

Surrey County Council Budget 2024/25 – Cumulative Equality Impact Assessment

1. This report analyses the potential equality impacts on residents and Surrey County Council staff with protected characteristics arising from setting a budget for the financial year 2024/25. It also includes actions proposed to maximise any positive impacts of budget decisions and minimise any adverse ones.
2. Through [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. To help the council deliver on this commitment, where a decision to change or reduce a specific service or part thereof has been made or is proposed to be made, the relevant Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) have been or, where detailed proposals are still being formulated, will be produced and made available for Cabinet to review.
4. This paper must therefore be read in conjunction with the 2024/25 Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 – 2027/28 (MTFS) and the Cabinet report of 30 January 2024. The information in this report is intended to ensure that Members are able to pay due regard to the equality implications of the proposed budget for 2024/25.

Summary

5. The Surrey Way is our strategic framework and outlines our ambitions and objectives. It provides us with a clearer, more joined up picture of ‘what’ we want to achieve (Our Purpose) and how we plan to deliver that (Our Organisation and Our People) which describe the type of organisation we need to be. Within The Surrey Way, we confirm what is in the Community Vision for Surrey 2030; that our guiding mission is to tackle inequality and ensure that no one is left behind. In addition, our commitments made under the People Strategy to ensure we create a place to work that is inclusive and compassionate, collaborative and trusting, ambitious and outcomes focused, and inventive and dynamic. This purpose informs our decisions and all that we do in our work, meaning that in our budget, every pound spent by the council needs to be used as efficiently as possible to ensure maximum resource available to support Surrey’s most vulnerable residents.
6. Given the scale and complexity of change required to deliver better outcomes while balancing our budget, the EIAs relating to the council’s efficiency proposals for 2024/25 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. The following groups have been identified:
 - a) Older adults and their carers, adults of all ages who are disabled, are experiencing mental health difficulties or have learning disabilities and their carers, and men from ethnic minority backgrounds.
 - b) Children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and their families.

- c) Surrey County Council staff who work in frontline operational roles and roles based in the community.
- d) Surrey County Council officers working in support services.

7. Certain efficiency proposals will lead to more positive outcomes for some of Surrey's residents by either reducing discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics or furthering good relations with other members of the community. For example, improved practice to support looked after children will support them and their families to live better lives, as well as improving the efficiency of services. Whilst not a protected characteristic, looked after children will also benefit by increased capacity of some services. Care leavers may also benefit from greater levels of choice over care and freedom for those who are more able to live independently.
8. The positive impacts identified throughout this report are drawn from the individual EIAs linked to the budget. The budget as a whole will also potentially have significant positive impacts, particularly where it focuses on expansion of some services, or changes to service that focus on prevention and early intervention.
9. Some efficiency proposals are in a formative stage, and as proposals are finalised, the specific equality impacts will be considered by senior officers and Cabinet before any final decisions around implementation are made. As part of this process for approval, additional consultation with affected residents and staff may be conducted and a range of delivery options explored.
10. A summary of mitigating activity which aims to minimise any negative impacts is provided in paragraph 54 and 55 of this report. This includes a range of measures that will focus on ensuring engagement and consultation with service users and staff that will likely be impacted, as well as focusing on activity that prioritises early-intervention/ prevention approaches. We will also look to consult with partner organisations (including district and borough colleagues) when working to implement any efficiencies or planned activity where their support and insight in delivery will be useful.

Our Duties

11. This analysis ensures this council continues to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (and the recently [updated guidance](#) published on the 18th December), which requires them 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.

12. Members are also required to comply with 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.
13. Under the legal duties placed on a local authority by Section 343AE of the Armed Forces Act (2021)¹, we are also 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. This includes ensuring that those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. In addition, it also means that 'special' consideration, or 'positive action', is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have been injured and/ or are bereaved.
14. Members must read each individual EIA (listed in paragraph 18) in full and take their findings into consideration when determining whether to approve the 2024/25 budget. In addition, consideration of equality is an ongoing process, based on evidence from consultation and engagement activity and other data sources where appropriate.
15. 'Due regard' also means that consideration given to equality matters should be appropriate in the context of the decision being taken. This means 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](#), and our ambition for no Surrey resident to be left behind;
 - 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. Increases in these age groups are placing, and will continue to place, additional demands and pressures on adult and children's social care services and local schools.

