Cumulative impact analysis of Member budget savings proposals for 2023-24

Summary

1.1. The purpose of this summary is to provide an overview of how budget savings pro formas requiring Mayor and Cabinet approval have taken account of impacts in the following areas:

- Equalities (particularly 'protected characteristics')
- Socio-economic impact
- Impact against Corporate Priorities
- Impact on the Council's equality objectives

1.2. The contents of this paper, reflect the totality of information that has been provided and by extension, the way in which relevant guidance has been understood and applied.

1.3. The expectation is that Equalities Analysis Assessments (EAA) are conducted in accordance with the circumstances set out within the Policy Context section of this paper. This report provides an overview of the circumstances and proposals for which officers are planning to undertake EAAs.

2. Policy Context

2.1. The Council has a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.The following equalities characteristics are 'protected' from unlawful discrimination in service provision under the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

2.2. In addition to the General Duty, specific duties include a need to have defined equalities objectives and to publish information to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty, specifically, information relating to people who share a protected characteristic and who are employed by or affected by the policies and practices of the organisation.

2.3. The Single Equality Framework 2020-24 is a delivery vehicle for the Council's corporate equality objectives. As such, it helps to ensure that all of the various activities that are geared towards the delivery of the Corporate Strategy are 'equality proofed'. It also helps to ensure that, where there are gaps in the Council's knowledge, careful and thoughtful analysis can be undertaken, ahead of time, to identify risks and any mitigating action that needs to be taken. Lewisham Council has a strong and clear commitment to equality and a series of specific objectives are set out within the Single Equality Framework. These are as follows:

- To ensure equal opportunities for marginalised and seldom heard communities.
- To reduce the number of vulnerable people in the borough by tackling socio-economic inequality.
- To improve the quality of life of residents by tackling preventable illnesses and diseases.
- To ensure that services are designed and delivered to meet the needs of Lewisham's diverse population.
- To increase the number of people we support to become active citizens.

2.4. The six equality prisms as defined in the Single Equality Framework 2020-24 are set out below:

- Has consideration been given to the 'due regard' duty?
- Is disproportionality a factor?
- Is intersectionality a factor?
- Is unconscious bias a factor?
- Is the risk of unfairness a factor?
- Is marginalisation a factor?

2.5. The Council's Corporate Equality Policy defines the local arrangements for delivering the above objectives, based on evolving best practice, as part of a 'Living Policy Framework'.

2.6. The expectation is that an EAA should be undertaken for all budget savings proposals. For the avoidance of doubt, an EAA is a succinct way of documenting how thinking, reasoning and logic have been applied and does require detailed narrative. Evidence used to inform an EAA should be presented to demonstrate how this has been weighed and measured to reach an informed conclusion about risk and mitigating actions.

2.7. The 'Fairer Lewisham Duty' is part of the Council's Corporate Equality Policy.

Specifically, it informs the equalities assessment of the likely socio-economic impacts of proposals and decisions on residents and service users.

