

Colchester Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment Form - An Analysis of the Effects on Equality

Section 1: Initial Equality Impact Assessment

Communities Theme in the Council Budget Strategy

- 1. What is the main purpose of the changes?** The Council Budget Strategy is to ensure that we can live within our financial means. With the impact of Covid19 on our finances the Council has had to quickly review its financial position and consider expenditure and income. The approach taken has been to look at 'themed' areas of work and the Communities Theme specifically looks at how we work with our communities and if there are opportunities to reduce our spending or increase income opportunities by working in a different way in the future.
- 2. What main areas or activities does it cover?** The Specific changes relate to two key areas, one is linked to the Locality Budgets that Ward Cllrs receive each year and the other is linked to the resources within the Community Development team at the Council.
- 3. Are there changes considered in this assessment?** The main changes are that the Locality Budget is to be halved from £2,000 per Councillor to £1,000 per Councillor and we will not replace the Community Development Team Apprentice paid for from the Councils Staffing Budget from April 2021. These changes will save the Council £64,000 annually which will help towards balancing the budget following the impact of loss of income and increased expenditure from the Covid19 pandemic.
- 4. Who are the main audience, users or customers who will be affected by the policy?** For the Locality Budget changes the main audience are local communities who would generally be invited to apply for this funding for a range of Community Activities from Community events through to small improvements to community facilities. The Apprentice change is unlikely to directly impact on one main audience or set of customers.
- 5. What outcomes do you want to achieve from the policy?** The key outcome is the efficiency of £64,000 to help the Council balance its finances but the change will also result in more consideration to how the remaining Locality Budget money is spent, considering with Ward Cllrs the inequalities that exist and if funding can be used in a different way in the future. In some cases, some Ward Cllrs have struggled to find ways to spend their locality budgets so the impact will be felt more by some than others.

This section helps us to identify any disproportionate equality impacts. Please indicate below whether the change is likely to particularly benefit or disadvantage any of the 'protected characteristics'.

Locality Budgets have generally been spend across the whole Borough and on a range of different things over the years including new benches, events, activities, blub planting, supporting community groups and to help improve community facilities.

The money is generally very small amounts, usually between £300 to £500 per grant, decided and paid by Ward Cllrs. The change will have a small impact on Communities access to funding but it is not spend on the same thing each year and Ward Cllrs still have access to £1000 so have the ability to minimise any impact on those with protected characteristics by being more selective on how they spend their grants in the future. Officers will work with Ward Cllrs to mitigate any possible impacts by considering future spend very carefully to maximise the positive outcomes for those who need the help the most.

11. If you have identified any negative impacts (above), how can they be minimised or removed?

- As above in relation to Locality Budgets – so better analysis of need and inequalities for each Ward Cllr to consider more focussed spending of the remaining grant within their Ward areas.
- Other funding is available for Communities to assist with some of the areas that have traditionally been funded by locality budgets and officers will work with Local Ward Cllrs and Communities to seek alternative sources of funding.
- Use of Asset Based Approaches within communities, so looking at what strengths and assets they have to help themselves and positively influence the improvements communities want to see happen.
- Working with the voluntary sector and other partners to enable and support communities into action and to find other, more sustainable sources of funding and help,.
- With regard to the Apprenticeship role, one off funding has been secured to employ an Apprentice in a different role within the team so the only negative impact, losing the opportunity to help improve the skills and employability of an individual has been mitigated by this new opportunity. The Apprentice role that will not be replaced will have ended naturally and they have also secured alternative employment.

12. Could the policy discriminate¹ against any 'protected characteristic', either directly or indirectly²? (No)

¹ The Council has a general duty to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation because of their 'protected characteristic' whether on grounds of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity; religion or belief; sex (gender), sexual orientation, or marriage and civil partnership. Indirect discrimination occurs when an apparently neutral provision or practice would nevertheless disadvantage people on the grounds of their 'protected characteristic'.

Summary and findings of Initial Equality Impact Assessment

13. Please put a tick in the relevant box to confirm your findings, and what the next step is:

Findings	Action required
A. No negative impacts have been identified <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and finish.
B. Negative impacts have been identified but have been minimised or removed – yes	Sign off screening and finish.
C. Negative impacts could not be minimised or removed <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.
D. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.

14. Name and job title of person completing this form: Lucie Breadman, Assistant Director for Communities

15. Date of completion: 08th September 2020

² If you answer 'yes' to question 11 (above) you will need to complete the following section *and* go on to complete Section 2 in order to conduct a full Equality Impact Assessment.