Surrey County Council Efficiency Proposals 2024/25 – Individual Equality Impact Assessments

16. Officers have reviewed all efficiencies proposed for 2024/25 to determine which proposals require EIAs and which do not. For those changes where residents are most likely to see differences in the way services are delivered, and where the equality implications are well defined at the time of setting the budget, individual EIAs have been made available for review. Other proposals not included in this report where potential equality impacts have been identified, will require the completion of an EIA for the relevant Cabinet Member and Executive Director to take into account before making a final decision.
17. For 2024/25, completed EIAs from Children, Families and Lifelong Learning (CFLL), Customer and Communities (C&C), Adults, Wellbeing and Health Partnerships (AWHP), Resources and the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Directorates

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

have been published. The Environment, Infrastructure and Growth (EIG) Directorate, Resources, and Customer & Communities are indicating that some efficiencies will likely require EIAs in future. For these efficiencies, initial thinking about what the potential impacts might be are included in the Pressures and Efficiencies annex of the MTFS. The Communications, Public Affairs and Engagement Directorate, as well as former Directorates that have now merged into others (including Public Sector Reform (PSR) and Partnerships, Prosperity and Growth (PPG)) have not identified any efficiencies that require an EIA.

18. 12 EIAs have been made available to assist Cabinet and Council to give due regard to the proposals outlined in the budget which can be found [on the Council's website](#). Some of these have been reviewed by Cabinet to inform decision-making previously. The list of efficiencies which have EIAs available for review are:

- Adult Social Care Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25
- Children, Families and Lifelong Learning: Sufficiency Refresh
- Children, Families and Lifelong Learning: Residential Development
- Children, Families and Lifelong Learning: Houses of Multiple Occupancy
- Children, Families and Lifelong Learning: Reunification
- Children, Families and Lifelong Learning: Coming Home/ Big Fostering
- Children, Families and Lifelong Learning: Home to School Travel Assistance
- Children, Families and Lifelong Learning: Early Help – Mentoring/ Family Centres
- Customer and Communities: VCFS Grant Reduction
- Customer and Communities: Libraries 2024/25 Savings
- Surrey Fire and Rescue Service: Fire Cadet Programme
- Resources: Land and Property Facilities Management (FM) Transformation

19. Some efficiencies within the 2024/25 budget will not directly affect residents or service delivery, and therefore are not considered within this report.

20. The following section assesses the proposed efficiencies for 2024/25 in a cross-cutting way and considers the cumulative impact of some of these changes on people with protected characteristics. As part of the EIA process, we also take impacts on wider characteristics not protected under equality legislation (such as socio-economic status) into consideration to ensure we take a more comprehensive approach to equality.

Surrey County Council Efficiency Proposals 2024/25 – Cumulative Impact

21. This equality analysis shows that the groups with the potential to be affected by multiple changes by efficiencies in the 2024/25 budget are:
- a) Older adults and their carers, adults of all ages with physical, mental and learning disabilities and their carers, and men from ethnic minority backgrounds
 - b) Children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and their families
 - c) Surrey County Council staff who work in frontline operational roles and roles based in the community
 - d) Surrey County Council officers working in support services
22. Our aspiration is to look at how different overlapping characteristics affect the experiences of residents, meaning that under each of these headings we have

outlined which specific characteristics are likely to be impacted, and how. Where impacts are intersectional, the relative positioning under the headings outlined above does not necessarily indicate the scale of the impact, or that it impacts that group/characteristic only. We would therefore encourage interested parties to refer to the full EIA documents for more specific and detailed information.

