

Appendix F: Budget 2024/25 Cumulative Equalities Impact Assessment

1. Purpose of Report

This report assesses the equalities impacts of the savings proposals set out in the Council's Budget for 2024/25.

It provides an assessment of the likely impacts of the budget savings on residents and employees with 'protected characteristics' as defined by the Equality Act 2010. It also considers the impacts on those who could be considered at a disadvantage in accessing opportunities or services (such as people with language difficulties or from low-income households), which is also a consideration in Islington's Equality Impact Assessment process.

The report assesses the overall impacts of the suite of savings proposals (cumulative impact) set out in the 2024/25 budget on residents and staff. It also provides a more detailed review – by specific groups and by directorate – of the cumulative impacts of previously agreed savings set out last year, and in this new budget, on specific groups, and the actions to reduce or mitigate these impacts.

There are significantly fewer savings proposals this year than there were last year, as the identification and delivery of savings gets more challenging every year.

2. Context

Our commitment to fairness and equality

Our [Islington Together 2030](#) strategy sets out the Council's vision to make Islington a more equal place – to create a place where everyone, whatever their background, has the same opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life.

Challenging inequality, racism and injustice is mission critical for Islington. We cannot realise our vision of creating a more equal borough for all our residents without tackling the inequality that continues to hold back some communities. Our 'Challenging Inequality Programme' sets out our long-term ambition for challenging inequality, inequity, racism and promoting inclusion. We are determined to improve life chances for our residents and staff, ensuring no-one is left behind.

We want to challenge inequality in every capacity available to us, taking advantage of our position as an employer, strategic leader and as a service provider/ commissioner.

Our EQIA Process

Equality impact assessments are an important part of ensuring our services are responsive to the needs of our diverse communities and help tackle inequality, creating a fairer more equal borough for all.

In Autumn 2021, we introduced a new EQIA process to improve efficiency and quality assurance. Each of the savings' proposals set out in this budget have been considered through an equalities lens, with initial screening of all proposals completed via our EQIA Screening Tool. Where the screening tool identified significant potential (or perceived) negative or positive impacts, a full

Equalities Impact Assessment was completed to mitigate any risks or maximise potential benefits. The Equalities Team was closely involved in all aspects of this process, working with services to identify potential or perceived impacts.

These individual assessments have been used to inform this overall cumulative assessment of the impacts of our budget savings proposals on residents and staff and on any specific group.

Our priorities

Over the next decade we will maintain a relentless focus on tackling inequality and eradicating poverty in our borough. To bring this vision to life, we have five clear missions outlined in our Islington Together 2030 Plan:

- Child Friendly Islington: Islington is a place where all children and young people are rooted in a community where they feel safe, can thrive and are able to be part of and lead change.
- Fairer Together: everyone in Islington who needs extra help can access the right support for them at the right time and in the right place.
- Safe Place to Call Home: everyone in Islington has a safe, decent affordable place to call home.
- Community Wealth Building: there is a sustainable inclusive, and locally rooted economy in Islington, where wealth is fairly-shared and residents and businesses feel they have a stake in their community.
- Greener, Healthier Islington: people in Islington can live healthy and enjoy London's greenest, cleanest and healthiest neighbourhoods.

Our legal duties

Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a legal duty to have “due regard” to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity and
- foster good relations between different groups.

The precise wording of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), together with a list of the ‘protected characteristics’ defined in the Act, is set out at **Annex A**.

We are required to demonstrate fulfilment of our duty to pay ‘due regard’ in the decision-making process and, as such, we need to understand the effect our policies and practices have on equality. Although the Council is not legally obligated to reject savings or growth proposals that could have negative impacts on any particular groups, it must carefully and with rigour consider the impact of its proposals on the PSED, take a reasonable and proportionate view about the overall impact on particular groups, and seek to mitigate negative impacts where possible.

In addition, at Islington we go above and beyond our legal duties to consider impacts on those who could be considered at a disadvantage in accessing opportunities or services. This includes people from low-income households, carers, migrants, refugees and people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), and those with low literacy levels.

Our diverse population

Islington is an Inner London borough with a diverse population. Data from our 2022 [State of Equalities](#) report paints a profile of Islington as a place and of our diverse communities:

