

Annex I - Surrey County Council Budget 2025/26 – Cumulative Equality Impact Assessment

1. This report analyses potential equality impacts on residents and Surrey County Council staff with protected characteristics of the 2025/26 budget. It also includes proposed actions to maximise positive impacts from the efficiency proposals and minimise negative ones, including plans for mitigation.
2. Through our aspiration to ensure no-one is left behind, as well as [our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion \(EDI\)](#), the council is committed to supporting all residents to have the same chances for a high quality of life and championing the most vulnerable living in Surrey. This includes proactively seeking opportunities to eliminate discrimination and co-designing services with residents and partners, so they are inclusive, accessible and fair.
3. Where a budget efficiency has the potential to impact residents' or staff experience, some Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) have been made available [on the council's website](#) for Members to review where plans are further ahead with their development. Some proposals are at a formative stage, and EIAs will be available at the point final decisions need to be taken on them.
4. This paper must be read in conjunction with the 2025/26 Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 – 2028/29 (MTFS) and the Cabinet report of 28 January 2025. This report will support Members to pay due regard to the equality implications of the proposed budget for 2025/26, as set out in our obligations under Section 149 of the Equality Act (2010).

Summary

5. All available EIAs for 2025/26 budget efficiency proposals have been analysed to understand potential **positive** and **negative** impacts on both **residents** and **staff** with protected characteristics, particularly where they may be impacted by multiple efficiency proposals.
6. The following groups have been identified as potentially being both positively and negatively impacted the most:
 - Older adults and their carers, adults of all ages who are disabled, are experiencing mental health difficulties or have learning disabilities and their carers.
 - Children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and their families.
 - Surrey County Council Officers, particularly women, working in support services and those from lower-income or socio-economically disadvantaged households.
7. The budget overall will also have significant **positive impacts**, particularly where it focuses on expansion of some services, or changes to service that focus on prevention and early intervention. Despite the challenging financial climate facing the council, we will continue prioritising investment decisions that are targeted at supporting the most vulnerable of Surrey's residents, so no-one is left behind.
8. For any potential **negative impacts**, a summary of mitigating activity is provided in paragraph 23. These include measures focusing on ensuring engagement and consultation with service users and staff that will likely be impacted, as well as activity that prioritises early-intervention/ prevention approaches. We will also engage partner organisations when working to implement any efficiencies or planned activity where their support and insight in delivery will be useful.

Our Duties

9. This analysis supports continued due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (and the [updated guidance](#) published on the 18th December 2023, under the previous government), which requires local authorities to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
 - Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
 - Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low
10. Other relevant legislation includes:
- Section 11 of the Children Act 2004, which places a duty on the council to ensure service functions, and those contracted out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
 - Section 343AE of the Armed Forces Act (2021)¹ where we are required to show due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when exercising certain statutory functions in the fields of healthcare, education and housing for current and former members of the armed forces, and their families.
11. Members must read each individual EIA in full and take them into consideration when determining whether to approve the 2025/26 budget. It should be noted that the analysis in these EIAs will be refreshed and updated as new evidence becomes available from consultation and engagement activity and other data sources where appropriate.
12. 'Due regard' also means that consideration given to equality matters should be appropriate in the context of the decision being taken. Members should weigh up equality implications against any other relevant factors in the decision-making process. In this case the most significant other matters are:
- a. the statutory requirement to set a balanced budget.
 - b. the ambitions the council has for Surrey, which are set out in the [Community Vision for Surrey in 2030, The Surrey Way](#) and the [Organisation Strategy 2023-2028](#)
 - c. the [demographic pressures](#) facing the council's services including a rising population with projected increases in the number of older residents and children and young people, and subsequent impacts on demand for council services.

Surrey County Council Efficiency Proposals 2025/26 – Scope of this report

13. All 2025/26 budget efficiencies have been reviewed to determine which proposals require EIAs and which do not. Where delivery plans for efficiencies are more developed, equality

¹ Information on the Armed Forces Act/ Covenant Statutory Guidance:
[Armed Forces Covenant Duty Statutory Guidance.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

analysis has been analysed for this report and summarised here. Full details for each efficiency can be reviewed [on the council's website](#).

