

Overview and Scrutiny



Public Accounts Select Committee Supplementary Agenda

Tuesday, 2 February 2021 7.00 pm

Remote - on Microsoft Teams - the public are welcome to observe via the Council's website at:

<https://lewisham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

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This meeting is an open meeting and all items on the agenda may be audio recorded and/or filmed.

Part 1

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4.	Budget cuts report – appendix 9 - equalities	3 - 16

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APPENDIX 9: Summary of Equalities Implications and Approach to Support Budget Decisions

Context

Given the diversity of our population and our unique economic profile, onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has raised significant equality challenges for Lewisham. It is therefore important that in presenting budget savings proposals for discussion, consideration is given to the stark reality of the equality landscape that has and continues to emerge as a result of Covid-19 and the damage this has wrought on our borough. In doing so, it is also important that Members are assured that the Council remains vigilant to risks that this changing picture is presenting, maintains a clear line of sight on what needs to be prioritised and is positioned to respond both strategically and tactically.

It is acknowledged that the health and well-being impacts of Covid-19 have been particularly severe on older people, those with pre-existing conditions and those of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) heritage. Published data updated daily by Public Health England, reveals that there have been more than 18,500 confirmed Covid-19 related cases in Lewisham, with more than 400 fatalities (i.e.: with Covid-19 on the death certificate).

There have also been wider socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. The latest available data reveals that number of residents experiencing food insecurity is increasing with nearly 12,000 food parcels delivered to Lewisham residents since March 2020. In addition, more than half of all emergency requests triaged through the borough's Community Hub, are referred to food banks and food aid organisations. The borough's local economy has also been hit hard. More than 20,500 Lewisham residents are in receipt of out of work benefits (up more than 12,000 since March 2020). The economic impact of Covid has been particularly harsh upon the borough's retail industry and those who are predominately employed in high-footfall sectors such as females and those aged between 16 and 24 years. The above cohorts have been particularly affected due to the fact that nearly four in ten of all employee jobs in the borough are part-time, compared to an average of one in four across London. These part time roles predominate in the retail sector and are more likely to be occupied by females and working age under 24s.

However, as well as young people, the economic disruption and uncertainty caused by Covid-19 and what is likely to be the compounding effect of Brexit, presents significant challenges for older residents and women who face particular challenges re-entering the labour market after periods away.

From an equalities perspective, there are other emerging challenges arising from Covid-19, which affect how the Council assesses the risk and vulnerabilities that our residents and employees face. As a case in point, in Lewisham just over seven in ten residents work in roles that could be described as public-facing, whilst one in four are employed in roles that could be described as remote working roles. Within these cohorts there are disparities between male and female, with men more likely than women to be employed in remote roles. For those in public sector roles who suddenly find themselves out of work and unable to find like-work due to the Covid-

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related economic damage, in their chosen sector unemployment, a period of uncertainty awaits them.

In the context of assessing the likely impact of budget savings therefore, it is recognised that greater recognition needs to be given to other dimensions of impact that might not previously have been considered material, but which in light of Covid-19 are now relevant. At some level, the emerging picture relating to childcare, may also require a re-evaluation. In particular how, as result of remote working opportunities, child caring responsibilities may be split in two person households. The above example serves to highlight the fact that the traditional way of looking at inequality through the lens of nine protected characteristics, anecdotes and casual assumptions lacks the necessary sophistication and nuance to reflect the ambiguities and complexities that have emerged as a result of Covid-19.

Much of the above-mentioned learning is now being considered as part of the 'Voices of Lewisham' programme. The programme functions as a platform for residents and local stakeholders to share their many and varied experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as an opportunity to identify key learning points that could help inform the borough's recovery. The programme has drawn evidence from a wide range of sources, mindful that residents choose to communicate in different ways. Some of the key issues that have emerged for the Council include issues such as the implications of digital service delivery, the reliability of data as well as the extent to which the data we hold and our understanding of it, reflect realities on the ground. Communication is another issue that has come to the fore, particularly the intersection between communication and public trust as has the opportunity for Council to further build upon the successful work of the borough's community economy.

Assessment of the impact of the proposed cuts

As set out in Appendix 9 of the budget report, the potential impact of the individual cuts proposed have been considered and amalgamated. Given the functions performed by the Council and the make-up of its funding and budget, the vast majority of our services and budget are focused on supporting the most vulnerable and in need residents through social care. As a result, the vast majority of cuts will impact on those services more so than universal services.

Through the analysis of the 2021/22 budget round 1 & 2 cuts proposals the summary equalities analysis (see below) considers the impact on protected characteristics (by number and value), the requirement for a full equalities assessment, whether specific localities are impacted, and the impact for the Council's corporate priorities. This assists with consideration of the aggregate and intersectional impact of the proposed cuts in terms of their potential equalities impact.

For example, the analysis identifies that across the 95 cuts proposals 15 (16%) have a high or medium impact with a value of £8.5m (20%) of the total. Of these gender and age were identified in the most, ethnicity and disability second, and pregnancy / maternity and sexual orientation the least. Of the seven with high impacts, these all related to health and social care services, mostly in respect of older adults hence the

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age and gender ratings being the highest with women living longer and generally undertaking a higher proportion of caring responsibilities in the community.

