

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)
Housing and Regeneration Department (HRD)
Budget Proposals 2014/15

1. SAVINGS, EXISTING EFFICIENCIES, AND NEW EFFICIENCY SAVINGS

Additional Pension Fund Service Deficit absorbed by the HRA based on actuarial calculations: £209K

- 1.1 This efficiency relates to the additional contribution to the Council's pension fund deficit required from the Housing Revenue Account rather than the General Fund. This efficiency will not have any significant equalities impact.

Reduction in amenity recharge from the HRA: £50K

- 1.2 This efficiency relates to a reduction in charges to the General Fund from the Housing Revenue Account. The charges relate to the perceived benefit to the General Fund of the amenity provided to residents from the Council's housing land.

Reduction in costs and risks associated with Hamlet Gardens: £150K

- 1.3 This efficiency relates to the reduced procurement cost expected to result following the expiry of an expensive lease for temporary accommodation, and the Council procuring suitable alternative accommodation more cost effectively. This efficiency is not expected to have any significant equalities impact.

Reduction in Housing Benefit Subsidy Loss on HALD portfolio: £20K

- 1.4 Introduction of and changes to Local Housing Allowances (LHA) has restricted Housing Benefits paid to customers. In 2013/14, 546 tenancies where existing rents exceeded LHA rates were identified. A combination of negotiation with landlords to reduce rents charged and seeking suitable alternative accommodation where appropriate has been successful in mitigating this risk. This saving is a budgetary provision that is now no longer required.

Cessation of subscription to Locata choice-based letting system: £70K

- 1.5 The cessation of the use of Locata is consequent upon changes to the Council's Scheme of Allocation. The new "Assisted Choice" model of making accommodation offers provides a more tailored approach to the client's housing needs than did Locata and this change is not expected to have significant equalities implications.

Minor reorganisation of roles and responsibilities with Housing Options: £40K

- 1.6 This efficiency relates to a staffing reorganisation which has been designed to best meet the requirement to deliver the revised housing strategy. This reorganisation shows no adverse impacts on staff with protected characteristics.

Review of income generation opportunities and cost reductions in Adult Learning & Skills Service: £211K

- 1.7 This efficiency results from cost reductions arising from a review of the staffing structure and the identification of income generation opportunities associated with the delivery of learning and skills course provision. The review will have no adverse impacts on staff with protected characteristics.

2 GROWTH

Potential Homelessness Impact of Welfare Reforms: £1,545k

- 2.1 The Council will manage the potential homelessness impact arising from the Government's package of Welfare Reforms through a combination of pro-active mitigating action and through growth. The impact of the Overall Benefit Cap exposes the Council to loss of income in the form of bad debt charges of £740k in 2014/15 on the Temporary Accommodation portfolio. It is anticipated that this budgetary pressure will be managed as a risk (in the range £370k - £740k) in 2015/16 and that this risk will then diminish in 2016/17. Further, the estimated impact on bad debts as a result of the implementation of Direct Payments is £805k in 2014/15, rising to £1,675 for 2015/16 and 2016/17. Any equalities impacts will arise from changes in Government policy. To the extent that the proposed growth item is a financial recognition of a risk of increased homelessness or of the increased use of B&B, the impacts are neutral. To the extent that the growth is mitigation leading to the prevention of homelessness or of the use of B&B, the impact will be positive to BME groups and households headed by women, which tend to be over-represented amongst homeless households.