3. Background

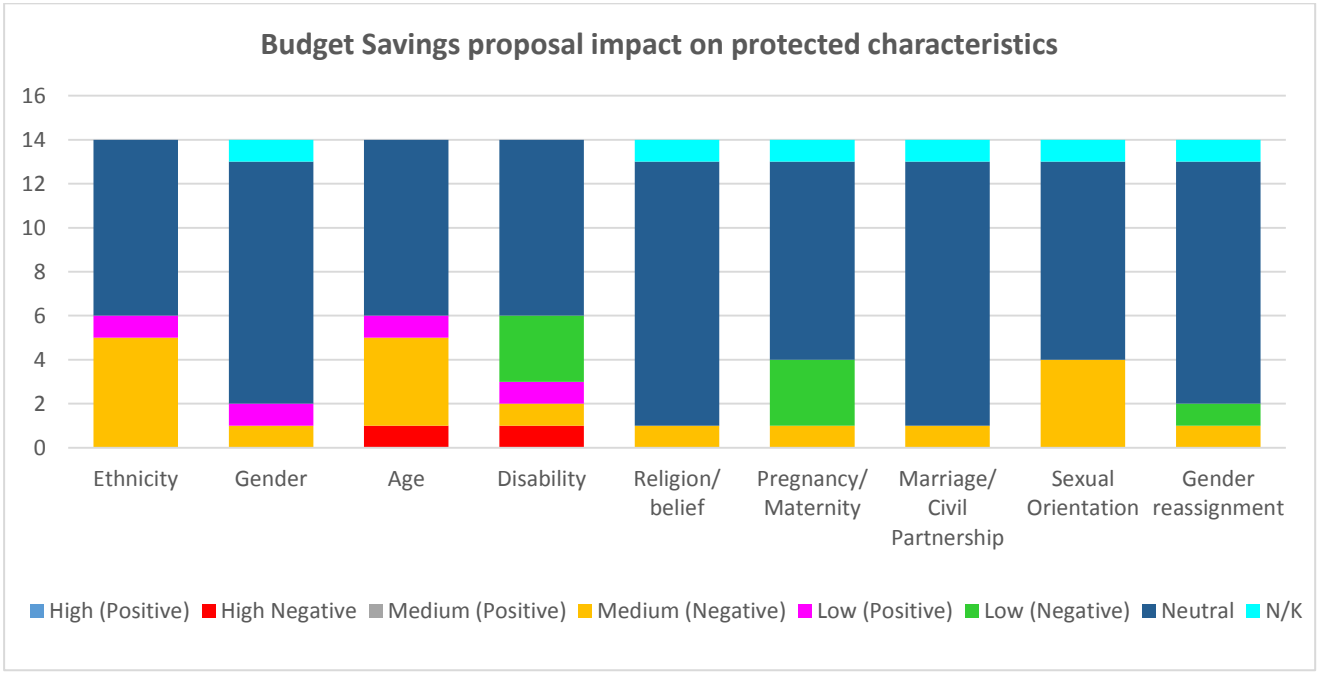
3.1. Budget savings proformas contain equalities screening information. It is this data and insight that has been used to inform the analysis of likely cummulative impacts. The purpose of the screening data is to identify impact level against each of the protected characteristics as well as Corporate Strategy priorties. In some instances, mitigating action and data is provided but this is usually limited at the screening phase.

3.2. Information from screening is also used to inform an initial judgement with respect to whether or not a full EAA may be required. It is therefore important to ensure that, whilst the savings proforma do not need to be detailed, for equality impact purposes, they do need to contain sufficient information for reliable inferences to be drawn.

4. Impact across protected characteristics

4.1. The chart below shows the anticipated impact of Member budget savings proposals across characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010. Specifically, it shows that as an aggregate, the greater number of savings proposals across all protected characteristics, will have a 'neutral' impact.

4.2. There are two protected characteristics where it is judged that the impact will be 'high and negative'. These are 'age' and 'disability'. Savings proposals with a 'medium and negative' impact will affect all protected characteristics, with the greatest number of these affecting 'ethnicity'. Three protected characteristics 'disability', 'pregnancy and maternity' and 'gender reassignment' will be impacted by savings proposal judged to be 'low and negative'.



4.3. For the purposes of this report, those budget savings proposals that are judged to have a 'high', 'medium' or low' negative impact on protected characteristics are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Savings proposals with a 'negative impact' on protected characteristics

Savings proposal	Impact range		
	High (Negative)	**Medium (Negative)**	**Low (Negative)**
NHS health checks		Age Ethnicity Sexual orientation	Disability Pregnancy & Maternity
Sexual and reprpoductive health services in primary care		Age Ethnicity Sexual orientation	Disability Pregnancy & Maternity
Public Health weight management		Age Ethnicity Sexual orientation	Disability Pregnancy & Maternity
Library and Information Service – Opening hours reduction		All protected characteristics	
Review of the road safety service	Age Disability	Ethnicity	