Older adults and their carers, adults of all ages with physical, mental and learning disabilities and their carers, men from ethnic minority backgrounds

23. Through the ongoing transformational changes that are included in the Adult Social Care 2024/25 Medium-Term Financial Strategy, it is anticipated that there will be positive implications for service users, particularly vulnerable adults and their carers. We will build upon people's strengths and help them stay connected to their communities; embed strengths-based practice; maximise the benefit of reablement services; and continue to reshape our learning disability services to be more creative, vocational and community-based.
24. We will continue to move towards a more personalised approach that reduces reliance on institutionalised building-based services. We will improve mental health services and continue our work to embed technology enabled care (including the 'telehealth' and 'telecare') to allow people to remain independent at home with the reassurance they, their family, and those who care for them need. We further anticipate positive impacts as we redesign our front door to provide a seamless and consistent offer and embed a strengths-based hospital discharge-to-assess model so people receive targeted support following their discharge to reduce their long-term care needs etc.
25. However, with the need to save a further £33.3m in 2024/25 (in addition to a budgeted carry forward care package pressure from 2023/24 of £10.3m), it is acknowledged that whilst actions are in place to mitigate and minimise negative impacts it may be difficult to do so in all cases. There are some potentially disproportionate impacts of the proposed efficiencies on older adults; adults with disabilities and their carers; women, who generally live longer and live more years with a disability; and digitally excluded older adults.
26. Following the pandemic and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, young people, in particular young women and those with mental health conditions, may be acutely impacted by efficiencies for mental health services.
27. Black and ethnic minority men tend to also have poorer access to, and uptake of, healthcare for a range of services, including mental health screening and testing. Improvements to the digital information and advice offer and growing staff's local community-based knowledge to deliver appropriate care services are means of mitigating negative impacts.

Potential negative equality impacts for older adults, adults with disabilities and their carers, women, and men from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Some decisions on placements for **older and disabled people** needing residential and nursing care that are offered at a distance may lead to concerns for their family and support network, who may struggle to reach them as easily as before. The lack of connection to family members and existing support networks may have an impact on the emotional and mental wellbeing of those in care. There may also be concern about how care provided by family, friends and community networks can be quality assured

and any safeguarding issues addressed. The shift towards more creative and informal care may generate additional anxiety for people of all ages.
Honest conversations with older people, their families and carers about what ASC can do and what they need to do for themselves. These conversations may be a source of significant stress and anxiety and might have practical difficulties particularly if there are language or cultural barriers .
Increasing demands upon the voluntary, community and faith sector to support people in the community putting them under further pressure at a time when they are recovering from the pandemic and struggling with the demands arising from the cost-of-living crisis. The increasing pressures on the system therefore mean the most disadvantaged, particularly those from lower income backgrounds or in more isolated settings may struggle to receive the support they need.
Carers may be concerned about what these changes mean for them and the people they care for and their wellbeing. They may feel obligated to take on more of a caring role, which could lead to issues in work-life balance and/ or have a more detrimental impact on their health.
Risk of reduced access to information, advice, and services for digitally excluded residents, such as some older people (who are disproportionately less likely to have internet access), those from lower income households and those who live in more rural and isolated locations with poorer quality internet access who do not have access to equipment or are unable to receive support remotely.
Women who typically live longer and for more years with disabilities may be disproportionately affected by the impact of change in services. Young people and, in particular, young women are also at a higher risk of reductions in provision of mental health services and shifts to more informal care may generate additional anxiety for both groups.
Service users who are black or from an ethnic minority background typically have poor access to, and uptake of, healthcare for a range of services, including mental health screening and testing. Changes to how the service engages with residents may have a further negative impact on access and subsequent health outcomes.

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

Looked After Children (LAC)

28. All local authorities have a statutory duty to provide care and accommodation for children looked after in the local area (the 'sufficiency duty'). We operate nine in-house children's homes in Surrey (as of November 2023, with a further two homes expected to open early in 2024). In addition, a number of independent children's homes providers operate homes in the county, with four additional homes registering with Ofsted during 2023 and a further five in different stages of the registration process. Overall, sufficiency of residential children's home placements remains low in Surrey with most children placed outside of the county.
29. This is in the context of national challenges for local authorities to secure residential children's home placements. To address sufficiency and increase capacity in Surrey, we plan to develop new children's homes as part of the Looked After Children Capital Programme, including an additional £25m of investment that is in the pipeline to create up to 10 additional homes in the county and ensure existing homes are fit for the future. Property will be developed in-house with care to be delivered in-house and/or via strategic partnerships with trusted providers. In addition, we are

working to establish new local commissioning arrangements, including block contracts with high-quality external providers of children's homes in Surrey, to secure more of the capacity that is in county for Surrey's looked after children.