In respect of the Council's priorities, which reflect the concern to equality in all aspects of life in the Borough, the two most significant services impacted by the cuts are Children and Adult health and social care services. These represent 70% of the Council's budget and therefore with cuts of the scale being proposed (£28m for 2021/22) and demographic of the Borough it is the equality impacts for these service users that rate highest – gender, age, disability, and ethnicity – in the assessment.

In addition to being alert to the possible equality impacts of the cuts and looking for specific mitigations as they are implemented, the Council also provides more general support in a number of ways to mitigate the impact on those with protected characteristics, including the economically disadvantaged. First and foremost as the Council's services are targeted to support those who are vulnerable or in need.

In terms of Council services such mitigations include running a Council Tax reduction scheme for up to 75% of a households liability (£20m/year), hardship funds for those in crisis (£1m/year), rent incentive support to families facing eviction (£1m/year), discretionary fares support (£0.3/year), support in respect of debt collection, multiple access points for residents requiring service, and the provision of largely universal youth services. The Council is also currently jointly undertaking research with the University of Birmingham into the impact of Covid 19 on BAME communities.

As an employer, the Council works to ensure all recruitment is open to those with disability, adopts flexible working policies to support staff over their career, provides access and equipment to enable staff to work effectively, runs a number of staff forum to share and work on improving work conditions and fairness, and in the case of potential redundancies in all cases seeks to redeploy staff in the first instance.

There are a number of financial proposals in the budget (e.g. council tax and rent increases) and related cuts proposals (e.g. fees and charges). The Council is sensitive to the impact these may have on residents. In respect of the rising fees and charges in the round 1 & 2 proposals these total just over £4m over the next three years. Of these just under £2.5m are in respect of highways and parking charges and will only arise if people do not comply with prevailing regulations. A further £0.5m is expected from rents through investment in more housing supply. Other charges, for example the self-funding of social care, only apply to those able to afford them as they are means tested or are optional, for example garden waste. The impact on those on lower incomes should therefore be mitigated.

Feedback from Member scrutiny

A central aspect of the approach described in this paper includes a commitment to take into account and follow through on the equality impacts of specific proposals. Some examples of how this will be done, taken from Healthier Communities Select Committee, are set out below:

In relation to proposal B-08 Review of the Power of Attorney Service (Round 1) the

committee noted that the power of attorney service is an extremely important and trusted service to the small number of very vulnerable people who are supported by it and recommended therefore that the council continues to provide the service in-house, charging users a fair price for its provision.

The possible introduction of a charging regime for the provision of this service will be subject to a proper impact assessment to assess and evaluate the capability of service users to pay. This is particularly important given the dynamic equalities environment in the borough and scope and scale of socio-economic inequality that has been wrought by the Covid-19 pandemic. Such an assessment will also have to be reviewed periodically to ensure that any conclusions drawn and risks identified reflect changing realities, emerging risks and learning.

In relation to proposal E-04 – introduce charging for certain elements of self-funded care packages (Round 1) the committee recommended ongoing monitoring of this change to ensure that the council's brokerage service, and bulk purchasing power, continues to provide a financial benefit for users, compared to users approaching service providers as individuals.

As with any proposal regarding charging for services, it is important that consideration is given to the ability of service users to pay and the fairness and proportionality of any means-testing regime to be introduced. To ensure that this happens, a socio-economic impact assessments will be conducted. This will not only provide assurance that the implementation of proposed changes, achieves the desired objectives, but also meet the fairness and reasonableness test. In taking this proposal forward, a detailed delivery plan will be put in place, facilitated by ongoing engagement with service leads.

Mitigating the impact in delivery of the cuts and our approach to service redesign

Setting the above context is important because it frames the Council's leadership effort on this agenda going forward, inclusive of specifically the practical delivery of these cuts proposals. The Council takes this challenge seriously and the work being undertaken to strengthen our strategic focus and practical approach to equalities builds upon the recently concluded Member-led In-depth Review of the effective management Inequalities in Lewisham, which identified five recommendations for action including for the creation of 'Fairer Lewisham Duty'. A programme of work is already underway to take these recommendations forward and deliver the intended outcomes.

We have set up the borough wide live impact analysis document where we pull together and share with partners ALL relevant data and insight to share and increase understanding of the impact and inform decision making across the council and wider partnership, it has been shared and used in the development of these cuts, and will be used when planning delivery of them.

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We are also embedding the Single Equalities Framework (SEF). The framework, which has been developed with input from the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee, sets out the Council's 5 equality objectives, which will follow through into all of our activity (policy formulation, strategy development, commissioning decisions, financial planning, service design etc.). Guidance on six key considerations (due regard, disproportionality, fairness, marginalisation, unconscious bias and intersectionality) is set out for us to assess the potential impact of budget savings on the most vulnerable residents.

Supporting the delivery of our Equality Objectives is the Corporate Equality Policy, which sets out the Council's approach to equality data gathering and the conduct of equality analysis assessment (e.g.: the process through which the equality impacts of Council decisions are weighed and measured). A review of this policy will be informed by what the Council has learnt from Covid-19, with an updated diversity questionnaire enabling respondents to classify themselves across a broader range of categories and by so doing add sophistication to the Council's understanding of overlapping characteristics or intersectionality.

Targeted focused action well in train to ensure that aims and ambitions underpinned by this new way of working are embedded into organisational habits, behaviours and practice as well as the design of business systems.