- **Population:** The population of Islington is estimated to be 245,827 in 2022. This is an increase of approximately 19% (39,189 people) since 2011. It is estimated that our population will grow by a further 2.7% (6,600 people) over the next 10 years. Islington is the most densely populated local authority area in England and Wales, with 16,699 people per square km. This is almost triple the London average and more than 38 times the national average.
- **Age:** Islington has a relatively young population: 9% of the population is aged over 65, compared with an average of 12% in London and 19% in England. Twenty-eight per cent of children under 16 live in low income households, and 61% of secondary school pupils are eligible for the deprivation Pupil Premium, a grant aimed at raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
- **Ethnicity:** Islington is a diverse borough, with Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic groups accounting for 32% of our population. 32% of residents are estimated to be born outside of the UK, compared to a national average of 14%.
- Children growing up in Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic households in Islington are more likely to be living in poverty in comparison to white children.
- **Sex:** The proportion of men and women in the borough is roughly 50/50. However, there are variations in life expectancy between men and women. Life expectancy at birth for men in Islington is 79.5 years, whilst women in Islington have a longer life expectancy of 83.2 years.
- 93% of lone parents with dependent children are female. This is significant because unemployment rates among lone parents are far higher than the wider population - this is likely to affect household income and therefore deprivation levels. In Islington 56% of lone parents are not in employment while just 21% are in full-time employment – half the figure for the wider population.
- **Disability:** In May 2021, there were 5,157 Disability Living Allowance claimants in Islington. The estimated number of Islington residents with a disability in 2022 is 34,416, or 14% of the population. There are 3930 people in Islington living with a serious mental illness, the fourth highest prevalence of serious mental illness in London.
- National research has demonstrated that disabled jobseekers need to apply for 60% more jobs than their non-disabled counterparts.
- **Socio-economic:** Islington is the most deprived borough in London for income deprivation affecting children, and fourth highest for income deprivation affecting older people. Poverty is an issue in every part of the borough: almost every ward includes one of the most deprived LSOAs in Islington. Finsbury Park is the most deprived ward. As mentioned above, children in Black and Minority Ethnic households or in lone parent households, and households with a disabled person, are more likely to be living in poverty.
- **Housing:** Islington has a relatively high proportion of social housing. Those in social housing are more likely to be on low income, though increasingly we are seeing households in the private rented sector struggling. Both social and private sector tenants who have moved to Universal Credit have seen increased levels of debt, which may put their tenancies at risk.

The impact of the cost-of-living crisis

The cost-of-living crisis has put further pressure on households who were already struggling. In Islington there are more than 11,500 families living in fuel poverty, and 27,400 people in households receiving housing benefit or council tax support. Many households who are just about managing will also soon start to see a decrease in their financial resilience.

Businesses in Islington are closing at the fastest rate since 2017, faced with uncertainty on energy bills and soaring costs for services, labour, and raw materials. In addition, some businesses are already experiencing a drop in consumer spend (e.g., delivery food items) and this is only expected to increase as households reduce discretionary spend. At the same time, the number of businesses carrying debt has more than doubled, initially because of the pandemic, and now increasing because of increased supply and borrowing costs.

In September 2022, the Council declared a “cost of living emergency” and pledged to do all it can to help the tens of thousands of residents likely to be hit hardest by spiralling energy and food costs and soften the blow for local small and medium-sized businesses.

Despite ongoing pressures on local authority funding, the Council continues to provide a comprehensive range of support for vulnerable and low-income households and to support local businesses and communities. In addition to the core support offer, a range of additional support is being delivered or planned, including ensuring any government grants are targeted as effectively as possible in support of the cost-of-living crisis and distributed as quickly as possible.

[Islington’s response to the cost-of-living crisis](#) sets out the full range of actions which Islington is taking to protect residents and businesses.

The scale of the challenge

This year, as in previous years, we have made every endeavour to protect those in greatest need and at most risk. Where possible, savings focus on optimising efficiencies in service delivery. However, some reductions in services have been unavoidable. Where this is the case, we have assessed the potential impact on groups with protected characteristics. In Islington, with high levels of poverty and deprivation, we also consider socio-economic disadvantage when assessing the impacts of changes to policies and services.

3. Equalities Impacts: overall cumulative impact

The overall assessment is that there is a **potential neutral impact** because of the budget savings proposals for 2024/25. Much of this is due to the current climate we find ourselves in with the cost-of-living crisis impacting the lives of our residents. Whilst many of these decisions are taken nationally by government, it is the council that feels the brunt of them with even less funding to support those most in need.

The Chancellor’s Autumn statement will be presented on the 22nd of November 2023, with measures that will impact citizens throughout the United Kingdom; however, the nature of these impacts are yet to be determined. The savings proposed as part of this budget are essential to be able to continue to deliver services to the most vulnerable. But within this challenging context any savings impacting residents are likely to exacerbate their difficult circumstances.

The budget sets out **24** new proposals, which will deliver savings of around **£5.551m** in 2024/25. This is in addition to **£5.269m** savings for 2024/25 agreed in last year’s budget.

The majority of savings for this year will come from council tax and tariff fee rises or changes, service restructures, maximising use of the various funding streams the Council has access to, and making better use of technology. These will result in 'back office' changes with small impacts on staff. Whilst we do not expect residents to be significantly impacted, there may be knock on impacts produced by these changes.

The majority of these impacts were not deemed significant enough to progress to a full EQIA, or had robust enough mitigation in place to mitigate fully against any negative impacts. However, 8 of the new savings proposals submitted for 2024/25 progressed to a full EQIA, and 2 will require a full EQIA at a later stage.