30. The Reunification Project further seeks to ensure that children being looked after can return to the care of their parent(s) (or other close relative) at the earliest opportunity if safe to do so and in their best interests. Changing homes is a stressful experience for any child and thus 'Reunification' allows them to return to a stable, consistent environment, with routines they know and understand.
31. One of the key positive impacts of this project is that it promotes better mental health, reduced anxiety, and happier lives for children, particularly those who have additional needs or disabilities, or are neurodivergent. Successful reunification will create long-term savings for the local authority in reduced placement costs for children.
32. There are also positive impacts related to the recognition that children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds or from different cultural and religious backgrounds may find it easier to maintain and build strong community relationships when separation is minimised.
33. The efficiency around the Coming Home project/ Big Fostering is another initiative that will have potential positive impacts on looked after children. The aim of the change is to enable more looked after children to move from outside of the county back into Surrey, as well as more broadly moving residential children's homes into foster placements with families.
34. There will be a number of positive impacts linked to this, not least the benefits for younger people (aged 0-17) having greater levels of choice over placements and where they live, as well as helping looked after children and young people by ensuring they are placed closer to communities and any other family members they might be more familiar with. This aspect in particular will likely be a particular benefit to those from ethnic minority communities, and different religious communities. This additional choice benefits most protected characteristics in a range of ways, but in particular it benefits looked after children and young people with additional needs, as their requirements for accommodation will likely be more acute.

Potential negative equality impacts for children and young people
The main potential negative impact identified for looked after children across these programmes of work is that access issues and suitability of the accommodation may not meet the full needs of disabled children and young people. As supply of accommodation is limited there is a risk that properties that are acquired may not immediately fit the needs of disabled children and therefore may need to be adapted.
There are likely to be accessibility issues for those who are from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds as communication, particularly for those with English as a second language, may become an issue.
Whether or not looked after children have suitable accommodation (for example access to single-sex spaces) may also require further attention as properties and beds are being acquired.
For changes that require people to move to a new area, access to places of worship may also potentially be restricted or made significantly more difficult.

Care Leavers

35. The **houses of multiple occupancy** project aims to create up to 24 beds for care leavers, including former Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, in Surrey using SCC capital funding and commissioning a provider to deliver floating support. Floating support refers to a type of 'in and out' care, where carers provide targeted help as and when, as opposed to constant care.
36. This represents a new accommodation pathway for care leavers that supports both their ability to progress towards independence and provide homes in Surrey for care leavers. There is a financial efficiency associated with this model of delivery as well as supporting care leavers to achieve greater independence and free up capacity for more targeted interventions of those with the highest level of need for specialised care/ interventions.
37. This initiative will enable young people who are more independent to access lower-support accommodation and should also increase access to local accommodation for those with higher support needs. It will also enable better outcomes for younger people aged 18-25, who will develop new independent living skills. The improvement of choice for care leavers will also benefit more people from different cultural, ethnic, or religious background to potentially be closer to their communities, places of worship or extended family.

Potential negative equality impacts for children and young people
There are concerns that some properties may have potential accessibility issues that might not immediately meet the needs of some disabled young people . This could occur where homes identified and made available may not have adequate accessibility support for younger people with additional needs .
Less monitoring of how the services users are doing in their accommodation may make it harder for them to report instances of racism or prejudicial treatment .
As with services relating to looked after children, cultural or language differences may make communication and social cohesion more difficult.
Similar to some issues raised for looked after children, access to appropriate accommodation (such as single sex spaces) may be an issue.

Other children and young people, and their families

38. Back in April 2022, Cabinet agreed to changes which involved both additional investments and efficiencies to the Home to School Travel Assistance Policy to enable the council to discharge its statutory and discretionary powers to provide school and college travel assistance for eligible children and young people. It also aimed to manage increasing costs and demand within resources available. The EIA that accompanied the Cabinet report suggested there were potentially positive and negative impacts based on protected characteristics.
39. Extensive benchmarking with other local authorities was carried out to review other local authorities' home to school travel assistance policies and provision. This established that most local authorities had either never provided for, or have withdrawn, the provision of free home to school transport for children and young people below statutory school age. Most local authorities apply an annual contributory charge to the parents of children and young people in receipt of post 16 home to school transport provision, to support the costs to the local authority for the provision of this transport. Some local authorities have reduced their discretionary

offer and no longer provide travel assistance once a young person is in Year 12 (Post 16 education).