Assurance

In terms of oversight in relation to equalities considerations specifically, the Corporate Equalities Board has been refreshed to oversee the Council's work on equalities with a new EMT Chair. This will further strengthening the way in which equalities shapes the way in which the organisation thinks, plans and organises as well as provide assurance to the public of the Council's continued commitment.

Delivery of the cuts and wider service and cultural transformation of the organisation will be driven through the Assistant Chief Executives division and the new thematic programme governance boards in addition to the Corporate Equalities Board. Feedback raised through briefings and Select Committees will be fed through these boards with the Strategic Transformation Business Partners ensuring these are considered in specific deliverables.

Programme management approach and strategic transformation

Building on the Chief Executive's vision for and restructure of the council, the new Strategic Transformation and Organisational Development Business Partners are undertaking wider work to support services in order to assure delivery of the budget savings proposals. This includes assuring the right approach is being taken for the project delivery and will include reviewing impact against the aforementioned six prisms in the SEF, and reviewing how any negative impact can be mitigated – either through the approach and deliverables for a given budget savings project, or through a prioritisation of our strategic transformation approach.

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The budget savings programme will be reported into the new thematic boards and Strategic Change Board, which provides the overarching governance for the programme of work alongside delivery of strategic priorities, of which the SEF will be one. The Board will be responsible for driving the SEF through the programme of work it is responsible for.

The approach is being developed by the Strategic Transformation Business Partners, which will be informed by concerns, feedback and data on each proposal, which will then feed into the approach and mitigations for the individual proposals as well as cumulative considerations.

Support for impacted staff

We recognise that it is inevitable that some staff may be displaced, and coupled with COVID-19 we are also mindful that there are higher levels of unemployment and staff will no doubt be worried about future opportunities. Therefore in addition to the standard offer of redeployment, we will be rolling out an outplacement support programme which will include CV writing, interview skills, preparing for assessment centres etc. We are also exploring offering 1-2-1 and/or group career coaching which would be externally sourced. However, we are committed to maximising opportunities for redeployment and this will include exploring suitable time limited opportunities within the COVID action team. As these will be temporary roles, they would not be considered as suitable alternative employment therefore staff would not be compelled to consider them

POLICY AND EQUALITIES ANALYSIS – BUDGET CUT PROPOSALS 2021/22

INTRODUCTION

This report is in two parts and summarises the anticipated impact of 2021/22 budget cut proposals on characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipated impact of the proposals on the corporate strategy priorities. In addition, the report highlights the anticipated impact of budget cut proposals on wards.

It is in two parts; the first presenting the analysis for the 41 round 2 proposals in this report and the second presenting the analysis combining that for the 54 round 1 (presented to M&C in December) amended for those decisions and the 41 round 2 proposals (total proposals 95).

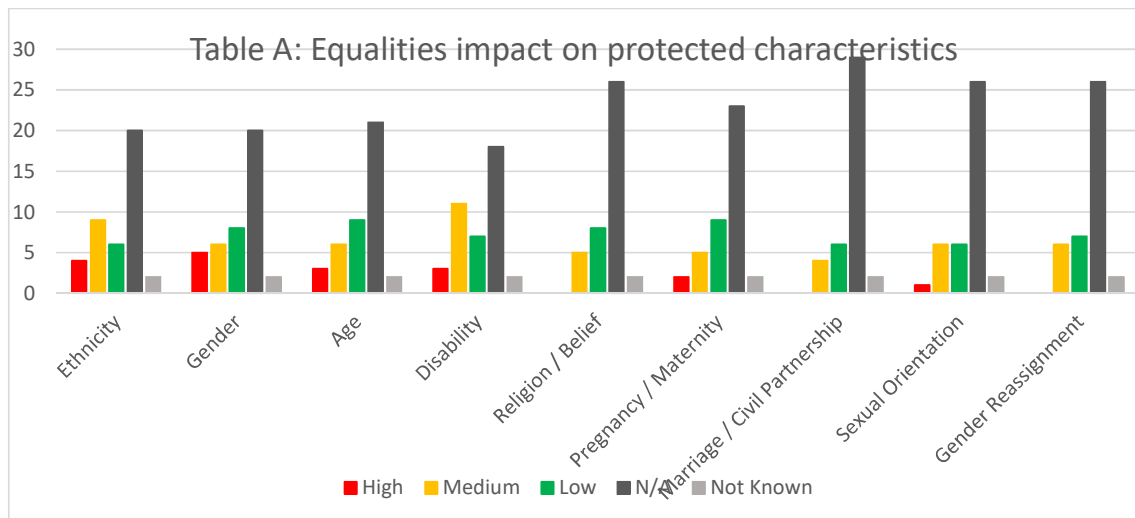
The proposals and analysis cover the next three years 2021/22 to 2023/24. The 95 proposals totalling £41.7m of cuts over the three years, with £28m for 2021/22.

ROUND 2 ANALYSIS

Impact of budget cut proposals on protected characteristics

Table A below shows the anticipated impact of cuts proposals on protected characteristics. Specifically the table shows that the protected characteristics of ethnicity, gender, age, disability, pregnancy / maternity, and sexual orientation with ‘high’ impact proposals against them. Of these ethnicity and gender were identified in the most, age and disability second, and pregnancy / maternity and sexual orientation the least.

