

Equalities Impact Assessment – Council Tax

Decision makers should have due regard to the public sector equality duty in making their decisions. The equalities duty is a continuing legal duty and is not a duty to secure a particular outcome. Where appropriate the equalities impact will be revisited on each of the projects and/or savings proposals as they are developed. Consideration of the duty should precede the decision to implement them.

The statutory grounds of the public sector equality duty are found at Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and are as follows: A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of Disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include steps to take account of Disabled persons' impairment or long-term health condition.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Tackle prejudice,
- Promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.

The relevant protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil partnership

In addition to the above, the Council also recognise those who are 'care experienced' as being a protected characteristic.

The Council must give due regard to its equalities duties, in particular with respect to general duties arising pursuant to Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

When making any decisions about growth, savings, and investment the Council must have due regard to the need to advance equality, in particular, to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.

An analysis of the proposal to increase Council Tax levels is detailed below.

Analysis of the impact of a Council Tax increase of 2.99% and applying the Adult Social Care precept of 2%.

The Council is obliged to set a balanced budget and council tax in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992. For 2025/26, a balanced budget is proposed based on investment in services to mitigate continuing inflationary, demand and demographic pressures, with prioritisation being given to the most vulnerable groups, savings and strengthening financial resilience.

The Council proposes to apply the maximum increase assumed by central government in the Local Government Finance Settlement of 4.99%; of which 2.99% is core Council Tax and 2% is the social care precept.

This is in line with government assumptions on Core Spending Power for local authorities. The increase is estimated to generate an additional £4m of council tax in 2025/26, with the intention of using the additional resources to help balance the budget. By increasing Council Tax, the Council can prevent reductions in services to residents and in so doing can continue to mitigate against adverse impacts facing individual households.

A 2.99% increase in Council Tax is proposed and the application of a 2% adult social care precept. These increases are modelled by the government in their spending

power calculations for local government. This will take the average Band D Council Tax from £915.37 to £961.04.

The percentage increase will be applied to all bands of council tax, as required by law. This will impact on all residents who are eligible to pay Council Tax. The average increase in cost per week on a Band D property is £0.88p. Since Council Tax is applicable to all properties it is not considered that the increase targets any one group; rather it is an increase that is applied across the board. At the same time because the increase is applied to all properties it is not possible to exempt any group.

The impact of Council Tax can be mitigated through the Local Council Tax Support scheme and other exemptions and discounts.

Protected Characteristics

AGE

The age of the liable person is not recorded for council tax purposes, but as per the ONS Mid-year population estimates¹, there were 186,176 residents who live in the borough. Of those in the council's population in 2023, 73.5% were of working age (16-64), and 10.8% who are 65 and over.

Eligible pensioners receive support under the Local Council Tax Support scheme.

Pension age claimants () are protected by law from any amendments under a local scheme and therefore continuation of the scheme will have a neutral impact upon them. For couples, both members of the couple must be pensioners.

The minimum age for receiving Local Council Tax Support is linked to the minimum age for being liable for council tax (which is 18), so residents younger than this will not be affected.

DISABILITY

The current scheme provides a maximum CTS of up to 100% for claimants who are classified as falling into the protected category.

The following people are classed as protected under the current scheme:

- Entitled to a disability premium, severe disability premium, enhanced disability premium or carer premium when their award is calculated
- Entitled to a disabled earnings disregard, a Disabled person's reduction for Council Tax purposes, war disablement pension or war widow's pension
- Classified as a Care Leaver under the age of 25
- Lone parents with a child under five years of age.

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationestimatesforenglandandwales/mid2023>

Those that currently fall into the protected category can receive up to 100% reduction in their council tax. Many of the customers who fall into the protected category under the council's CTS scheme will fall into the protected disability characteristic.