40. The increased use of shared transport as part of this initiative has the potential for positive impacts, by allowing children and young people to socialise with their peers more regularly, helping to improve overall mental health and wellbeing. Physical health and wellbeing may also be improved due to increasing the number of different options made available to travel to school, such as 'Bikeability', cycle training.
41. We are also working towards renegotiating with incumbent providers to reduce the overall cost of services. The Annual Procurement Forward Plan (APFP) Savings in 2024/25 would require reassessment of the need for the service to understand if there are opportunities to streamline the current scope. This includes reviewing if the service is provided elsewhere, if the current level of service is required and if an alternative service can be procured that meets needs at lower cost. We also intend to group services together into a broader prospectus of services which aims to increase competition between providers which in theory should bring about more competitive rates. One area where this will be explored is the provision of services relating to our post-16 cohort within SEND and Education.
42. Moving to contracts for longer durations should broaden the potential pool of providers and encourage more of them to bid for work. This will give providers the time and motivation to innovate within their specialities to bring about efficiencies within their delivery. The approach will require the council to set prices which factor in inflationary uplifts at appropriate intervals to remain attractive to providers. Setting prices with clearly defined inflationary uplifts reduces the need to renegotiate contract values upwards during the term of the contract.
43. Surrey's need to manage the budget effectively is imperative in order to deliver services which meet the needs of all children, and young people in Surrey, whilst ensuring value for money across the commissioned services portfolio. Any reduction in budget is likely to impact the quantity of any service delivered but it is the Council's ambition to redesign services which take advantage of more cost-effective alternative delivery models.
44. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service evaluated a number of their prevention activities in 2023, which resulted in the ceasing of their SFRS Cadet Programme. The programme was designed to support young people in their education and public service life. It was designed according to national standards and pro-social modelling (where supervisors act as a positive and motivating role model). To enable SFRS to consider its impacts on both the public and SFRS, a limited trial of 10 cadets and volunteers was commissioned based at Guildford Fire Station (FS). This pilot came to end in June 2023 and was supported by five volunteers working for SFRS.
45. This efficiency did not impact cadets who were already enrolled, and they received their qualification which was followed by the programme coming to a natural end. Whilst this efficiency does not have any planned activity over the 2024/25 period, this is when the saving will be realised.
46. The efficiency around early help and family support includes the work on Family Centres and Mentoring Recommission. The county-wide mentoring scheme commissioned offer includes two voluntary sector lead providers who work in partnership with two additional voluntary sector partners to offer mentoring support to families that have children between 0-19yrs. These services can be self-referred into

and do not require a referral from Surrey County Council's (SCC) Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA). SCC currently have 11 contracts with providers to deliver this mentoring provision which are due to end on the 31 March 2024.

47. The services' work through family centres provides one-to-one family support and group activities through 21 'Family Centres' and 9 satellite sites that work with families that have children aged between 0-11 years. Between 01 April 2022- 31 March 2023, Family Centres worked with 3,575 children and young people and on average 65% reported that their 'family needs (were) met'.
48. There are a number of anticipated positive impacts associated with these initiatives, including the potential benefits to ensuring long-term support to children, young people and families. This is in part to focus on taking a more localised approach to recommissioning that helps to join up local services, resources and assets (such as buildings) in a partnership model co-ordinated within a District and Borough (D&B) area.
49. This approach will have additional benefits, particularly for disabled younger people and their carers, due to co-locating services making them easier to navigate. Further, the development of community delivery and the use of a wide range of venues will ensure that those with disabilities are able to access in-person provision. The service will also work with providers to ensure that certain types of demographic data will be recorded, to help monitor any unanticipated disproportionate impacts of any planned activity.