5. Socio-economic impact

5.1. The chart below shows the impact judgement of budget savings proposals against Corporate Strategy Priorities.

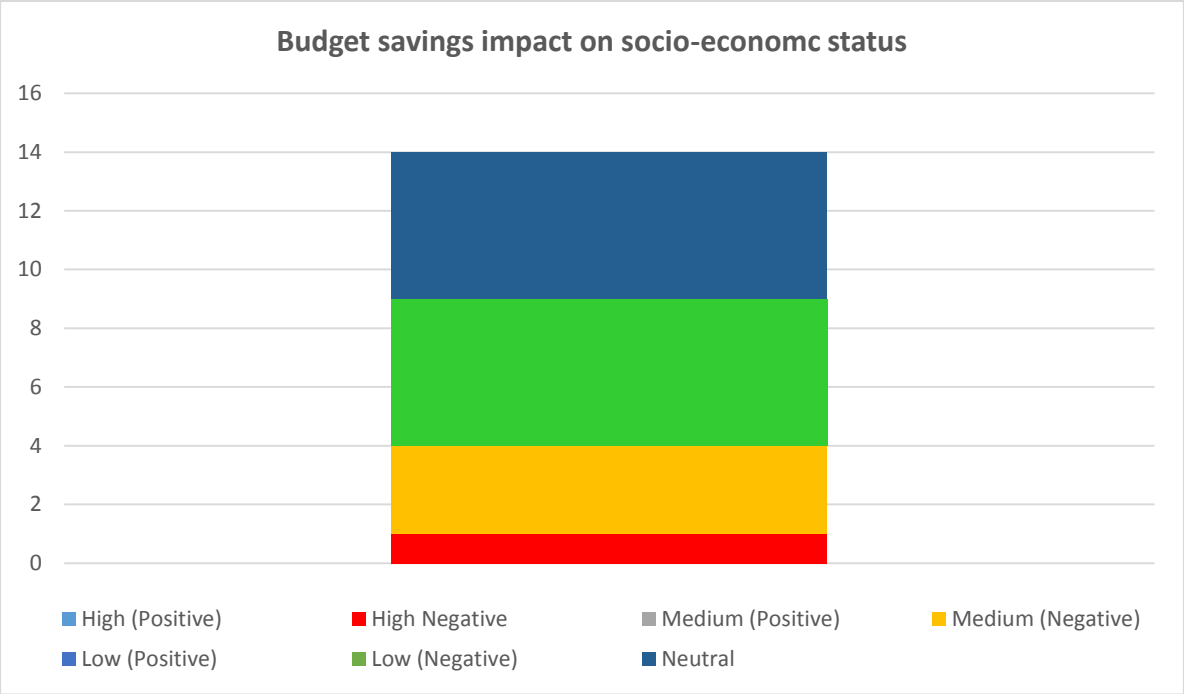
5.2. Although not a characteristic protected under the Equality Act 2010, consideration has been given to the impact of budget savings proposals on 'socio-economic status'.

5.3. This is particularly important in light of factors such as the high levels of relative deprivation in the borough (Lewisham ranks 63rd nationally and 7th overall in London) as well as the broader context of the ongoing cost of living crisis (Lewisham is below the London average in terms of median household income). In addition, whilst the borough continues its recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, the Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimant count remains stubbornly high, currently more than 12,300 (higher than the March 2020, pre-pandemic total of 8,400, but significantly lower than the March 2021 pandemic high of nearly 21,000).

5.4. To better understand the likely socio-economic impacts of budget savings, proposals will be considered through the lens of the 'Fairer Lewisham Duty' Guidance, which functions as a socio-economic framework to test and inform thinking. This lens will be applied through the EAA process.

5.5. The chart below profiles budget saving impacts on 'socio-economic status'.

Specifically, it shows that for those savings proposals where a 'socio-economic status' impact has been identified, about two thirds of these will be 'negative' (either 'high', 'medium' or 'low'). Of these, the impact of one proposal is expected to be 'high and negative', whilst the impact of three others is expected to be 'medium and negative'. Five savings proposals, are expected to have a 'low and negative' impact.



5.6. Those proposals judged as likely to have a 'negative' impact on socio-economic status are set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Savings proposal with a negative impact on 'socio-economic status'

Savings proposal	**Impact level**		
	High (Negative)	**Medium (Negative)**	**Low (Negative)**
Increase charge for bulky waste collections			
Increase charge for fridge/ freezer collections			
Charge for mattress collections			
Charge for replacement of refuse and recycling wheelie bins and food caddies			
Sexual and reprpoductive health services in primary care			
Public Health weight management			
Reduction in funding to the general fund element of the Children's Centre Budget			

NHS health checks			
Library and Information Service – Opening hours reduction			

5.8. Given the above mentioned challenges, the EAAs that will be prepared as part of the budget savings process, will highlight in greater detail the likely socio-economic impacts of budget savings on protected groups and, as appropriate, look to map these impacts geo-spatially to areas of relative deprivation. This will aid understanding in terms of those communities likely to be affected as well as any mitigating actions that are appropriate.