GENDER REASSIGNMENT

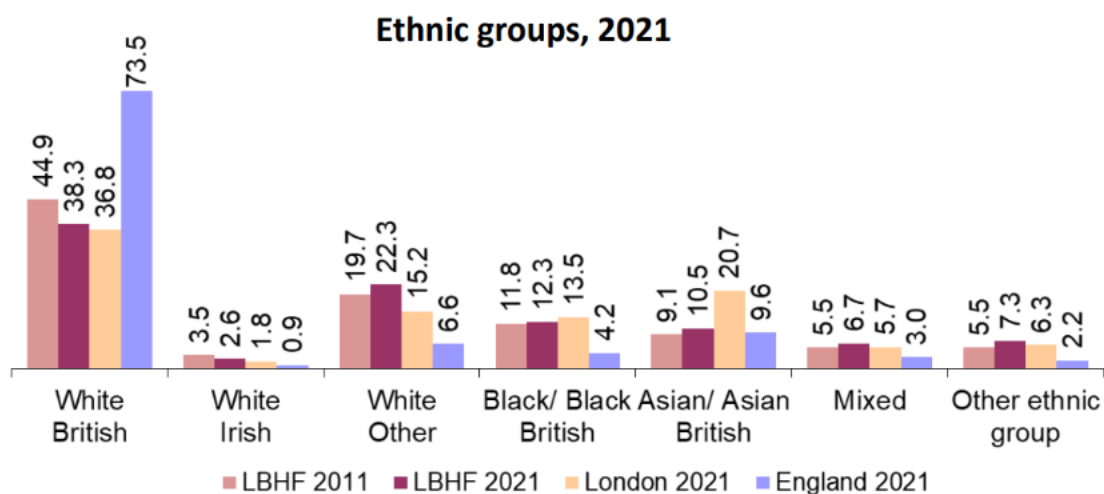
There is no Council Tax data on gender reassignment

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

Pregnancy or maternity status of the liable person is not recorded for council tax purposes. Those who are expectant or new parents may benefit from the protection of specific services for families, children and education that the proposed increase will deliver.

RACE

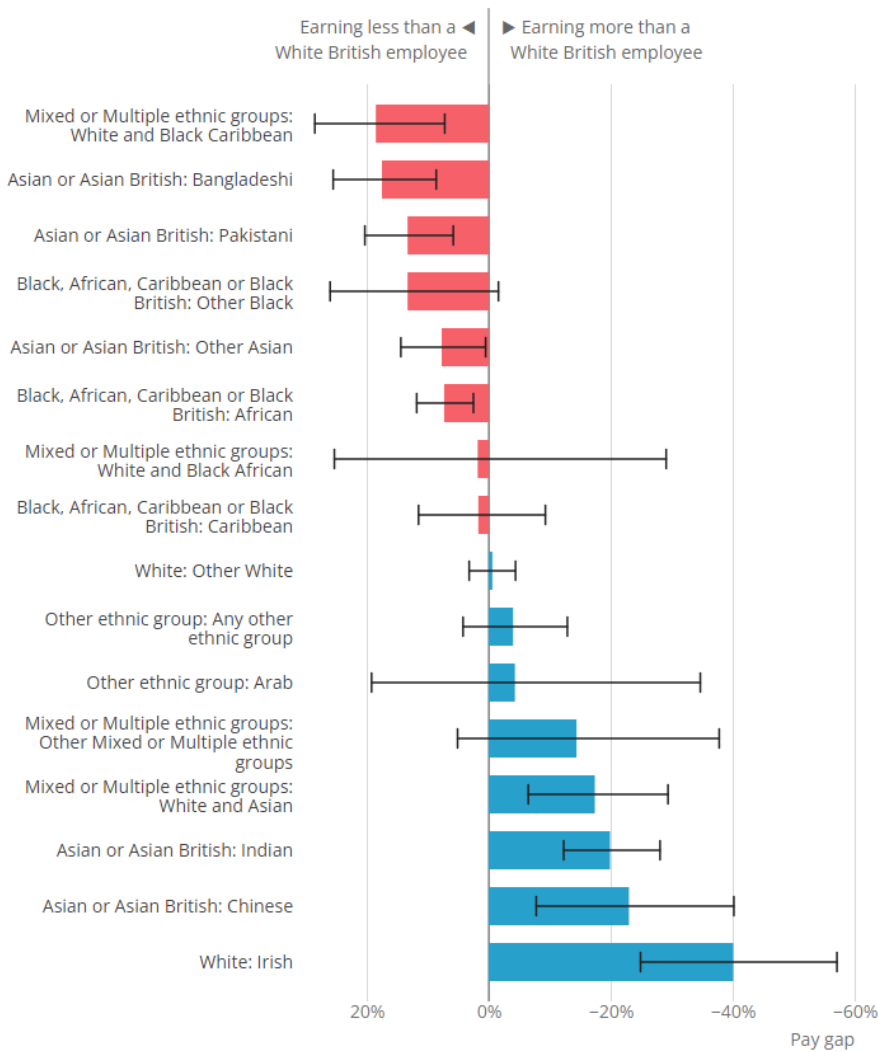
The council is an ethnically diverse place with 61.7% of residents identifying as "non-White British".