The 8 full EQIAs identified potential negative impacts on:

- Residents
- Service users
- Staff

Impacts on residents

There are a small number of changes to universal services and charges, and these have the potential to affect all residents. The key proposals are:

- Extend controlled parking zone enforcement
- Extend controlled parking zone hours
- Council Tax and Adult Social Care precept increase
- Contact Centre Rationalisation

The proposal to extend parking zone enforcement involves increasing the maximum parking charge for electric vehicles from £2 to £4. It also involves reversing a decision to provide free visitor vouchers and flat rate parking charges in two controlled parking zones (CPZ) and adding a £1 surcharge to all short stay parking sessions purchased during 10am to 1pm in all CPZ's except those with part day restrictions. The times that parking controls are active also being extended in 3 CPZ's in the south of the borough, from 6.30pm to midnight.

These proposals will affect all residents but will disproportionality impact residents that are reliant on cars as a means of travel. The Environment and Commercial Operations Division will mitigate the impact of extending parking zone enforcement and parking controls by signposting residents to the resident voucher scheme. Residents with parking permits will also be exempt from paying additional fees.

Residents will see a small increase in their Council Tax, including the Adult Social Care precept. However, the most vulnerable residents will continue to be protected. Older people and those on low incomes remain eligible for subsidised Council Tax through our Council Tax Support Scheme, and Islington's Resident Support Scheme continues to provide a safety net for those in crisis and facing severe financial hardship.

Residents who contact Islington Council should hopefully have a better customer experience because of the contact centre rationalisation project, which seeks to merge all three contact centres into one. Running parallel to this, staff members within Access Islington will be upskilled to

deal with enquiries relating to different subject matter so residents can be effectively signposted to the correct support if they are not automatically directed to the relevant department.

The council has also taken steps to protect vulnerable residents through its response to the cost of living crisis, which has included work with voluntary sector partners to maximise the borough's collective offer, including the rollout of warm spaces, a communications campaign to increase awareness and take up of the support which is available to residents, and a core offer of financial and other support (e.g., the work of the Income Maximisation team).

Impacts on specific service users

Most of the proposed changes will have no impact on service users, as the savings focus on contracts, 'back office' staffing, the deletion of vacancies, changes to funding sources, and the removal of excess budgets where there is currently an underspend.

However, four proposals could impact specific groups of service users. The proposals are:

- Review, re-design and re-procurement of the Adult Social Care Wellbeing Service
- Introduction of a charging policy for Assistive Technology
- Implement eligibility and charging policies for people receiving legacy Supporting People services
- Repurpose school premises houses

The proposal to review and re-design the Wellbeing Service will have a positive impact on services users within Islington, specifically those over the age of 50 as the service will focus on this group; however, the service will continue to be open to all adults over the age of 18. The proposal seeks to enhance these benefits by aligning with existing Early Intervention and Prevention offers and becoming more outcomes focused.

Both, the introduction of a charging policy for assistive technology and legacy supporting people services will ultimately have a negative impact on service users. To access these services, service users will now have to undergo a financial means assessment to determine their ability to pay for services that they receive from Islington. Depending on income, savings and disability related expenditure, this may be more than what they were previously paying, and they may lose access to specific services that were previously free if they decide to not pay for them.

Whilst these policies will negatively impact users, the financial means assessment is designed to ensure that income-deprived service users are still able to access the services they require from the council at a rate that is affordable to them. This is made possible due to the charging scale implemented in both policies, which charge residents based on their relative material circumstances.

The proposal to repurpose school premises houses will have a positive impact on service users who are comprised of foster carers and children in care, with black and global majority children being of particular benefit to this proposal due to their overrepresentation within the care system. The proposal will benefit service users by keeping children in care closer to their local area and services, whilst providing them with suitable and supportive foster carers and accommodation.

Impacts on staff

Most staff savings and efficiencies will come from deleting / not recruiting to vacant posts, so there will be no direct impact on most staff or specific protected characteristics. One proposal could lead to redundancies; however, this would be voluntarily agreed with staff who will be compensated accordingly. These staffing changes are subject to consultation and are not expected to have any negative impacts on protected groups.

Of the proposals that did not progress to a full EQIA, there were potential impacts – with mitigating action in place – on the following groups:

- Service users
- Residents
- Staff

The potential impacts experienced by staff have been elaborated on in Section 6: Staffing Impacts, of this report. However, as these impacts were not significant enough to progress to a full EQIA, they have been outlined in section 5 in the summary of all proposals.