8

Potential negative equality impacts for children and young people
Younger children , particularly those who are disabled, may face challenges with accessing their education setting and impacts on health and wellbeing from disruption to existing service provision.
Children of non-statutory school age no longer be eligible for free transport, except in exceptional circumstances.
The alternative ways of travel that have been recommended may not be suitable for children and young people with additional needs .
Changes to the way contracts are procured may result in a reduction of services for all protected characteristics however, the aim is to improve the procurement process itself and not to reduce services. Although recommissioning of services will check 'if that level of service is required', which may see a reduction/change in non-statutory service delivery. EIAs will be produced for each contract on a case-by-case basis.
Younger people from socio-economically disadvantaged households may be disproportionately impacted by a reduction in some services running at their current capacity, which could have secondary impacts on their wider wellbeing.
Any reduction of mentoring services could result in children, young people and families that have lower levels of need either waiting for provision or not being able to access this support.
As demographic/ protected characteristic data on staff is self-reported, there are significant gaps in some services' knowledge over who will or won't likely have disproportionate impacts. This gap in data impacts all staff , but given that is a difference in the makeup of some staff cohorts, changes, restructures or redundancies will potentially disproportionately impact certain groups who are over-represented.

Surrey County Council employees who work in frontline operational roles and roles based in the community

Customer and Communities

50. From 2024/25, the Libraries service is proposing to cease Sunday opening for Walton Library to reduce spend by £86,000. This proposal is most likely to impact typical Sunday visitors, with the potential for disproportionate impact by age – particularly children and young people and older adults² - based on the profile of Surrey Library service users. There is also the potential for impacts on people who use libraries as places of safety, warmth or to access wi-fi technology, such as people experiencing domestic abuse, digital exclusion, homelessness and socio-economic disadvantage.
51. Staff who work in the library on Sundays will also be affected. Younger adults have been identified as a group potentially affected by this change as they may only be able to work on Sundays due to other commitments, such as college, during the week. We therefore may not be able to offer them alternative hours they can commit to working. It is possible some staff may be made redundant from a proportion of their role.
52. An efficiency is proposed to reduce the grant amount across voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) infrastructure organisations by £100,000 in 2024/25. We are working with these organisations to develop new ways of working to reduce reliance on local authority grants and help increase match funding from other sources. We are working in partnership with organisations, such as the Community Foundation for Surrey (CFS), to support affected organisations through the transition period in 2024/25. We are investing £100,000 in a CFS Strategic Transformation Fund to enable organisations impacted to transform their ways of working. Separate one-off funding will also be used for the transition phase to off-set core grant reductions.
53. Currently, identifying the exact protected characteristics impacted by this work is challenging as infrastructure organisations support various aspects across the sector. As we progress with these plans, and support organisations to manage the transition, quarterly monitoring will take place with those organisations to understand emergent equality impacts and the EIA will be updated as new information becomes available.
54. The Customer and Communities Directorate will also seek to rationalise staffing structures as a means to reduce costs faced by the service. This will involve the removal of some posts across C&C services including Trading Standards, Community Investment & Engagement, Communities & Prevention, and Libraries & Culture. Staffing reductions will be done in prioritisation and relevant needs for services. Once decisions have been made on which roles are impacted, a full equality analysis will be completed.

Surrey County Council officers working in support services

Resources

64. As part of an organisation-wide review of the Council's operating model, the Resources Directorate will undertake a strategic analysis of services that make up the Directorate to understand requirements on the future shape, skillsets and processes needed to meet future demand.

² Surrey County Council Library and Cultural Services Strategy 2020 - 2025

65. It is anticipated that most services and functions will be in scope. As solutions are developed, and future requirements specified, full equality analyses will be developed where appropriate. The Council's Change Management Policy will also be observed at all stages of these reviews, so all staff and managers get the support they need.
66. While it is currently unclear how services will be affected, nearly three quarters of the Directorate's staff identify as female. This means that there is a higher chance of female staff being disproportionately affected by the operating model review. As changes are implemented, impacts based on gender, as well as other protected characteristics, will be monitored and appropriate support delivered to affected staff.