The race of the liable person is not recorded for council tax purposes, but there is no reason to believe that the increase will not negatively impact on any ethnic group disproportionately. Nationally according to the ONS, those from Bangladeshi and Pakistani backgrounds, as well as those from Black African and Caribbean backgrounds are more likely to earn less than those from a White British background.

Raw pay gaps, 18-category ethnicity, England and Wales, 2022

— 95% confidence interval



Source: Annual Population Survey from the Office for National Statistics

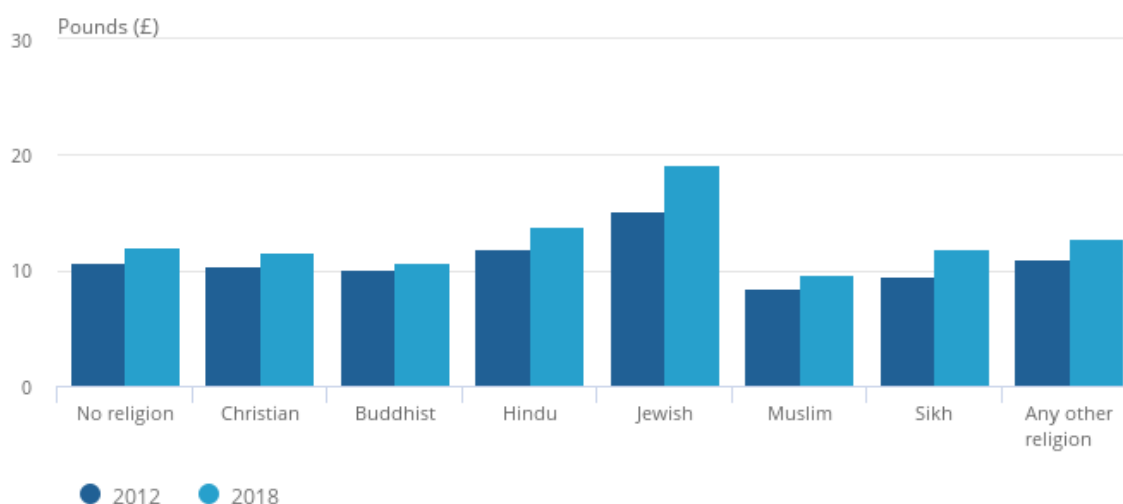
To mitigate the potential impact on those groups, those eligible for assistance for the council’s Council Tax Support Scheme which provides support with payments of council tax to low-income households in the borough. are encouraged to do so.

RELIGION OR BELIEF

The religion of the liable person is not recorded for council tax purposes, but there is no reason to believe that the increase will not negatively impact on any religious group disproportionately.

Nationally according to the ONS, those who identify themselves as being Muslim are likely to earn less than other religious affiliations and beliefs.

Median hourly pay of employees by religious affiliation, England and Wales, 2012 and 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

To mitigate the potential negative impact on those groups, those eligible for assistance for the council's Council Tax Support Scheme which provides support with payments of council tax to low-income households in the borough. are encouraged to do so.

SEX

Approximately 53.2% of the borough are females, with 46.8% recorded as male as per the mid-year census.

The sex of the liable person is not recorded for council tax purposes, but there is no reason to believe that the increase will impact either sex disproportionately.

Statistically according to the ONS, as at April 2024 the median pay for all employees was 13.1% less for women than for men and are more likely to work part-time or in lower-paid jobs. This means that an increase in council tax can disproportionately affect women, especially single mothers and elderly women living alone.

To mitigate the potential negative impact on those groups, those eligible for assistance for the council's Council Tax Support Scheme which provides support with payments of council tax to low-income households in the borough. are encouraged to do so.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The sexual orientation of the liable person is not recorded for council tax purposes, but there is no reason to believe that the increase will impact disproportionately.