14. For efficiency proposals at earlier stages of development, EIAs will be produced for the relevant Cabinet Member and Executive Director, or the whole Cabinet, as required, to consider before making a final decision.
15. Efficiencies that will not directly affect residents or service delivery are not considered in this report. Where efficiencies are linked to staff restructures these may not be published due to the risk of disclosing personally identifiable data used in EIAs. Impacts for these efficiencies are presented at a high level.
16. Some efficiencies are in a formative stage of development, so equality implications at this stage are less clear. As delivery plans for these efficiencies become available, equality implications will be considered and full EIAs completed for decision-makers to consider ahead of implementation.
17. Efficiencies at a more formative stage include:
 - Place:
 - Redesign efficiency
 - Children, Families and Lifelong Learning (CFL):
 - Fostering review
 - Review of admin/ staffing costs and business support functions
 - Short breaks efficiency
 - Resources:
 - Surrey Arts
 - Reduced trade union posts
 - Staffing reductions
 - IT&D licence reductions

Surrey County Council Efficiency Proposals 2025/26 – Cumulative Impact

18. To determine which protected characteristics are most likely to be impacted by the council's budget, the frequencies with which these characteristics appear in EIAs, as well as the nature of those impacts, have been analysed.
19. The table below summarises the **positive impacts** of these budget efficiencies for both residents and staff by protected characteristics:

2025/26 budget efficiencies – positive equality impacts – protected characteristics										
Efficiency	Age	Disability	Race	Sex	Sexual orientation	Gender reassignment	Religion and belief	Pregnancy and maternity	Marriage and civil partnership	Carers ²
Key: + = potential positive impact, blanks = no impact, tbc = more evidence being collected										
Adults, Wellbeing and Health Partnerships										
Strengths-based practice and demand management	+	+	+							+

² Protected by association with others who possess protected characteristics.

2025/26 budget efficiencies – positive equality impacts – protected characteristics										
Efficiency	Age	Disability	Race	Sex	Sexual orientation	Gender reassignment	Religion and belief	Pregnancy and maternity	Marriage and civil partnership	Carers ²
Key: + = potential positive impact, blanks = no impact, tbc = more evidence being collected										
Changing care models	+	+								
Purchasing of care packages	+	+	+				+			+
Assessed charging policies	+	+								
Communities function reconfiguration	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	Tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Children, Families and Lifelong Learning										
Reunification Support Service for Looked After Children	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+
Residential Children's Homes Development in Surrey	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	
Houses of Multiple Occupation	+	+	+	+			+			
Home to School Travel Assistance (H2STA) Policy Refresh	+	+								
Adolescence Service	+									
Families First and Intensive Family Support Service		+								
Staff Recruitment, Retention and Culture programme	+	+	+		+		+	+		
Surrey Adult Learning Review	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Place										
Closure of Bagshot (Swift Lane) Community	No positive impacts identified.									

2025/26 budget efficiencies – positive equality impacts – protected characteristics										
Efficiency	Age	Disability	Race	Sex	Sexual orientation	Gender reassignment	Religion and belief	Pregnancy and maternity	Marriage and civil partnership	Carers ²
Key: + = potential positive impact, blanks = no impact, tbc = more evidence being collected										
Recycling Centre										
Resources										
Customer Transformation		+		+	tbc				tbc	
Review of Data Strategy and Insights Team	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	Tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Twelve15 efficiencies	+	+	+	+	tbc		Tbc			
Organisation Redesign programme	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	Tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Council-wide mobile phone efficiencies	No positive impacts identified.									

