</p> <p>Council Tax and fees and charges</p>	<p>Director of Adult and Community Services and Director of Children's Services to assess the impact of budget savings within their departments</p> <p>Financial Services Continue to raise awareness of the Council</p>

	deteriorating year on year which is mirrored in Torbay.		A Council Tax Support Scheme is in place which limited the amount that eligible applicants are required to pay to 75%. The Exceptional Hardship Fund is also available to provide financial support to eligible applicants facing exceptional financial hardship.	Tax Support Scheme and to ensure that equality is considered.
Disability	<p>In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness. This was significantly higher than England (17.3%) and South West (18.6%), the difference was particularly marked in those stating that their day-to-day activities were limited a lot.</p> <p>Council Tax Support Scheme caseload data Around 2% of all working age households receive a Disability or Severe Disability Premium.</p> <p>Budget consultation Of those who responded to the budget consultation, 15.38% said that they had a disability. 84.62%</p>	<p>Revenue saving plans Due to their overrepresentation as service users people with disabilities may be disproportionately impacted by budget management decisions in Adult Social Care and Children’s Services provisions.</p> <p>Council Tax and fees and charges People with disabilities may be disproportionately impacted by increases to Council Tax and fees and charges due to the increased likelihood of them experiencing poverty.</p> <p>Venue and streaming of council meetings People with disabilities may be disproportionately impacted by the decision to change the venue of the council’s meetings as they may find it more difficult to travel to in person meetings.</p>	<p>Revenue saving plans Services will continue to take a case-by-case approach and person/ child centred approach in their delivery of services to ensure that individuals receive support tailored to their individual needs and circumstances. To ensure that equality is fully considered, individual decisions will be further assessed as proposals develop and go through the decision making cycle independently. In addition, where relevant existing council policies will continue to be followed to ensure that service delivery is equitable.</p> <p>Council Tax and fees and charges A Council Tax Support Scheme is in place which limited the amount</p>	<p>Director of Adult and Community Services and Director of Children’s Services to assess the impact of budget savings within their departments.</p> <p>Financial Services Continue to raise awareness of the Council Tax Support Scheme and</p>

	<p>of respondents said that they did not have a disability.</p>		<p>that eligible applicants are required to pay to 75%. The Exceptional Hardship fund is also available to provide financial support to eligible applicants facing exceptional financial hardship.</p> <p>Venue and streaming of council meetings Meeting dates will continue to be published in good time to encourage maximum attendance. Minutes of the meeting are published online so that those unable to attend can stay informed of Council decisions. Consideration will be given to ensuring that any alternative venues are accessible and that reasonable adjustments are put in place where required.</p>	<p>to ensure that equality is considered.</p> <p>Corporate Services to ensure that Council meetings remain accessible.</p>
<p>Gender Reassignment</p>	<p>In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay’s community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.</p>	<p>Revenue saving plans People with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment may disproportionately impacted by reductions in Adult Social Care and Children’s Services provisions if the ability to put in place appropriate and considered care and support is limited. Due to the limited data collected locally, it is not possible to fully understand the possible impacts on this group of service users.</p>	<p>Revenue saving plans Services will continue to take a case-by-case approach and person/ child centred approach in their delivery of services to ensure that individuals receive support tailored to their individual needs and circumstances. To ensure that equality is fully considered, individual decisions will be further</p>	<p>Director of Adult and Community Services and Director of Children’s Services to assess the impact of budget savings</p>

			assessed as proposals develop and go through the decision making cycle independently. In addition, where relevant existing council policies will continue to be followed to ensure that service delivery is equitable.	within their departments.
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	There are no expected adverse impacts anticipated.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	Venue and streaming of council meetings Those who are pregnant or recently had a child may be disproportionately impacted by the decision to change the venue of public meetings as they may find it more difficult to travel to in person meetings.	Venue and streaming of council meetings Meeting dates will continue to be published in good time to encourage maximum attendance. Minutes of the meeting are published online so that those unable to attend can stay informed of Council decisions. Consideration will be given to ensuring that any alternative venues are accessible and that reasonable adjustments are put in place where required.	Corporate Services to ensure that Council meetings remain accessible.
Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of	Revenue saving plans Revenue savings plans in Adult Social Care and Children's Services provisions may disproportionately impact people from different cultural backgrounds if the ability to put in place culturally appropriate and considered care and support is limited.	Revenue saving plans Services will continue to take a case-by-case approach and person/ child centred approach in their delivery of services to ensure that individuals receive support tailored to their	Director of Adult and Community Services and Director of Children's Services to