MARRIAGE OR CIVIL PARTNER

The marital status of the liable person is not recorded for council tax purposes (except for those who are eligible for single person discounts), but there is no reason to believe that the increase will impact those who are married or in civil partnerships disproportionately.

Council Tax Exemptions and Discounts

Some properties are exempt, or qualify for a discount, from Council Tax. The different classes of exemptions/discounts are listed below.

Occupied Properties with only the following residents:

- a) full time students (they must complete an application form and return it to us with a council tax certificate from their place of study).
- b) severely mentally impaired people.
- c) a foreign diplomat who would normally have to pay Council Tax.
- d) people who are under 18.
- e) members of a visiting force who would normally have to pay Council Tax.
- f) elderly or disabled relatives of a family who live in the main property, in certain annexes and self-contained accommodation.

If there is only one other resident in the property who does not fall into one of the above categories, then the property will receive a 25% discount rather than be exempt. If there are more than two such residents, then the property will neither be exempt nor receive a discount.

Unoccupied properties

- g) owned by a charity are exempt for up to six months.
- h) empty due to resident receiving care in a hospital or home elsewhere.
- i) empty as resident has been sent to prison.
- j) empty as resident has moved to care for someone else.
- k) empty awaiting probate and for six months after probate is granted.
- l) has been repossessed.
- m) is the responsibility of a bankrupt's trustee.
- n) is waiting for a minister of religion to move in,
- o) empty by a student whose term-time address is elsewhere,
- p) empty because it is against the law to live there, including from 1st April 2007 where a planning condition prevents occupation.
- q) empty as it forms part of another property and may not be let separately.

Pitch or mooring

- r) that doesn't have a caravan or boat on it is also exempt.

Those who are care experienced up to the age of 25 are now exempt from having to pay Council Tax. As well as exemptions for in-house foster carers and special guardians. This is in addition to over 13,000 households who currently receiving Council Tax support in Hammersmith and Fulham.

Those who feel they are entitled to an exemption are encouraged to contact the Council and information on how to do that is provided by the Council when Council Tax Bills are issued. Support for people struggling with their Council Tax bill is also offered through advice centres.

The liability for Council Tax is summarised below:

Total dwellings in the borough	94,867	100%
Reductions:		
Exemptions (mainly students, includes care leavers and vacant properties)	(3,257)	(3%)
Council Tax support claimants (elderly & working age on low income, including those with other discounts)	(13,080)	(14%)
Discounts only (primarily single person discount 25%)	(21,135)	(22%)
Dwellings liable for 100% of Council Tax	57,395	61%

People Department Growth and Savings Proposals

Children's Services Growth Proposals 2025/26

Travel Care and Support Demand - £519,000

Officers have assessed that the proposed budget growth will have a positive impact on groups that share protected characteristics and in particular age and disability, as children and young people are already receiving provision, and this will continue to be provided. Approved growth will allow the Council to continue to respond to growing demands and meet its obligations under published travel care policies.

Early Intervention Family Hubs - £173,000

Officers have assessed that the proposed budget growth will have a positive impact on groups that share protected characteristics, making it simpler for families to access a wide range of council services. The hubs will allow the council and its partners to support all children and young people from pre-birth to adulthood, and their families, through earlier intervention. Family Hubs act as a single point of access to help families navigate and receive the support they need when they need it.

Investment in Attendance Services - £243,000

It is expected that this proposal will have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics. Investment in statutory responsibilities to work with school partners to remove barriers to good attendance recognising attending schools is a protective factor for children and young people.

Investment in Front Line Social Work - £458,000

It is expected that this proposal will have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics. Whilst the proposal seeks to review the operating model and skills mix, it is not expected that any changes will negatively impact the provision and services available for children and young people. Whilst it may result in a change in worker for a small number of young people and families this is common within business as usual with well-developed processes and controls in place to mitigate the impact on children and young people. Any disruption will be short term. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of any restructure process to ascertain any potential impact on staff.