Overall equalities impact assessment

Looking at the totality of the savings to be delivered in 2024/25, the impacts on Islington residents and service users are assessed as follows:

- The proposals could negatively impact residents who are more likely to face parking zone enforcement and parking controls, which will increase the cost of parking for residents. Additionally, residents will be impacted by the council increase the council tax rate. These impacts will be mitigated through parking vouchers to reduce the impact of higher parking fees, and vulnerable residents will also be signposted to the Council Tax Support Scheme, Resident Support Scheme, and other initiatives to help mitigate costs and maximise income.
- The proposals may also positively impact service users, specifically adults over the age of 50 and black and majority global children, who are likelier to acquire the needs to of the Wellbeing Service and are overrepresented within the care system, respectively. Other proposals will have a negative impact on service users through introducing charging policies on assistive technology and legacy supporting people services. Service users may have to pay for services that they previously acquired for free; however, due to a charging scale being implemented, service users who have lower salaries and less savings will pay less than those who have more.
- Considering the extremely challenging fiscal situation and the need for services to remain financially sustainable, the conclusion is that the Council's proposals for achieving savings are considered reasonable and have shown due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

4. Equalities groups impacted by savings proposals

This section looks in more detail at the impacts of specific proposals on protected characteristics and on socio-economic disadvantage. It includes proposals from this year's budget that have a potential equalities impact.

Based on individual Equalities Impact Assessments the following protected characteristics are **potentially negatively impacted** by one or more of the savings proposals for 2024/25:

Characteristic	Proposal	Directorate
Age (older people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of a charging policy for Assistive Technology • Implement eligibility and charging policies for people receiving legacy Supporting People services 	<p>Adult Social Care</p> <p>Adult Social Care</p>
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of a charging policy for Assistive Technology • Implement eligibility and charging policies for people receiving legacy Supporting People services 	<p>Adult Social Care</p> <p>Adult Social Care</p>
Socio-economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of a charging policy for Assistive Technology • Implement eligibility and charging policies for people receiving legacy Supporting People services 	<p>Adult Social Care</p> <p>Adult Social Care</p>

There are no disproportionate impacts relating to:

- Race and ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Maternity or pregnancy
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment

5. Savings proposals and impacts – by directorate

This section provides a detailed assessment by Directorate of those savings proposals – both new and existing - that will potentially impact specific groups. This includes proposals that necessitated full EQIAs as well as proposals that only necessitated completion of an EQIA screening tool – i.e. the proposal did not demonstrate a significant (negative or positive) equalities impact.

a) Council wide

New savings:

Three cross-cutting proposals were submitted, none of which will require a full EQIA.

Efficiencies through Automation of Processes

This proposal is about a 3-year automation programme aimed at optimising council processes by deploying Robotics Process Automation and other process automation tools. These solutions can work across multiple IT systems, or multiple data sets, to process work at a faster rate and in greater volumes than a human computer user can achieve. They can also continue to work 24/7, which can support the delivery of work and services to residents out of hours.

The implementation of automation tools, such as RPA, is expected to deliver cashable savings for the council. The exact amount of savings will depend on the scale and efficiency of the automation initiatives. Cashable savings can be realised through the optimisation of processes, reducing manual labour, and streamlining workflows. However, it is essential to note that the actual realisation of these savings will be contingent upon other parts of the organisation implementing change plans to reconfigure and release resources. The programme aims to deliver cumulative savings of c£929k over three years. This is a net saving inclusive of the resources and technology required to deliver this target.

The EQIA notes that the benefits of RPA are well-founded. RPA has been shown to boost productivity, improve efficiency, deliver returns-on-investment, eliminate human error, elevate security, increase compliance, and transform operating models.

This programme will affect council staff, digital services, change management functions across the organisation, senior management and council leads as well as stakeholders including residents who will experience improved services and greater efficiency from the council. No impacts on protected groups have been identified in the initial screening tool; however, the projects that arise out of this programme will each require individual EQIA's which may identify impacts on protected groups.

Encouraging Apprenticeships

This proposal is about the Council's apprenticeship programme. The Council is offering apprenticeships to young people, care leavers, and career changers. Currently, there are 122 unfilled junior positions across the Council that could be replaced by apprenticeship roles. This could save some budget and help with recruitment and succession planning. The saving is conservative because automation and resident experience may reduce the need for junior roles; however, this proposal will produce an estimated saving of £250,000.

Enhanced Business Efficiency and Redundancy Scheme

This proposal is about the council's scheme for staff to voluntarily leave on redundancy or business efficiency grounds. The scheme will last for about a month before the next financial year and will delete the posts or make equivalent savings. The scheme will be fair and consistent to all employees, regardless of their personal characteristics. The Council will analyse the impact of the scheme on equality.

The scheme aims to save £1m with less than 1% of staff leaving. There may be an extra £5k enhancement as in the previous round. The scheme ran successfully in 2022-23 with 58 staff taking voluntary redundancy.

Challenge Panels and Agency Levy: Reducing Overtime, Additional Payments & Agency Staffing

The council is spending approximately £8.5m on overtime and additional payments, and around £37m on agency staff and interims, a figure that is on the rise. To address this, a new approach involving Challenge Panels led by the Head of Paid Service is proposed. These panels will scrutinise local practices and the use of agency staff, aiming to identify opportunities for cost reduction and efficiency improvements.