20. It is anticipated there may be **negative impacts** on residents and staff with the following protected characteristics:

2025/26 budget efficiencies – negative equality impacts – protected characteristics										
Efficiency	Age	Disability	Race	Sex	Sexual orientation	Gender reassignment	Religion and belief	Pregnancy and maternity	Marriage and civil partnership	Carers
Key: - = potential negative impact, blanks = no impact, tbc = more evidence being collected										
Adults, Wellbeing and Health Partnerships										
Strengths-based practice and demand management	-	-	-	-			-			-
Changing care models		-								-
Purchasing of care packages	-	-								-
Assessed charging policies	-	-								tbc
Communities function reconfiguration	tbc	-	-	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Children, Families and Lifelong Learning										
Reunification Support	No negative impacts identified.									

2025/26 budget efficiencies – negative equality impacts – protected characteristics										
Efficiency	Age	Disability	Race	Sex	Sexual orientation	Gender reassignment	Religion and belief	Pregnancy and maternity	Marriage and civil partnership	Carers
Key: - = potential negative impact, blanks = no impact, tbc = more evidence being collected										
Service for Looked After Children										
Residential Children's Homes Development in Surrey		-						-		
Houses of Multiple Occupation	-	-	-	-			-			
Home to School Travel Assistance (H2STA) Policy Refresh	-	-								
Adolescence Service		-								
Families First and Intensive Family Support Service	No negative impacts identified									
Staff Recruitment, Retention and Culture programme	-	-	-	-						
Surrey Adult Learning Review	-	-	-	-				-		
Place										
Closure of Bagshot (Swift Lane) Community Recycling Centre	-	-								
Resources										
Customer Transformation		-	-	-	tbc		-	-	tbc	-
Review of Data Strategy and Insights Team	-	-						-		
Twelve15 efficiencies	-	-	-	-	tbc		tbc			
Organisation Redesign programme	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc

2025/26 budget efficiencies – negative equality impacts – protected characteristics										
Efficiency	Age	Disability	Race	Sex	Sexual orientation	Gender reassignment	Religion and belief	Pregnancy and maternity	Marriage and civil partnership	Carers
Key: - = potential negative impact, blanks = no impact, tbc = more evidence being collected										
Council-wide mobile phone efficiencies	-	-		-						-

21. Other potential positive and negative equality impacts on **other areas of inequality** are identified below:

2025/26 budget efficiencies – impacts on other characteristics	
Efficiency	Other characteristics
Adults, Wellbeing and Health Partnerships	
Communities function reconfiguration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents facing economic hardship may be more impacted by the reconfiguration. There may be disproportionate impacts on key neighbourhoods as defined in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. These include Hooley, Merstham and Netherne (Reigate and Banstead), Canalside (Woking), Westborough (Guildford) and Bellfields and Slyfield (Guildford).
Children, Families and Lifelong Learning	
Reunification Support Service for Looked After Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More Looked After Children will benefit from returning to their parents where circumstances are suitable and depending on readiness of parents to care for the children. Any additional needs for LACs will be considered during the planning process.
Short Breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Looked After Children with disabilities may have less access to the service from recommissioning the offer.
Adolescence Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some staff posts could be regraded, leading to potential loss of earnings, impacting those on lower incomes. Some staff may also not want or have the flexibility to move to the new service due to increased costs from changing office location.
Surrey Adult Learning Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deleting posts and changes to contractual hours could impact staff on already low salaries. Loss of individual working arrangements could impact individuals' ability to remain in work. Employees with long-term health conditions or on long-term absence may feel isolated or uninformed about the process, or may find securing other employment challenging due to their long-term condition.
Resources	
Customer Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other characteristics that may be impacted by this programme include people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, education and training (literacy) needs, digital exclusion, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, people experiencing homelessness, people with drug or alcohol use issues, people on probation, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and people who live in more rural communities.
Review of Data Strategy and Insights Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff with low numeracy skills may have increased anxiety around expectations on data literacy and be cautious about accessing training opportunities.
Twelve15 efficiencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other characteristics that may be impacted by these efficiencies include those with education (literacy) needs, Looked After Children, young carers, those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further data on these characteristics are required to establish full extent of impacts.
Council-wide mobile phone efficiencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater impacts on staff in lower paid roles and experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, including being required to provide their own personal phones and/or fund work calls if using personal devices. • Staff in lower paid roles also disproportionately female.