Children's Services Saving Proposals 2025/26

In-borough High Support Placements - £217,000

It is expected that these proposals will continue to have a continued positive impact on groups that share protected characteristics as there will be no change to

placements for children and young people because of savings identified. This proposal will particularly impact on young people who are currently looked after or leaving the care system, and young people at risk of homelessness, by providing them with a supportive home whilst they build the skills required to move on into independence.

Supporting post 19 care leavers to independence (from 2026/27) - £96,000

It is expected that this proposal will continue to have a continued positive impact on groups that share protected characteristics. There is a clear pathway to independence, providing young people with substantial support including key worker, social care, and housing support. Young people will only be moved to independence when deemed appropriate and will require approval at Housing Panel which considers young people's individual needs. This is because additional floating support will be provided to post 19 care leavers to ensure that their transition into the Housing pathway is successful and to encourage independence.

Expansion of Semi-Independent Living (SIL) places - £310,000

It is expected that these proposals will have a positive impact on groups who share protected characteristics as there will be no change to placements for children and young people because of savings identified. This proposal will particularly impact on young people who are currently looked after or leaving the care system, and young people at risk of homelessness, by providing them with a supportive home whilst they build the skills required to move on into independence. We will expect provision to be tailored to meet needs, for example by having female-only spaces and creating LGBTQ-friendly provision.

Supporting Families to Stay Together and Preventing Family Breakdown - £310,000

It is expected that these proposals will have a positive impact on those with protected characteristics as there will be no negative impact/change to placements for children and young people because of savings identified. This proposal will provide intensive support for families and young people to reduce conflict or avoid family breakdown, enabling families to build resilience. Support will be tailored to the individual needs of the young people and their families. Support arrangements will be planned in conjunction with other work being carried out with families and acts as a part of a package of support offered to the family.

Shared Service Staffing Efficiencies - £116,000

It is expected that this proposal will have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics. Whilst the proposal seeks to review the operating model and skills mix, it is not expected that any changes will negatively impact the provision and services available for children and young people.

The investment may result in a change in worker for a small number of young people and families this is common within business as usual with well-developed processes and controls in place to mitigate the impact on children and young people. Any disruption will be short term. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of any restructure process to ascertain any potential impact on staff.

Travel Care and Support (Bus contract and Travel Training) - £200,000

Officers have assessed that the proposed savings will have a positive impact on protected groups and in particular age and disability, as creative alternatives to travel care such as the phased transfer of travel training and efficiencies in casework planning will promote independence, aligned to a key priority within our SEND strategy to promote successful preparation for adulthood.

Social Care Savings Proposals

Review care costs with NHS Continuing Health Criteria (CHC) as people with very high needs are discharged from hospital – savings proposal of £0.100m

This proposal has a **positive** impact on our residents that share protected characteristics as CHC can apply to any resident across health and social care. It also allows eligible residents to receive the care and support they require from the NHS without charge.

Focus on prevention to further promote independent living including promotion of services and support provided in the local area by the voluntary and community sector - savings proposal of £0.300m

This proposal has a **positive** impact for those with shared protected characteristics as the service re-design aims to promote independent living through improving the process of signposting residents to the range of services and support provided in the local area by the voluntary and community sector. ASC provides a level of support to residents through welfare checks and through links to a range of support available locally through volunteers and the wider voluntary and community sector.

Further increased take-up of Direct Payments to improve choice and control for residents – savings proposal of £0.200m

This proposal has a **positive** impact on groups that share protected characteristics and in particular Disabled people as Direct Payments (DP's) are key enablers for Independent Living giving people choice and control over how they meet their assessed needs. The approach to DPs in Hammersmith and Fulham has been co-produced with residents in line with recommendations of the Disabled People's Commission (2017) and an independent review of DPs in Hammersmith and Fulham (2018).

Increasing choice and flexibility to access meals – savings proposal of £0.050m

In line with our choice and control principles, residents are choosing to order online or make other independent meals arrangements. This change in resident activity enables the delivery of this saving. This proposal has a **neutral** impact on groups that share protected characteristics

Social Care Investment Proposals**Adults Care Packages - Baseline budget pressures in Residential & Nursing Placements and in Supported Living Accommodation with the full year effect in 2024/25 of all residents receiving care services and supporting the care market – investment proposal of £2.8m**

The Adult Social Care (ASC) budget is under severe pressure due to (a) an ageing population with an increased acuity of care needs (b) the increasingly complex needs of Disabled residents with learning difficulties (including young people reaching adulthood, (c) increasing number of residents with higher acuity needs being discharged from hospital and being supported by the community, (d) the increased demand on services and support from residents with mental health issues. This proposed funding will have a **positive** impact for residents requiring assessed needs with physical support, learning difficulties, and mental health needs as there is additional funding to partly meet the new care needs in Residential & Nursing care homes, and Supported Living Accommodation.