The balance of proposals which are anticipated to have a ‘medium’ impact in spread more evenly across the proposal but by more proposals for ethnicity and disability. Notable, consistent with previous cuts proposals, are the high number of proposals with limited or no impact on protected characteristics. This reflects that many of the changes are to operational practices to ensure good governance and operation effectiveness (see impact on corporate priorities below).



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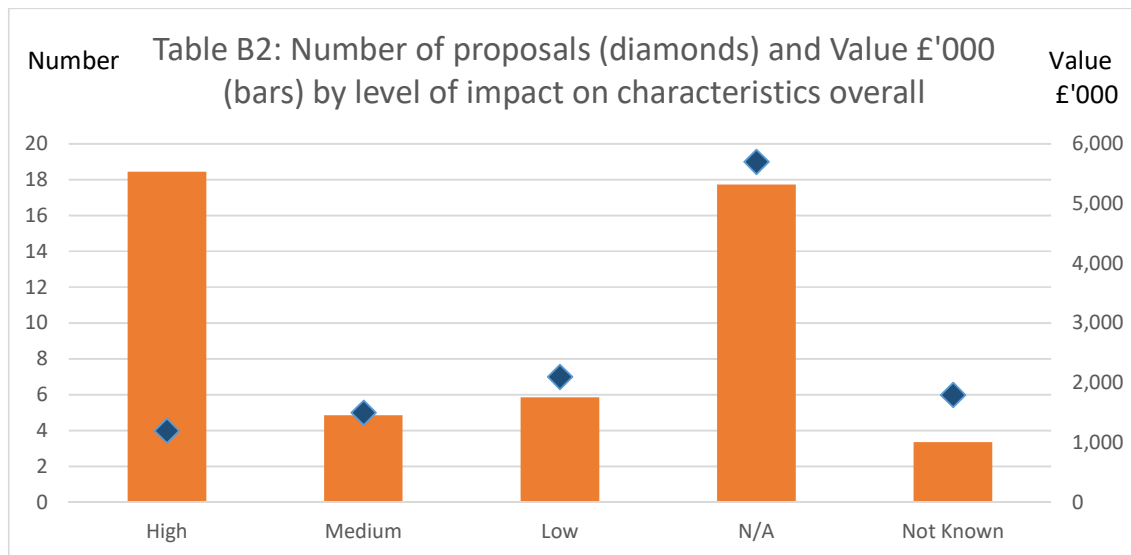
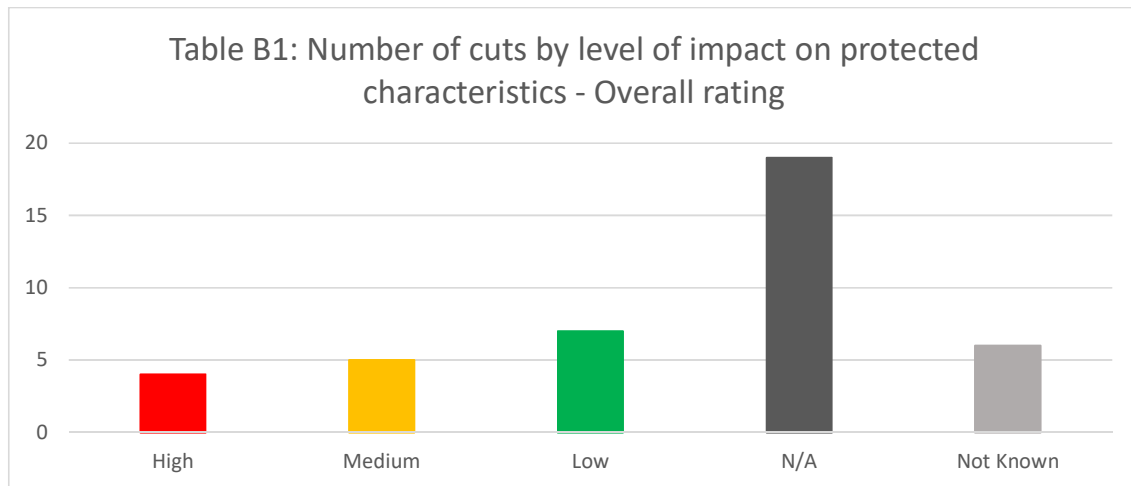
Tables B1 and B2 below shows the overall (cumulative) impact of the cuts proposals by number and value. This is based on the assessment of high, medium, and low judgements across the various protected characteristics overall.

By number, of the 41 proposals 9 (22%) are anticipated to have a high or medium impact compared to 26 (63%) having a low or no (not applicable) impact.

By value, of the 41 proposals the 9 identified with high or medium impact are for £6,984k (46%) compared to £7,076k (47%) for the 26 having a low or no impact.