To discourage the use of agency workers, a levy is proposed on all agency charges, which will be used to offset corporate pressures and contribute to building reserves. The Challenge Panels plan to work with the Senior Management Teams of each directorate to analyse current agency, overtime, and allowances usage and propose new ways to provide the same services with a more permanent base of employees. Consultations will be held with staff and trade unions if any changes to employees' terms and conditions are proposed.

Future savings will be produced through proposals produced by the Challenge Panels.

b) Adult Social Care

New savings:

The budget for 2024/25 sets out six savings proposals, two of which were assessed to have no significant equalities impacts at the screening stage, with the other three progressing to full EQIA, and one requiring a full EQIA in the future.

Introduction of a charging policy for Assistive Technology (Full EQIA)

This EQIA is for a proposal that commenced on the 1st April 2015, and involved the introduction of a weekly charge for Assistive Technology (AT) in Islington. AT is a service that provides equipment that helps people to live independently and safely at home. The charge was set to be in line with other boroughs and the Care Act statutory guidance, which established the rules for charging for Adult Social Care and support services.

The proposal would affect two groups of people: those who only receive AT from Adult Social Care, and those who receive other services and have the financial resources to pay for more.

The charge would be based on a financial assessment that considers the person's capital assets, income, living costs, housing costs, and disability related expenses with the proposal aiming to ensure fairness, sustainability, wellbeing, personalization, and social inclusion for the people who use AT. The need for charging for AT arose due to the increasing costs and sophistication of technology, as well as the national transition from analogue to digital phone lines. The proposal also lists the types of care and support that are provided for free, such as intermediate care, community equipment, and after-care services under the Mental Health Act.

Implement eligibility and charging policies for people receiving legacy Supporting People services (Full EQIA)

This proposal involves charging certain residents who receive support services that were previously funded by the Supporting People Programme (SPP), meeting the Care Act 2014 eligibility criteria for care and support. The proposal aims to follow the national guidance and the council's charging policy, and to ensure fairness and consistency among all residents who

have eligible needs for care and support. The proposal also expects to generate £200,000 of income for the first year, and £250,000 for the second year.

The proposal states that some residents who receive services that were historically included in the SPP, such as supported living and accommodation for various groups, were exempt from the council's charging policy. This created a disparity with other residents who receive similar services and are charged according to their financial assessment. The proposal also notes that some residents may need a new or updated Care Act assessment before they can be financially assessed.

The proposal also described the main features and principles of the council's charging policy, which is based on the Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support Statutory guidance. The policy aims to ensure that people are not charged more than they can afford, that public subsidy is available for those who need it, and that personalisation, wellbeing, and social inclusion are promoted.

The EQIA highlights how the proposal will impact residents and, particularly, service users, who will be asked to complete a financial means assessment to ascertain whether they need to pay for support.

Review, re-design and re-procurement of the Adult Social Care Wellbeing Service (Full EQIA)

The proposal outlines a new Wellbeing Service for adults in Islington, based on a strategic review and stakeholder engagement. The service aims to provide various levels of support for residents' physical, mental, and emotional health, utilizing strength-based approaches and outcome measures to enhance residents' overall wellbeing.

The current Wellbeing Service offers information, advice, access to activities, and short-term enablement support to prevent or reduce the need for care and support. Through the strategic review and stakeholder engagement, residents' preferences and gaps in the existing service were identified. To ensure that the new service meets residents' desires and requirements, the service specification will be co-produced with residents and partners.

The budget allocated for the new Wellbeing Service is estimated to be £3,493,280 for the entire contract duration. This estimate is based on an annual budget of £436,660. Notably, this represents a reduction of £50,000 from the current annual contract value.

The EQIA identified that re-designing the Wellbeing Service will have a positive impact on residents, particularly those over the age of 50.

Review and re-model of Hilldrop Road Care Home (requires full EQIA in the future)

This proposal discusses council plans to save £100k in 2025/26 by re-modelling the Hilldrop Road Care Home, which provides residential care for men over 45 with alcohol misuse, homelessness, and mental illness.

The Council will review each resident's needs and support some of them to move to more independent living options, such as supported living. This will reduce the number of beds funded by the Council from 15 to 12.

The EQIA shows positive and negative impacts on the residents and the care home provider. The primary negative impact outlined within the proposal is a breakdown in service users mental health following a change in provider and/or location. This will be mitigated through collaborative management of the transition, between Islington Council and the provider, to ease service user anxiety. This involves creating personalized transition plans for each resident, with involvement from service users, carers, family members, and advocates. Communication will be timely, and residents and their families will participate in social care reviews and decisions about their future care and support.

Redesign of Floating Support Contract

This proposal outlines the council plan to save £100k in 2025/26 by re-procuring the Multi-Disciplinary Team Floating Support Service, which helps vulnerable tenants avoid homelessness. The current service, delivered by the Single Homeless Project, has been extended until 2024 with £240k savings agreed for 2024/25.

A strategic review and benchmarking of the service will be done in 2023/24 to inform the re-procurement. The Council expects to achieve more savings as there are other support options available in the borough and the service model can be improved. The savings for 2024/25 will not affect the service quality or availability as they are from vacant posts and redeployments.