Some of the proposed growth will be to support the Social Care Market from April 2025 on the additional cost impact of the increases in the London Living wages, Employers National Insurance contributions and business operational costs.

Place Department Investment and Growth Proposals

Continued investment in prevention of Violence Against Women & Girls - £250,000

This additional ongoing investment will enhance the support provided to victims, and those at risk of becoming victims, of violent crime (particularly women and girls), and the prevention of this type of crime. The service is specifically designed to be inclusive of all women, including transgender women, and non-binary individuals. It therefore has a positive impact on groups that share protected characteristics (and particularly on age, sex and gender reassignment).

Continued investment in the Law Enforcement and Gangs teams - £3.075m

This additional ongoing investment will ensure the continuation of the Law Enforcement and Gangs teams, whose purpose is to improve safety and the feeling of safety and prevent crime across the borough. Although the Law Enforcement Team is a universal service, there to protect all residents, businesses and visitors to the borough, it is believed that this additional ongoing investment has a positive impact on groups that share protected characteristics. Particularly those groups that are at greater risk of becoming victims of crime (such as women and girls) or those that are disproportionately disadvantaged by obstructions on the highway (such as those with mobility issues). The continued investment in the Gangs team is also believed to have a positive impact on those with protected characteristics, such as age, given the focussed work the service does with children and young people.

Align waste contract budget with service provision - £1.8m

This additional investment in the waste collection and street cleansing service is believed to have a neutral impact on those with protected characteristics as it is a universal service from which all residents benefit.

Additional investment in Climate Change projects and activities - £120,000

This additional investment may have a positive impact for certain protected groups. For example, older people with poor health are more at risk of being adversely affected by the impact of climate change and poor air quality.

Enhanced maintenance of bookable sports facilities to improve standards - £60,000

This additional investment in sports facilities is believed to have a neutral impact on those with protected characteristics as it is a bookable service that is available to everyone. It will have a positive impact on Disabled people where any works improve accessibility (although works required to improve health and safety, including accessibility issues, are already prioritised within the service).

Additional investment in Upstream London Industrial Strategy - £250,000

This additional one off investment may have a positive impact for certain protected groups. For example, age, race and sex, as it could enable improved employment opportunities in industries that might be typically underrepresented by young or older people, women, or people from multiethnic backgrounds.

Reversal of prior year one off growth - specialist expertise to support development of the Industrial Strategy - £25,000 budget reduction

There is no service impact as a result of this budget change, which therefore has a neutral impact on groups with protected characteristics.

Place Department Savings Proposals

Enhanced specialist enforcement of environmental street scene crime - £150,000

The purpose of this specialist service is to improve street cleanliness and reduce health and safety risks relating to environmental street crime (such as fly tipping, littering and obstructions on the public highway). Although this is a universal service, there to protect all residents, businesses and visitors to the borough, it is believed that this has a positive impact on groups that share protected characteristics. Particularly those groups that are disproportionately disadvantaged from obstructions on the highway (such as those with mobility issues). An equalities impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the options appraisal and decision process.

Additional external income for CCTV - £30,000

This budgetary saving is to be delivered through new external funding, with no impact on the current service delivery model. It is believed that this proposal has a neutral impact on groups that share protected characteristics as there are no planned service changes, and this service is provided to all residents, businesses and visitors.

Waste disposal - targeted shift from general waste to recycling - £300,000

This budgetary saving is to be delivered through a sustained reduction in overall waste disposal tonnages, along with a targeted shift from general waste to recycling. It is believed that this proposal has a neutral impact on groups that share protected characteristics as the Council collects waste and recycling from every household in the borough.

Introduce time banded commercial waste collections - £50,000

The introduction of time banded commercial waste collections is believed to have a positive impact on Disabled groups, as it should restrict the number of obstructions (waste presented for collection) on the highway to a reduced number of occurrences, making it easier for those with mobility issues to move around the borough more safely.