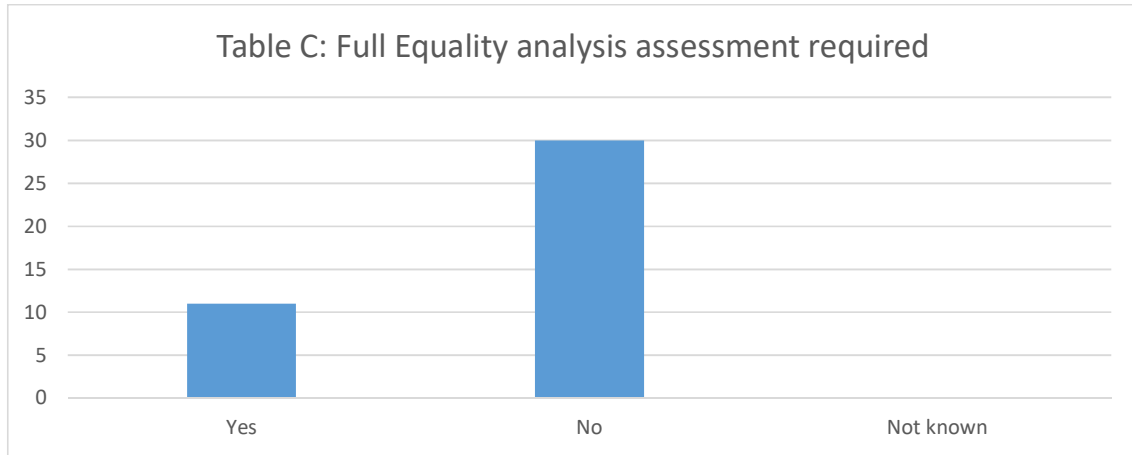
The four proposals with an anticipated high impact overall are:

- B11 £1,000k – Improved usage of the Better Care Funding across partners
- C13 £100k – Sexual and reproductive health services in primary care
- C15 £150k – Integrated sexual reproductive health services
- F24 £4,279k – Adult social care cost reduction and service improvement



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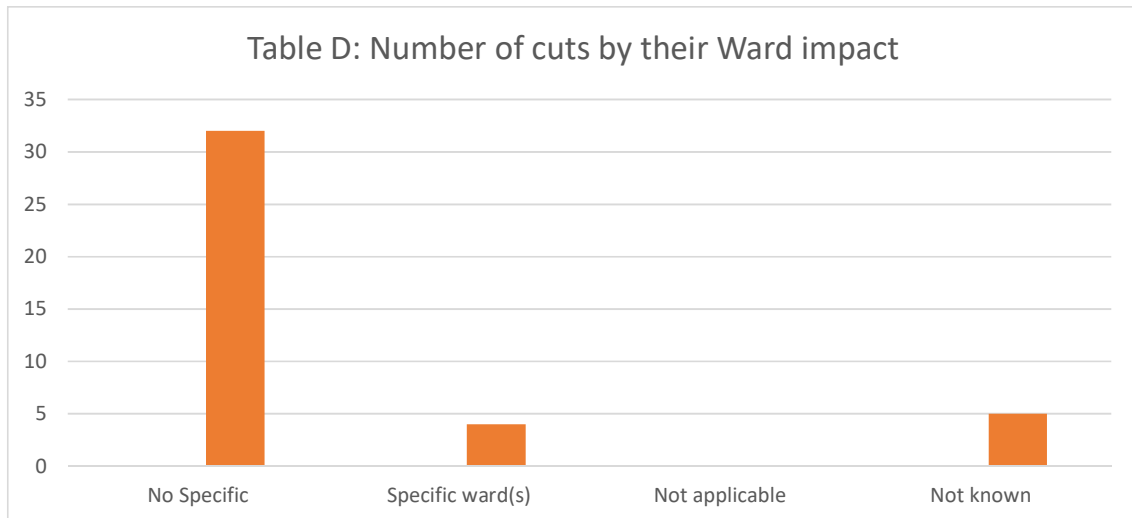
Table C below shows the number of budget proposals where a full Equality Analysis Assessment (EAA) is required. Specifically it shows that 11 proposals with a value of £6,882k will require a full EAA to be completed prior to a final decision being made and the cut implemented in full.



Geographical impact of budget cut proposals

Table D below shows that for the majority 32 (78%) there is no specific ward impact (i.e. the changes will impact services across the Borough as a whole).

The table shows there are 4 proposals with specific ward(s) impact. They are C26, F20, F21, and F22. C26 impacts local leisure facilities and the F proposals impact parking charges so localised according to the arrangement in place by ward.



Impact on corporate strategy priorities

The information in the Tables E below show the number and value of the cuts impact by corporate strategy priority.