The EQIA shows no impact on protected groups.

Review and re-design of Mental Health Recovery Pathway and wider early intervention and prevention offer

This proposal outlines the council plan to save £275k by 2025/26 by reviewing and re-designing the Mental Health Recovery Pathway and other VCS community mental health services.

These services, delivered by Islington MIND, help residents with mental health needs. The reviews will be completed in July 2023 and will identify opportunities to improve outcomes and value for money by delivering more flexible and strengths-based support in the community. The savings will be achieved by joining up VCS contracts, re-designing the Mental Health Reablement offer, and reviewing the use of under-utilized day service sites.

The EQIA screening tool says that no decisions have been made yet and a full EQIA will be done after the reviews. There may be negative impacts depending on the changes to the service providers or locations.

c) Community Engagement and Wellbeing

New savings

The budget for 2024/25 sets out one saving proposals which required a full EQIA:

Contact Centre Rationalisation (Full EQIA)

The proposal is part of the Resident Experience Programme, which aims to improve the online services and channel shift for residents, while reducing the cost-of-service provision and meeting the Council's strategic objectives.

The proposal has two phases: Phase 0 and Phase 1. Phase 0 is already in progress and involves reducing the staff headcount of Access Islington, the main front door for residents to access council services, by 15 FTE due to a reduction in call volumes. This is achieved by implementing a new Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system that directs calls more efficiently and reduces abandonment rates. Phase 0 has been completed, with the programme now shifting to Phase 1.

Phase 1 involves creating a single contact centre by unifying the three existing contact centres: Access Islington, Housing Direct, and Homes and Community Safety. This will be enabled by a new omnichannel solution called 8x8, which will allow the council to handle interactions with customers from multiple channels, such as telephone, email, webchat, and face to face. The omnichannel solution will also provide a workforce management tool that will optimise the scheduling, performance, and quality of the contact centre operatives. Operatives will be cross-skilled to handle a range of queries and provide solutions right first time. Phase 1 will also involve creating a single management structure and harmonising the opening hours of the contact centre.

The main beneficiaries of the proposal are the residents and taxpayers in the borough, who will experience shorter queue wait times, lower abandoned call rates, a wider range of channels, and more opportunities to provide feedback. The proposal will also free up the time of officers to have longer conversations with those residents with the most complex needs and allocate more resource to the Access Islington Hubs.

The amount of money expected to be saved by the proposal is £1.118 million over two years (24/25 and 25/26). This is broken down as follows:

- £337,947 from Phase 0 (reducing Access Islington staff headcount) in 24/25
- £434,000 from Phase 1 (creating a single contact centre) part year savings in 24/25
- £354,000 from Phase 1 full year savings in 25/26

d) Environment

New savings:

The budget for 2024/25 sets out 8 savings proposals. Of these nine saving proposals, 6 were consolidated into 2 full EQIA's due to their similar subject matter. Of the other two EQIA's, only one progressed to full EQIA with the final one not requiring a full EQIA due to no or little negative impact.

Extend controlled parking zone enforcement (consolidated – full EQIA)

The saving above is the result of three EQIA's combined into one, all of which have been summarised below:

Increase Maximum Pay & Display Parking Charges for Electric Vehicles

This proposal involves increasing the maximum parking charge for electric vehicles from £2 to £4, which would generate an additional £100,000 in revenue. The proposal also argues that this would recognise the benefits of electric vehicles over combustion engines, but also encourage people to use more sustainable transport modes such as cycling, walking or public transport.

Removal of Evening Concessions for CPZ Zones C&K

This proposal proposes to reverse a previous decision to provide free visitor vouchers and flat rate parking charges in the evenings in two CPZs, which would generate an income of £60,000 per annum. The proposal also states that this would reduce vehicular traffic and promote active travel and health.

Parking Pay & Display Peak Charging

This proposal to add a £1 surcharge to all short stay parking sessions purchased during the busiest period 10am to 1pm in all CPZs except those with part day restrictions, which would generate a saving of £0.21m. The proposal also asserts that this would reduce vehicular traffic during the peak time, and promote active travel and health.

These projects may result in residents being charged more for parking within the borough, in certain areas within Islington. However, residents are able to apply for parking permits (if they live locally) and blue badge holders are eligible for free parking. Additionally, residents throughout Islington are eligible to receive parking vouchers meaning they can park at a discounted rate.

Extended CPZ Hours (full EQIA)

This proposal discusses extending parking controls from 6:30pm to midnight Monday to Saturday in 3 CPZs located in the South of the borough, which would generate a surplus of £394,000 in the second year. The proposal also states that this would manage the parking of vehicles within the night-time economy and encourage people to use other modes of sustainable travel.

Green garden waste chargeable service

The Council plans to introduce a chargeable green garden waste collection service from April 2024, which will generate an estimated income of £209,000 by 2026/27.