6. Impact on Corporate Priorities

6.1. The chart below shows the impact judgement of budget savings proposals against Corporate Strategy Priorities.

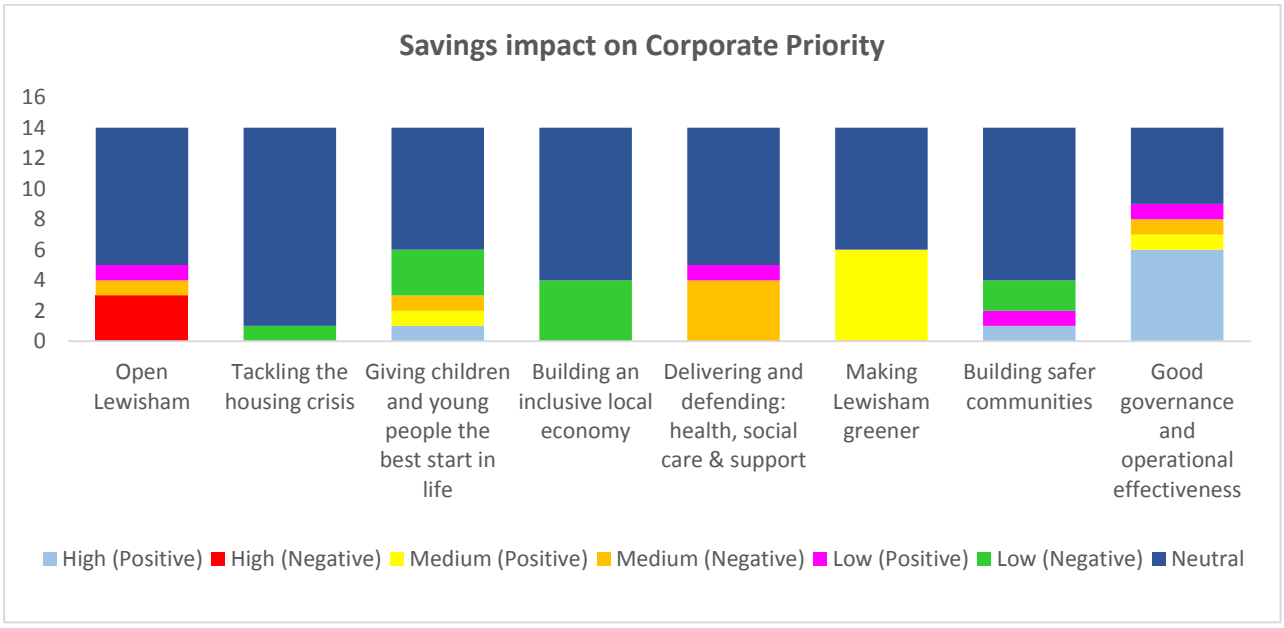
6.2. The chart shows that 'open Lewisham' is the only Corporate Strategy priority with 'high and negative' impacts against it. In total. there are three savings proposals that will have a 'high and negative' impact on this priority.

6.3. There are four priorities where the impact is expected to be 'medium and negative'. These are 'open Lewisham', 'giving children the best start in life', 'delivering and defending: health, social care and support' and 'good governance and operational efficiency'.

6.4. Four priorities: 'tackling the housing crisis', 'giving children the best start in life', 'building an inclusive local economy' and 'building safer communities' are expected to sustain 'low and negative' impacts.

6.5. Six priorities show 'high', 'medium and 'low' positive impacts, with the 'good governance and operational effectiveness' being the only one where the majority of impacts are expected to be 'positive'.

6.6. Overall, the chart shows that across each of the Corporate Strategy priorities, the greater number of impacts will be 'neutral'.