Potential negative equality impacts residents and staff of all ages facing socio-economic disadvantage
Changes to library opening hours may disproportionately affect some service users more, particularly typical Surrey library users such as children and young people and older adults . Other residents who may use libraries for safety, warmth or access to technology will be unable to use Walton Library on Sundays. This includes people experiencing domestic abuse, digital exclusion, homelessness and socio-economic disadvantage .
Potential changes to any funding arrangements with our VCFS partners, could result in disproportionate impacts for those who rely on their services. Those who receive support from these particular organisations tend to be disproportionately from marginalised groups, such as people of all ages with disabilities , those from ethnic minority backgrounds, and often are people facing socio-economic disadvantage .
Some people who share protected characteristics and rely on certain services provided in the community are at risk of being in households with lower incomes than others. This includes ethnic minority residents, who are disproportionately represented among lower-income households.
Whilst a full analysis on the impacts related to the rationalisation of staff in C&C is still to be carried out, women , and in particular women over the age of 50 , are over-represented within the Directorate compared to the Surrey and SCC average. Research from the ONS indicates that people aged 50 or over find it much harder to get back into work after being made redundant ³ .

Mitigations

55. Services have developed a range of mitigating actions that seek to offset impacts of efficiency proposals on residents and staff with protected characteristics. Further details on specific mitigating activities linked to individual efficiencies can be read in the EIAs listed in paragraph 18 of this report.
56. In general terms, the council's approach to mitigating impacts has been, or will be as strategic principles are developed into more formative proposals, 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. This means bringing together the right people early in the process to understand the issues and then deciding what can be done collectively to improve outcomes.

³ ONS: [Reasons for workers aged over 50 years leaving employment \(September, 2022\)](#)

- 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. Services will also work to anticipate and mitigate against any potential negative externalities through corporate/ operationalise risk analysis.
- 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, to refine and strengthen the mitigations that are in place and to document and respond to unforeseen negative impacts.
- 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. Some services who have acknowledged gaps in staff and service user data and have committed to improving the way this data is recorded to help monitor any unanticipated impacts of planned activity associated with changes.
- e. Increasing opportunities for residents to access council services in new and easier formats, such as through the use of digital technologies. Additional support will be provided for residents who may need help to adapt to the new formats, such as some older or disabled people. Work is also ongoing across services to ensure that our digital services are as accessible as possible, including improving the language to the appropriate reading age and ensuring style and layout are implemented in a way that is inclusive of those with additional needs.
- f. Ensuring any changes to staffing levels or staff 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. In particular, there may be positive career opportunities for staff with protected characteristics as a result of this activity.
- g. Ensuring that staff with protected characteristics are fully supported with training and adjustments as appropriate to allow them to access the new ways of working the transformation proposals give rise to and for all staff to be equipped to support residents to do the same.
- h. Engaging with partner organisations, including the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS), to help support potential gaps in services that might be created as a result of efficiencies. These charities, voluntary and partner organisations have proven themselves effective in identifying where issues can arise in current service provisions as well as in their ability to deliver early intervention work.
- i. Working with District and Borough Councils to ensure their Council Tax Support Schemes are able to assist economically vulnerable households to offset any significant financial difficulties that might arise as a result of Council Tax increases.
- j. Where physical changes are being made to Surrey County Council premises, or new sites are acquired, these will be assessed for any accessibility issues and staff and/ or residents will be consulted. Who is engaged with and how will likely depend on the changes in question, but services will ensure that all potential impacts are considered, that workplace adjustments are in place and

that buildings are accessible to all. This will include things like buildings having ramps, appropriate entrances, hearing loops (where possible), are accessible from public transport (where possible), and staff are trained in how to support those who need additional assistance.

Conclusion

57. As part of our continued efforts to ensure the council remains financially sustainable, we are changing the way we deliver some services to residents. Some of these changes require an EIA to identify any groups with protected characteristics who may be impacted by these proposals. When taking a decision to set the budget, Members must use this paper so they can discharge their duty to pay due regard to the equality implications of agreeing this package of efficiencies to balance the budget.
58. This report has summarised the main themes and potential impacts on residents arising from efficiency proposals for the 2024/25 year, as well as mitigating activity. The council continues to go through significant transformation, and we will continue to consider how these changes affect the most vulnerable residents and how we can support them to ensure that no-one is left behind.
59. The equality analysis completed for the efficiency proposals is a moving picture and detail on the groups likely to be impacted will be iterated as more details on delivery are considered. Services will put in place their own arrangements to monitor the impacts of changes against what was scoped in the EIAs and will develop their own actions plans to implement mitigating activity.
60. **This report must be read in conjunction with each individual EIA**, as provided in Background Papers to the Cabinet Budget report.