22. This analysis concludes that the protected characteristics most likely to be both positively and negatively impacted by the budget are:

- **Older adults and their carers, adults of all ages with physical, mental and learning disabilities and their carers.**

Many efficiencies, particularly in the Adults, Wellbeing and Health Partnerships Directorate, focus on strengths-based practice, supported accommodation solutions and respite for carers to build independence and resilience.

However, it is acknowledged that some of these changes could lead to anxieties on what they mean for individuals and their carers, meaning close engagement in any solutions will be crucial.

Older and disabled residents are also more likely to be digitally excluded compared to the wider population, and may need more support as more services are delivered digitally.

- **Children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and their families.**

The council is investing in key programmes, such as Families First and the Reunification projects, to make sure those children and young people most in need are supported to get the best start in life and good health and wellbeing.

The capital programme also seeks to develop more bespoke accommodation solutions in the county, meaning more children and young people are supported closer to their families and communities, while their needs and progress towards independence are supported.

Some changes may have adverse impacts on children and families, such as those who are no longer eligible for transport under the refreshed Home to School Travel Assistance Policy. While they will be supported with other travel assistance options beyond provision of transport, some families may experience inconvenience, such as increased travel costs.

- **Surrey County Council officers, particularly women, working in support services and those from lower-income or socio-economically disadvantaged households.**

Changes to ways of working in some services could lead to greater opportunities for some staff with protected characteristics. For example, more permanent roles for staff in Children's Social Care (CSC) will offer greater security for people from lower-income households and women, who make up 85% of the CSC workforce. There may also be reduced workplace stress for some staff with protected characteristics, such as neurodivergent staff or those with caring responsibilities, through introducing more efficient systems and tailored working approaches.

However, where staff restructures are needed, over-representation of women in the council's workforce means there is a greater chance they will be impacted. Staff with lower incomes in those teams will also be more greatly personally impacted by these changes.

Changes to working practices and increased use of digital technology means some staff will require more support to adapt than others. This includes people who are more likely to be digitally excluded such as older and disabled staff and people on lower incomes.

23. Further detail on equality impacts for each efficiency can be found on the council's website.

Mitigations

24. In general terms, the council's approach to mitigating impacts has been to adopt one or more of the following:

- a. Putting service users and staff at the heart of service re-design, using co-design, consultation and engagement methods to produce services that are responsive and focus on supporting people that need them most.
- b. Investing in preventative activity and early-intervention measures to help enable better outcomes earlier and avoiding having to resource high-cost intensive activity that leads to greater pressures on our budget.
- c. Undertaking ongoing evaluation of the impacts of changes to services so we can build further evidence, and update our EIAs, on who is affected by them.
- d. Providing tailored information to service users that are impacted negatively by efficiency proposals so they can draw on their own resources or seek further support either from the council or partner organisations.
- e. Increasing opportunities for residents to access council services in new and easier formats, such as by using digital technologies, while ensuring additional support is provided for residents who may need help to adapt to the new formats, such as some older or disabled people.
- f. Ensuring changes to staffing levels or structures are completed in accordance with the council's human resources policies and procedures and take account of the impact these changes have on the workforce profile.
- g. Ensuring staff with protected characteristics are fully supported with training and adjustments so they can access new ways of working as part of the council's transformation and for all staff to be equipped to support residents to do the same.
- h. Where changes are made to digital, infrastructure, provision is made available to ensure staff are properly trained and that adequate support, advice and guidance is available for both staff and service users. This includes support provided by the workplace adjustments service.
- i. Engaging with partner organisations, including the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS), to support potential gaps in services that might be created due to efficiencies.
- j. Working with District and Borough Councils to ensure their Council Tax Support Schemes can assist economically vulnerable households to offset any significant financial difficulties that might arise because of Council Tax increases.
- k. Where physical changes are being made to Surrey County Council premises, or where new sites are acquired, these will be assessed for any accessibility issues, staff and/or residents will be consulted and relevant adjustments commissioned.

25. Further detail on specific mitigations for budget efficiencies can be found on the council's website.

This page is intentionally left blank