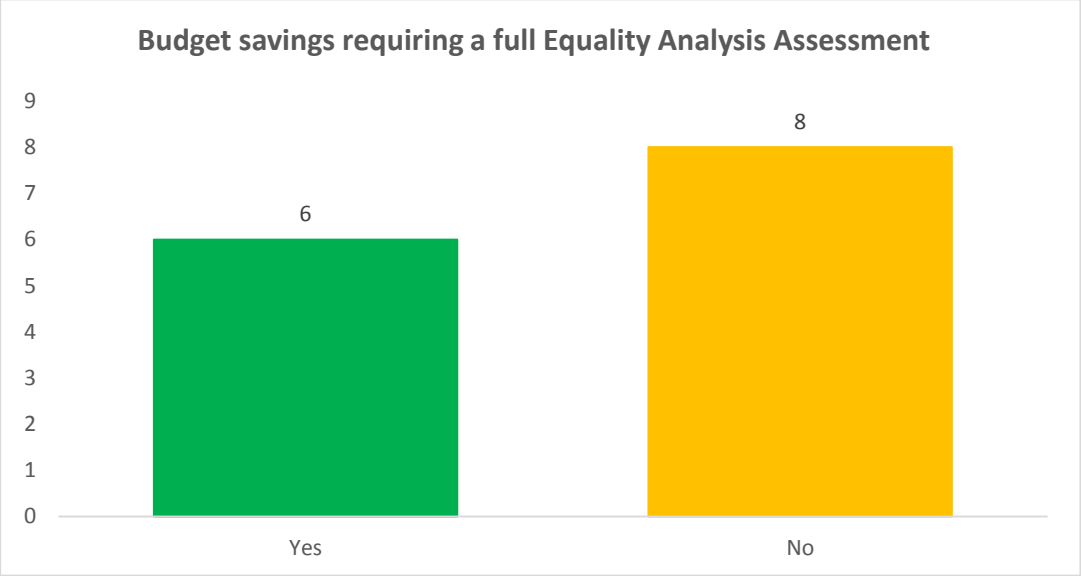
6.7. The specific budget savings proposals with a 'high and negative' impact on the Corporate Strategy priority 'open Lewisham' are set out in Table 2 below.

Table 3: Savings proposals with a 'high and negative' impact on Corporate Strategy priorities

Proposal	Specific priority impacted
Public Health weight management savings	Open Lewisham
Sexual and reproductive health services in Primary Care	Open Lewisham
NHS health checks	Open Lewisham

7. Proposals identified as requiring Full EAAs

7.1. The chart below shows the count of 'Yes' or 'No' responses to the question 'whether or not a full EAA is required' in relation to budget savings proposals.



7.2. At this stage, those budget savings proposals that have been identified for an EAA are as follows:

- Public Health weight management savings
- Sexual reproductive health services in Primary Care
- NHS health checks
- Reduction in funding to the general fund element of the Children's Centre Budget
- Library and Information Service – opening hours reduction
- Review of the Road Safety Service

7.3. However, the expectation is that all budget savings proposals should be subject to an EAA, whether or not this was the original intention.

8. Initial assessment of impact on the Council's equality objectives

8.1. Table 4 below presents an initial assessment of the likely impact of Member budget savings on the Council's corporate equality objectives. The assessment is based on the totality of information provided in the proformas and in particular that relating to likely impacts on protected characteristics (including socio-economic status) and on Corporate Strategy priorities.

8.2. As part of the EAA process, officers will be specifically required to indicate how their proposals will impact on the Council's equality objectives. The detail of the equality impact in terms of 'positive', 'neutral' or 'negative'; the scale, scope severity and of impacts as well actions to mitigate harm, will also be contained within the EAAs.

8.3. The initial assessment is that the impact of budget savings proposals on four of five equality objectives will be 'negative', whilst the impact on the other will be 'neutral'. The risk to equality objectives relates to the socio-economic impact of proposals to introduce charges as well as several other proposals impacting the accessibility of health care provision.

Table 4: Initial assessment of impact on equality objectives

Equality objective	Positive	Neutral	Negative
To ensure equal opportunities for marginalised and seldom heard communities			
To reduce the number of vulnerable people in the borough by tackling socio-economic inequality			
To improve the quality of life of residents by tackling preventable illnesses and diseases			
To ensure that services are designed and delivered to meet the needs of Lewisham's diverse population			
To increase the number of people we support to become active citizens			

9. Assurance regarding budget savings determined as officer decisions

9.1. As set out in Article 16 of the Council's Constitution, all decisions, including budget savings proposals considered as part of the 2023-24 savings round, will be subject to the same rigour with regard to equality impact judgements. The expectation therefore is that where a full EAA is required, this will be conducted.