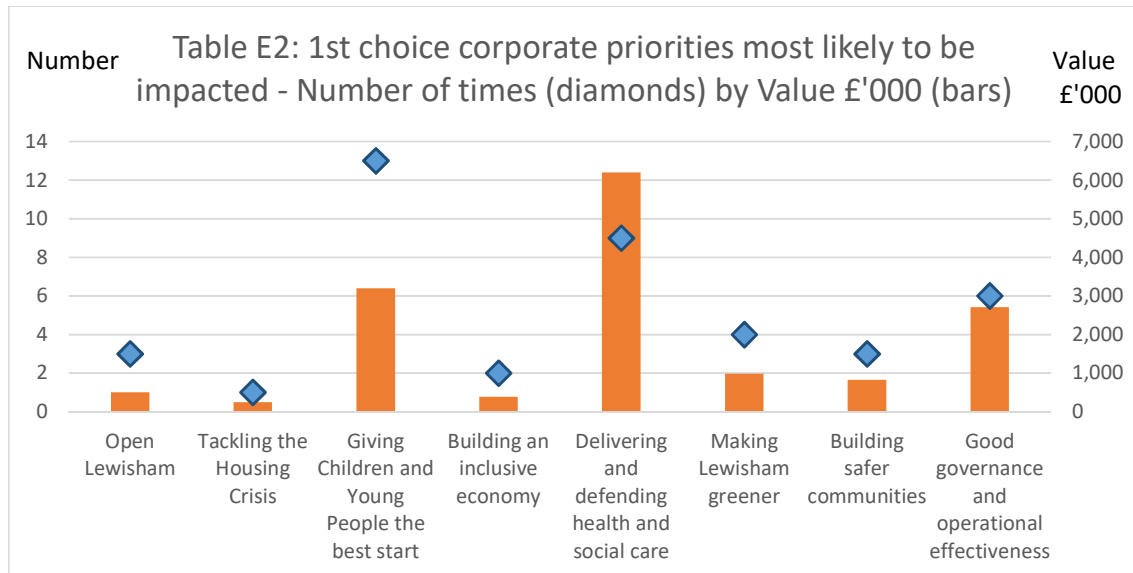
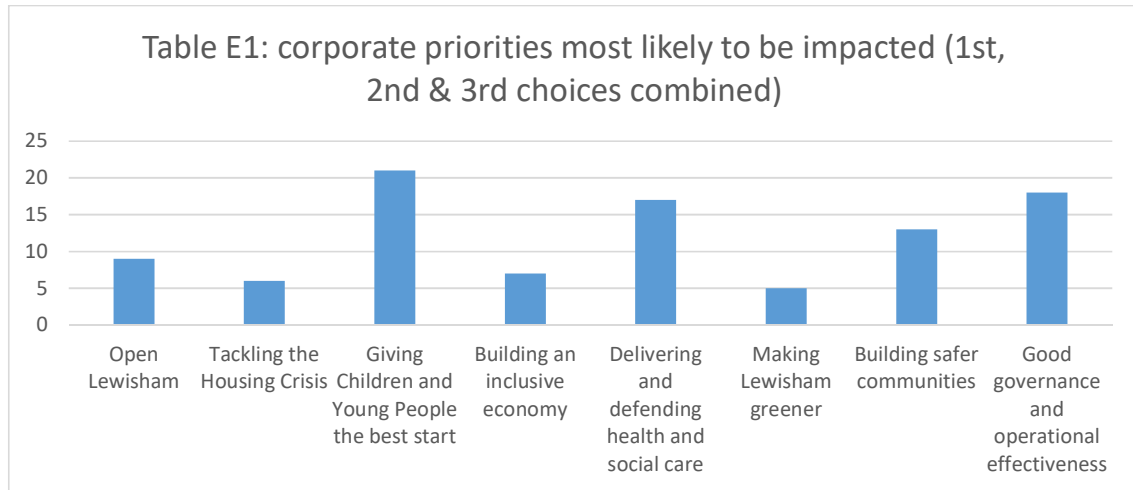
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By number, the three corporate priorities identified as likely to be the most impacted (all of first, second, and third choices) are:

- Giving Children and Young People the best start in life
- Good governance and operational effectiveness (not a formal priority in the corporate strategy but added to capture proposals to operational practice)
- Delivering and defending Health and Social Care.

This impact on priorities is also carried through into the analysis by value of the cuts to the corporate strategy. Looking at the first choice (main priority) impact the number and value of cuts by the three most impacted priorities are:

- Giving Children and Young People the best start in life – 13 cuts for £3,199k
- Good governance and operational effectiveness – 6 cuts for £2,705k
- Delivering and defending Health and Social Care – 9 cuts for £6,199k

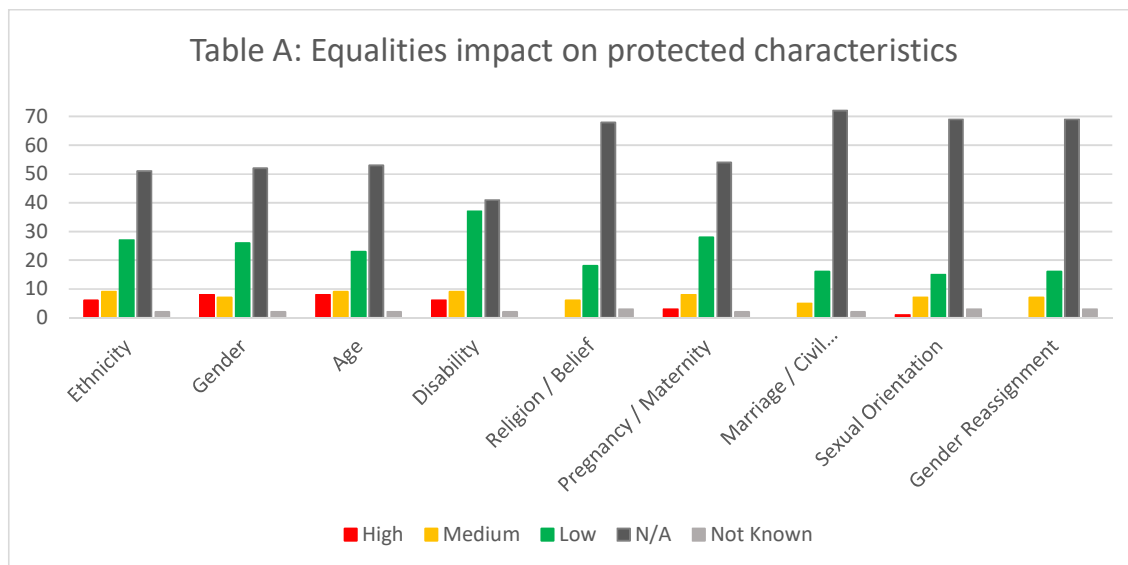


COMBINED ROUND 1 (POST M&C) AND ROUND 2 (PRE M&C) ANALYSIS

Impact of budget cut proposals on protected characteristics

Table A below shows the anticipated impact of cuts proposals on protected characteristics. Specifically the table shows that the protected characteristics of ethnicity, gender, age, disability, pregnancy / maternity, and sexual orientation with ‘high’ impact proposals against them. Of these gender and age were identified in the most, ethnicity and disability second, and pregnancy / maternity and sexual orientation the least.