The service will replace the current free service, which is not a statutory requirement. The service will cover 51,000 kerbside properties with gardens and will charge £80 per year for a fortnightly collection. The Council expects to have 3,000 subscribers in the first year, 4,000 in the second year, and 5,000 in the third year.

The costs of staff, vehicles, bags, and communications for the service are estimated at £194,678 in the first year. The net income of the service will increase from £45,322 in the first year to £209,868 in the third year.

e) Homes and Neighbourhoods

New savings

The budget for 2024/25 includes 2 savings proposal, one of which required a full EQIA:

Selective Licensing (full EQIA)

This proposal aims to extend property licensing to three wards in the borough of Islington, namely Finsbury Park, Tollington and Hillrise. Property licensing is a tool that can be used to improve housing conditions and management standards in the private rented sector.

The proposal is based on data from various sources, including council and census data, private renters' complaints and enforcement. The data shows that 29% of residents in Islington live in private rented accommodation, and that many of them face poor housing conditions, high rent costs and insecure tenancies. The data also suggests that in at least 43% of properties covered by the proposed schemes, some improvement is needed in terms of property and management standards.

There are three types of property licensing schemes currently operating in the borough:

- Mandatory Licensing: for large HMOs (5 or more households)
- Additional Boroughwide Licensing: for HMOs for 3 or 4 households
- Selective Licensing: for all one and two person households in the private rented sector

The proposal is to introduce selective licensing in Finsbury Park, Tollington and Hillrise wards, which would cover all one and two person households in the private rented sector in these areas. The selective property licensing scheme is a 5-year licensing scheme intended to improve conditions for tenants renting private accommodation.

If the scheme is implemented, landlords would have to:

- apply for a property licence
- demonstrate that they are able to manage rented accommodation and do not have any relevant criminal convictions that could present a risk to the health, safety and welfare of tenants
- comply with requirements concerning the management, use and occupation of their rented property

Landlords will pay an application fee, currently set at £500 per property (estimated £50,000 in income per annum) for a five-year licence. The licensing income is used to cover the cost of administering the scheme, including inspecting properties and enforcing compliance. The scheme is designed to be self-financing, with 100% income generated covering the cost of setting up and implementing the licensing scheme.

Revised Management of Civic Services

This proposal aims to save £100,000 by removing the vacant Assistant Director of Civic Services post, as well as the occupied Head of Islington and Camden Cemetery Service post. The serving Head of Service will be ringfenced into the new permanent Head of Civic Service role to ensure the continuity and high-quality of services. The proposal also seeks to retain the

current Civic Service structure, aligning key life event services, to improve resident services and efficiency.

f) Children's Services

New savings

The budget for 2024/25 sets out 1 savings proposals which progressed to a full EQIA:

Repurpose school premises houses (full EQIA)

This proposal describes a programme to increase in-house fostering capacity and to reduce reliance on expensive independent foster agency placements in the borough. The programme aims to keep more children local and reduce overspend of the placements budget. The proposal is seeking to do this through re-housing and housing adaptations for existing or potential foster carers, such as loft conversions, extensions, garden rooms, or moving to larger properties within the council or housing association stock. The programme also involves moving grown up birth children into council housing to free up bedrooms.

The programme has been underway since April 2020 and has assessed 20 carers and provided 15 with a housing solution. The programme has created 6 additional placements and prevented the loss of 5 more. The programme has also supported circa 8 Children in Need families and kinship carers with their housing challenges. The programme has delivered in-year savings of £317k and a total estimated saving over 7 years of £1.2m.

The programme impacts children, particularly those within the care system, and their foster parents positively, by providing them with support and capacity to look after the children.

g) Community Wealth Building

New savings

Efficiencies from restructuring the Corporate Landlord Service (requires full EQIA in the future)

The establishment of a new Corporate Landlord Service began in 2020, with teams gradually integrated over time. The service aims to deliver new affordable council homes, undertake major works and repairs, provide operational buildings, offer professional property advice, and ensure successful delivery of new homes and capital delivery programmes. The goal is to create a permanent management structure, realign ad-hoc arrangements, address budget pressures, and deliver a 5% saving to the General Fund (£373k) from 2024/25.

The benefit of this proposal is a service that can deliver ambitious new build targets and perform the duties of an effective Corporate Landlord service. The service will also lead on the development of a new Strategic Asset Management Plan to maximise and maintain assets, enabling the delivery of the overarching vision and five missions set out in Islington Together 2030. There will be no significant changes to the services provided or impacts on residents.

The main impacts will be on staff, with the creation of new posts, re-evaluation of existing posts, and some changes in line management. Some posts will be deleted to achieve savings,

prioritising vacant posts to minimise impact on staff. Redundancies are anticipated to be low, with 10-15 expected across a service of around 270 staff. Formal staff consultation is planned for September 2023, with implementation by April 2024.

Additional Income from Commercial Estates

The Council owns several properties that it rents out commercially, managed by the Corporate Asset Management Team. This rental income supports the delivery of services. The rent roll has already increased from £3.2m to £3.8m due to completed lease renewals and rent reviews. The target of £4.2m will be pursued over the next 12 months through further rent reviews, lease renewals, and letting of vacant units.