	<p>Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.</p> <p>Budget consultation 97.14% of those who responded to the budget consultation described their ethnic background as White, 0.57% as Asian or Asian British, 1.14% as Black or Black British and 1.14% as being mixed or of multiple ethnic groups.</p>	<p>Council Tax and fees and charges People from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds may be disproportionately impacted by increases to Council Tax and fees and charges due to the increased likelihood of financial insecurity.</p>	<p>individual needs and circumstances. To ensure that equality is fully considered, individual decisions will be further assessed as proposals develop and go through the decision making cycle independently. In addition, where relevant existing council policies will continue to be followed to ensure that service delivery is equitable.</p> <p>Council Tax and fees and charges A Council Tax Support Scheme is in place which limited the amount that eligible applicants are required to pay to 75%. The Exceptional Hardship fund is also available to provide financial support to eligible applicants facing exceptional financial hardship.</p>	<p>assess the impact of budget savings within their departments</p> <p>Financial Services Continue to raise awareness of the Council Tax Support Scheme and to ensure that equality is considered.</p>
<p>Religion or belief</p>	<p>64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.</p>	<p>Revenue Savings Plans Revenue savings plans in Adult Social Care and Children’s Services provisions may impact people from different cultural backgrounds if the ability to put in place culturally appropriate and considered care and support is limited.</p>	<p>Revenue saving plans Services will continue to take a case-by-case approach and person/ child centred approach in their delivery of services to ensure that individuals receive support tailored to their individual needs and circumstances. To ensure that equality is fully considered, individual decisions will be further</p>	<p>Director of Adult and Community Services and Director of Children’s Services to assess the impact of budget savings</p>

			assessed as proposals develop and go through the decision making cycle independently. In addition, where relevant existing council policies will continue to be followed to ensure that service delivery is equitable.	within their departments.
Sex	<p>51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male</p> <p>Council Tax Support Scheme caseload data Based on current data there is a higher percentage of working age women claiming Council Tax Support 4,048 (61%) when compared to their representation in the Torbay population 71,493 (51.31%). There are 1,842 lone parents receiving Council Tax Support, which represents 28% of all working age households. 1,703 or 92.4% of lone parent households are women.</p> <p>Budget consultation 50.55% of those who responded to the budget consultation were male and 43.96% were female. 5.49 per cent of respondents preferred not to provide this information.</p>	<p>Council Tax and fees and charges Females may be disproportionately impacted by increases to Council Tax and fees and charges due to the increased likelihood of lone parent households experiencing poverty.</p>	<p>Council Tax and fees and charges A Council Tax Support Scheme is in place which limited the amount that eligible applicants are required to pay to 75%. The Exceptional Hardship fund is also available to provide financial support to eligible applicants facing exceptional financial hardship.</p>	<p>Financial Services Continue to raise awareness of the Council Tax Support Scheme and to ensure that equality is considered.</p>

<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.</p>	<p>Revenue saving plans Revenue savings plans in Adult Social Care and Children’s Services provisions may impact people from LGBT+ communities if the ability to put in place appropriate and considered care and support is limited. Due to the limited data collected locally, it is not possible to fully understand the possible impacts on this group of service users.</p>	<p>Revenue saving plans Services will continue to take a case-by-case approach and person/ child centred approach in their delivery of services to ensure that individuals receive support tailored to their individual needs and circumstances. To ensure that equality is fully considered, individual decisions will be further assessed as proposals develop and go through the decision making cycle independently. In addition, where relevant existing council policies will continue to be followed to ensure that service delivery is equitable.</p>	<p>Director of Adult and Community Services and Director of Children’s Services to assess the impact of budget savings within their departments</p>
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