The balance of proposals which are anticipated to have a ‘medium’ impact in spread more evenly across the proposal but by more proposals for disability. Notable, consistent with previous cuts proposals, are the high number of proposals with limited or no impact on protected characteristics. This reflects that many of the changes are to operational practices to ensure good governance and operation effectiveness (see impact on corporate priorities below).



Tables B1 and B2 below shows the overall (cumulative) impact of the cuts proposals by number and value. This is based on the assessment of high, medium, and low judgements across the various protected characteristics overall.

By number, of the 95 proposals 15 (16%) are anticipated to have a high or medium impact compared to 69 (73%) having a low or no (not applicable) impact.

By value, of the 95 proposals the 15 identified with high or medium impact are for £8,516k (20%) compared to £27,611k (66%) for the 69 having a low or no impact.

The seven proposals with an anticipated high impact overall are:

- C02 £150k – Adult learning and day opportunities
- E04 £82k – Introducing charging for certain elements of self-funded care
- F09 £600k – In-house reductions – adult passenger transport
- B11 £1,000k – Improved usage of the Better Care Funding across partners

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- C13 £100k – Sexual and reproductive health services in primary care
- C15 £150k – Integrated sexual reproductive health services
- F24 £4,279k – Adult social care cost reduction and service improvement

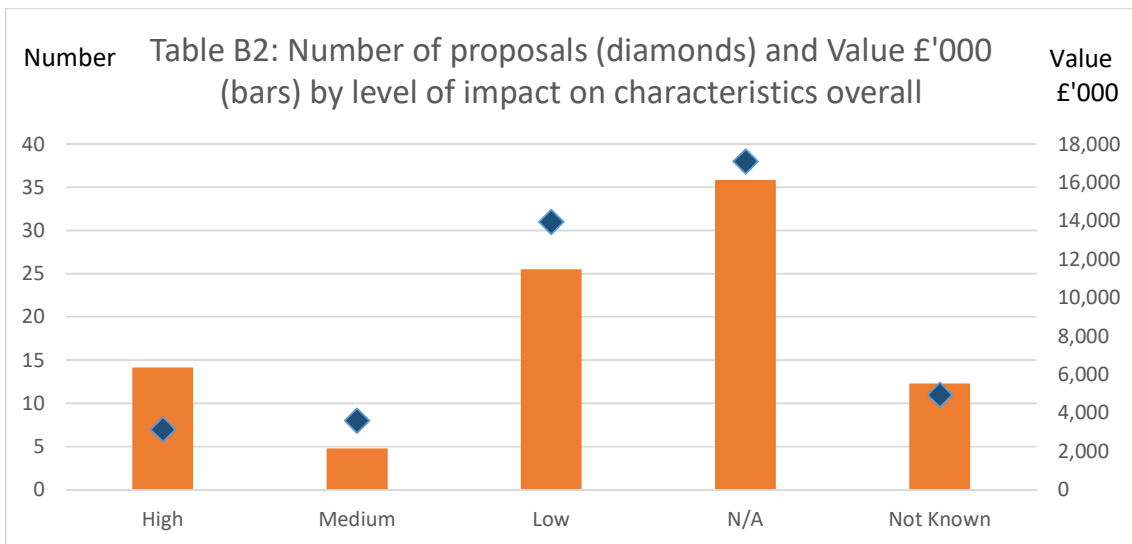
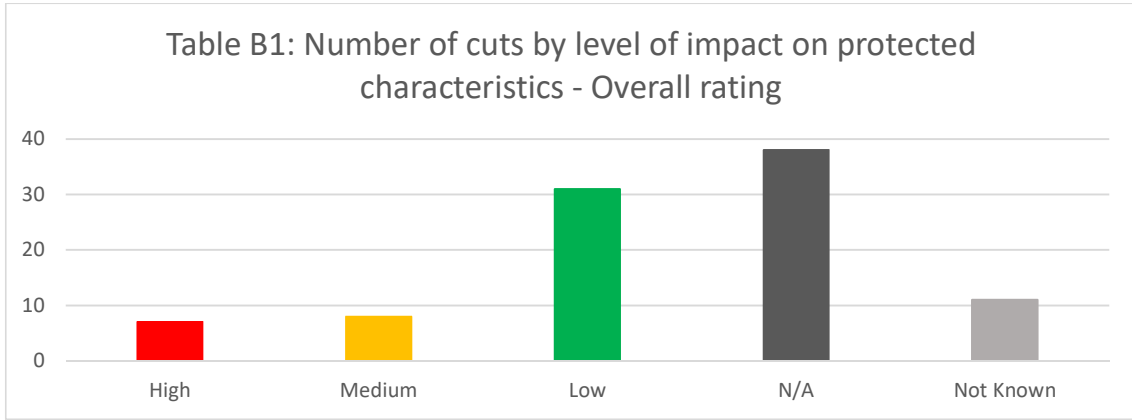
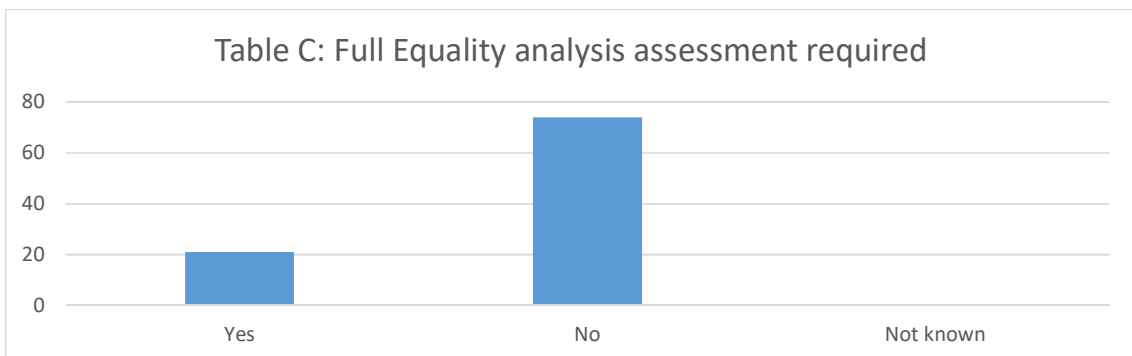