An additional £400k of rental income is expected to be generated by active asset management and letting of former operational space, particularly the release and letting of 7NBW, from 2025/26. This proposal aims to maximise commercial income from the Council's assets, with no negative impact on any communities. The additional income will support the delivery of key Council services and priorities.

h) Resources

There were no new savings proposals submitted for Resources.

i) Public Health

There were no new savings proposals submitted for Public Health.

6. Staffing Impacts

As summarised in section 3, some proposals will have staffing implications. While the significant majority will come from deleting / not recruiting to vacant posts, some proposals will have implications which may include changes to current roles or a potential risk of redundancy (for a very limited number of staff).

The impacts of these proposals on staff with protected characteristics cannot yet be fully determined but as numbers are low and spread across a number of services / types of roles there are unlikely to be any groups disproportionately impacted. Any changes to staffing structure will require consultation with staff unions in accordance with the council's reorganisation policy and procedures.

Our established organisational change process ensures we support all of our staff through this change. Where restructures are proposed we carry out a comprehensive Staffing Impact Assessment that identifies the implications for those with protected characteristics and finds ways to mitigate accordingly.

Where a redundancy situation is possible, we will take a number of steps including:

- not filling vacancies in advance of a restructure so as many opportunities as possible are available to our existing staff
- using our redeployment process to help staff at risk find suitable alternative employment within the council

- considering alternative options to redundancy such as early retirement, flexible working or other 'working differently' options.
- stress management support and counselling services will be offered to staff through the Employee Assist Programme to help them cope with the additional pressures that structural change may bring.

We have an ongoing commitment to making Islington an employer of choice and are Timewise accredited, supporting flexible working opportunities available where possible, including condensed hours, flexible start and end times and part time working.

The Council is committed to a workforce that is representative of the borough at all levels and will continue to look for new ways to improve progression routes for staff and equip them to be senior managers of the future. We will continue to promote our staff equality forums as a way of engaging with staff and working together to continually improve their experience of working in Islington.

7. Human Rights and Safeguarding

Human Rights

It is unlawful for the council to act in a way that is incompatible with a European Convention right (unless the council could not have acted differently as a result of a statutory provision).

An interference with a qualified right (e.g. the right to respect for private and family life) is not unlawful if the council acts in accordance with the law and the interference is necessary in a democratic society.

In deciding whether the interference is necessary, the law applies a proportionality test, including whether a fair balance has been struck between the rights of the individual and the interests of the community.

Safeguarding

Implications for safeguarding in Adult Social Care

Proposals outlined in this document build on the Council's work on Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP). MSP is enshrined in the Care Act (2014) and the Pan London Safeguarding Adults Policies and Procedures.

MSP puts the person at risk of harm or abuse at the centre of decisions and actions about them. Just like the Strengths Based Practice approach for general social work activities, MSP respects that adults often bring ideas and solutions which will work best for them and the outcomes they need support in achieving.

This means that safeguarding adults continues to be integral in the work we are undertaking to really embed strengths-based practice. Ensuring vulnerable adults are safe and focusing on wellbeing is a core element of strengths-based practice and ensures there is consistency in approach whether we are working with a vulnerable person on a support plan or a safeguarding plan.

Implications for safeguarding in Children's Services

Safeguarding children is about protecting them from maltreatment, preventing their health and development being impaired, ensuring that they grow up in environments which provide safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The mitigation identified for each proposal reduces very significantly the risk of poor safeguarding practice. The council's mitigation should include not adopting any policy where safeguarding practice is adversely affected.

The proposals put forward have been tested against effective safeguarding practice. A broad range of quality assurance measures are already in place and will continue to be monitored and responded to robustly.

8. Monitoring

This year, the Equalities Team has reviewed the equalities impacts from current savings to screen for any unexpected impacts as the projects have progressed – this process will continue.

Each individual proposal will continue to be reviewed and updated as required. Consultation will be carried out where required to seek the views of residents and service users. The lead officer for each proposal will be responsible for ensuring that equality considerations remain at the forefront of decision making as each of these proposals are progressed.

Annex A: Public Sector Equality Duty

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 provides that:

- (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to —
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- (2) A person who is not a public authority but who exercises public functions must, in the exercise of those functions, have due regard to the matters mentioned in subsection (1).
- (3) 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, in particular, to the need to —
 - (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
 - (b) 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
 - (c) 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.
- (4) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
- (5) 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 —
 - (a) tackle prejudice, and
 - (b) promote understanding.
- (6) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favorably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.
- (7) The relevant protected characteristics are —
 - age

- disability
- gender reassignment, including non-binary and gender-fluid identification
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

(8) A reference to conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act includes a reference to —

(a) a breach of an equality clause or rule;

(b) a breach of a non-discrimination rule.

(9) Schedule 18 (exceptions) has effect.