Review fees and charges - £500,000

This budgetary saving is to be delivered through a review of fees and charges to ensure at least full cost recovery. It is believed that this proposal has a neutral impact on groups that share protected characteristics, as all customers are charged equally based on the goods/services purchased, apart from registered charities and community groups who receive discounts in some areas.

Review street lighting asset inventory - £150,000

This budgetary saving is to be delivered by ensuring improved efficiency in street lighting energy payments (ensuring that payments are aligned to the existing number and type of streetlights). This will not impact service provision, and therefore is believed to have a neutral impact on those with protected characteristics. Although not directly as a result of this saving, street lighting is an effective aid in designing out crime, and so has a positive impact on those that are at greater risk of becoming victims of crime (such as women and girls and older people).

Additional income from highways assets - £200,000

This budgetary saving is to be delivered through securing new external income from contractors that make use of the Council's highway assets (such as electric vehicle charging points, and attachments to lamp columns). It is believed that this has a neutral impact on groups that share protected characteristics.

Enforcement of Advertising board licences - £50,000

Unlicensed advertising boards positioned on the public highway can cause obstruction and present health and safety risks. Enhanced enforcement and regulation of their use is expected to have a positive impact on Disabled people, particularly those with mobility issues, who may be disproportionately disadvantaged by obstructions on the public highway.

Additional sports bookings income from enhanced facilities - £100,000

It is expected that there will be increased income generating potential following the major refurbishment and upgrade of Linford Christie Stadium and the enhanced maintenance of bookable sports facilities across the borough. It is expected that this income will be generated through a combination of increased usage and a review of fees and charges. It is believed that this has a neutral impact on groups that share protected characteristics, as these facilities are available to all, and all users are charged equally according to an agreed schedule of charges.

Review sports bookings discounts - £50,000

The removal of existing sports bookings discounts (for those users who are members of other sporting bodies) will regularise charges for all users. It is believed that this has a neutral impact on groups that share protected characteristics.

Review sports bookings administration - £50,000

This is a back office saving and will not affect front line service delivery. As such, it is believed that this proposal has a neutral impact on groups that share protected characteristics.

Review Home Library Service - £64,000

It is proposed to review the current operational arrangements for this service so that it can be provided in a more efficient way. This service is currently delivered to a relatively small number of users, the majority of whom have mobility or other health issues which make it difficult for them to visit a library. An equalities impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the options appraisal and decision process.

Café franchise in libraries - £20,000

This saving is to be delivered through securing new external income from the provision of a new café franchise in libraries. Libraries already provide an accessible, warm, safe and sociable space for users which will be further enhanced by the introduction of a café franchise. It is believed that this proposal has a positive impact on those with protected characteristics, particularly based on age and disability as well those who might be socially isolated.

Non-domestic property portfolio master plan - £100,000

This saving is expected to have a neutral impact on groups with protected characteristics as it relates to making the Council's non-domestic property portfolio more efficient. Any specific proposals to change the existing use or tenancy arrangements of currently occupied buildings will consider an equalities impact assessment as part of the proposal and decision.

Review discretionary Planning charges - £175,000

This budgetary saving is to be delivered through a review of discretionary Planning fees and charges to ensure at least full cost recovery. It is believed that this proposal has a neutral impact on groups that share protected characteristics, as all customers are charged equally based on the services purchased.

Homebuy matching and marketing service - £75,000

This budgetary saving is to be delivered through the introduction of a fees for the Homebuy service, to ensure at least full cost recovery. It is believed that this proposal has a neutral impact on groups that share protected characteristics, as all customers are charged equally based on the services purchased.

Housing Solutions Investment and Growth Proposals

Increase in Temporary Accommodation Households in more expensive accommodation - £1.2m

An increase in the use of more Bed and Breakfast (B&B) and B&B annexes as Temporary Accommodation (TA) for homeless households at more costly rates combined with constraints in the supply of private sector leased (PSL) accommodation is resulting in additional costs for the Council's Temporary Accommodation service.