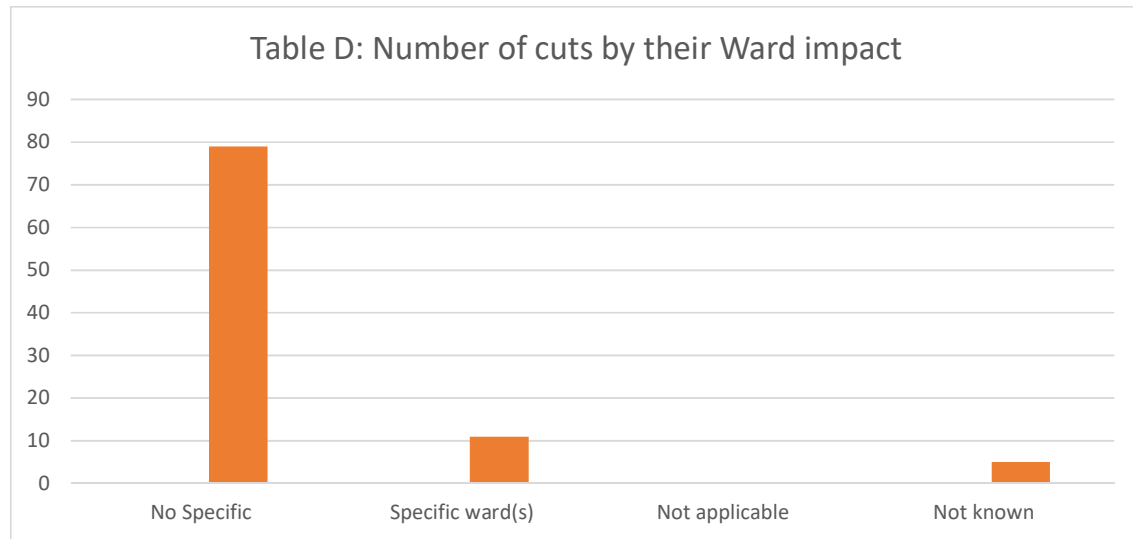
Table C below shows the number of budget proposals where a full Equality Analysis Assessment (EAA) is required. Specifically it shows that 21 proposals with a value of £11,080k will require a full EAA to be completed prior to a final decision being made and the cut implemented in full.



Geographical impact of budget cut proposals

Table D below shows that for the majority 32 (78%) there is no specific ward impact (i.e. the changes will impact services across the Borough as a whole).

The table shows there are 4 proposals with specific ward(s) impact. They are C26, F20, F21, and F22. C26 impacts local leisure facilities and the F proposals impact parking charges so localised according to the arrangement in place by ward.



Impact on corporate strategy priorities

The information in the Tables E1 & E2 below show the number and value of the cuts impact by corporate strategy priority.

By number, the three corporate priorities identified as likely to be the most impacted (all of first, second, and third choices) are:

- Giving Children and Young People the best start in life
- Good governance and operational effectiveness (not a formal priority in the corporate strategy but added to capture proposals to operational practice)
- Delivering and defending Health and Social Care.

This impact on priorities is also carried through into the analysis by value of the cuts to the corporate strategy. Looking at the first choice (main priority) impact the number and value of cuts by the three most impacted priorities are:

- Giving Children and Young People the best start in life – 22 cuts for £6,654k
- Good governance and operational effectiveness – 24 cuts for £14,136k
- Delivering and defending Health and Social Care – 18 cuts for £13,862k

For the most significant two service priorities identified - Children, Health and Social Care - to put this into context the Council's overall net general fund budget has 70%

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of the budget for adult and children social care and public health. The cuts identified to these priorities for Children, Health and Social Care (although they are not the only ones impacting these services and other will be under good governance for example) represent £20.5m (49%) of the total £41.6m of proposals.