It is expected that this proposal will have a positive impact on groups that share protected characteristics as the budget growth will fund the increasing cost of homelessness within the borough and assist in having a positive impact on the cohort. The budget growth will enable the Council to meet the increased cost of providing temporary accommodation for homeless households. A mitigation strategy is in place to ensure homeless households that the Council has a duty towards are placed into suitable but affordable accommodation. This is being achieved through measures including improved procurement of lower cost temporary accommodation and supplementing the supply of properties by discharging the Council's main housing duty into the private rented sector.

Finance and Corporate Services Investment and Growth Proposals

Increase in insurance premiums budget - £425,000

This additional ongoing investment is required to ensure the insurance premiums budget is sufficient to match current expenditure. There have been significant cost increases across the sector in recent years and this investment will address the current pressure being reported. There is no change to the current provision so the proposal will not impact any of the groups that share protected characteristics.

Enhancing corporate and resident anti-fraud measures through the Digital Inclusion Strategy - £124,000

Ongoing investment is required to implement the Digital Inclusion Strategy for the borough. The Strategy vision is for Hammersmith and Fulham to be a more digitally inclusive borough by 2025 (aligned with the Greater London Authority); a place where residents have access to the digital skills, devices and support they need to achieve their aspirations. The proposal is for a digital inclusion programme manager and resource budget to be allocated to ensure the ambitions set out in the strategy are delivered. There are no direct negative equality implications for groups who share protected characteristics, under the Equality Act 2010. The implementation of the strategy Individual actions as part of the digital inclusion programme will be evaluated appropriately to ascertain any potential negative impact on groups that share protected characteristics and mitigating action to address potential digital exclusion to some groups in particular, age, disability and socio-economic factors prior to delivery, however the overall impact on equalities is expected to be positive.

Finance and Corporate Services Savings Proposals

Local Support Payments - bringing the service in-house and reducing administration costs - £150,000

The proposal is based on the reduction of administration costs in delivering the Local Support Payments scheme by bringing it in-house. Legal implications of bringing the service in-house are currently being investigated. This cannot currently be confirmed and if this is not achievable the budget will need to be supplemented by the Household Support Fund (HSF). This proposal will have a neutral impact on groups that share protected characteristics as the mitigation proposed will ensure that the value of awards are maintained. There is a dependency on HSF round 7 to achieve this.

Digital Advertising - £100,000

An increase in the income target budget for digital advertising based on increasing the rental income in line with contracted annual inflation based increases. There is no change to the current provision so the proposal will not impact any of the groups that share protected characteristics.

Increase in increase in income budgets from a review of Registrars fees and charges - £100,000

An annual review provides Registrars with an opportunity to benchmark against other register offices (particularly those in neighbouring boroughs). This allows the Council to remain competitive and responsive to trends, introduce innovative ideas and create additional streams of income. The proposal to review and benchmark fees and charges annually will not negatively impact groups that share protected characteristics. An Equality Analysis will be undertaken as part of the process to move from paper-based system to electronic registration to consider the potential impacts on groups that share protected characteristics, including socioeconomic factors.

Removal of two vacant Community Engagement posts - £80,000

Removal of two vacant posts in the existing Community Engagement team. This team has three posts in total but has been dormant since COVID. The proposal involves recruiting to one of the posts and removing the other two. A portion of the total saving made will be used to address existing budget shortfalls in the wider Communications team leaving £80,000 to be taken as an MTFs saving. The posts are currently vacant and have not been filled since their creation. However, the proposal will impact the opportunity to improve service provision of Community Engagement from the corporate centre, and impact groups that share protected characteristics. It should be noted that community engagement work is carried out by officers throughout the Council for their respective departments and campaigns.

Reduction in mobile phone contract costs - £80,000

A reduction in contract cost allows for mobile phone budgets across the Council to be reduced in line with reduced charges. There is no impact on services and therefore no impact on groups that share protected characteristics.

Council Wide Savings Proposals

Corporate redesign - £750,000

The Corporate Redesign has reduced the Council from 6 to 3 departments, each of which is led by a director. A £250k saving was planned in 2024/25 and the further £750k is planned to be delivered in 2025/26 from a review of Chief Officer posts in People, Place, and Finance & Corporate Services. It is anticipated that there will be a reduction in posts and there will be redundancies arising from the proposal. Staff consultations will take place and full EIAs will take place as plans are developed.