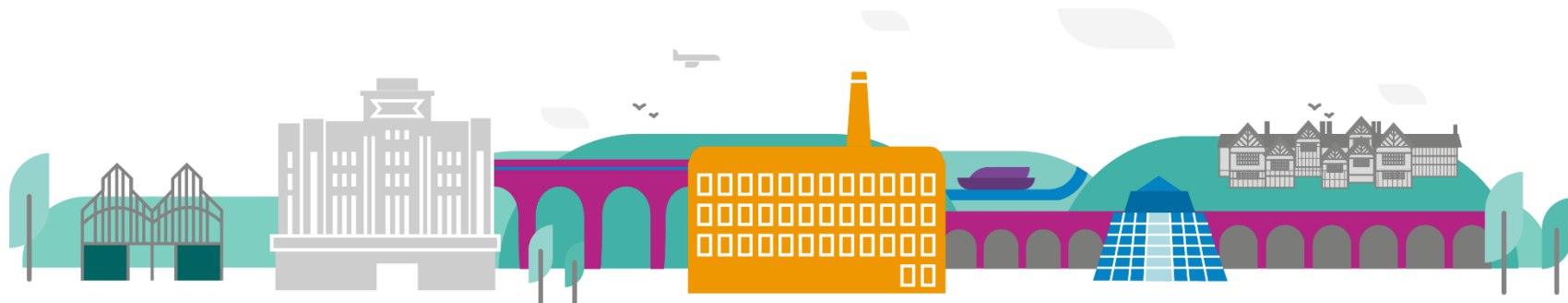




**Communities & Transport
Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Proposals
Equality Impact Assessment
December 2023**



Equality Impact Assessment

Title of report or proposal	Communities & Transport Scrutiny Committee – Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Proposals		
Lead officer(s)	Business Relationship Manager/ Transformation Lead	Date	December 2023
Aims and desired outcomes of the proposal Are you trying to solve an existing problem?			
<p>The report analysed in this EqlA outlines our strategic approach in responding to the review of the medium-term financial plan (MTFP). The budget proposals being considered by the Cabinet aim to address financial and demand challenges, enable longer term transformation, and ensure the delivery of shared strategic partnership ambitions. Our collective focus is on actions which deliver outcomes to support and enhance our communities and businesses across Stockport.</p> <p>To understand the impact of our proposals on our residents and communities we will undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EqlAs) for each of these programmes of work. This EqlA aims to assess the impacts of the proposals brought to the Communities & Transport Scrutiny Committee, and should be considered alongside EqlAs for the remaining programmes of work as well as a cumulative assessment for the whole of the MTFP programme.</p>			
Scope of the proposal Include the teams or service areas from the Council and outward-facing services or initiatives			
<p>Proposals span the Communities, Culture & Sport and the Parks, Highways & Transport Services portfolios which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries - standardise staffed hours at all of our 13 libraries which have Open Plus technology installed and have one more full day of self-service access in these libraries. Also reviewing management staffing structures, spend on the book fund and online resources. • Service efficiencies and reduction in services – Corporate and Support Services: Reduction in a post within the Communities Team; Registrars income yield; Strategic Infrastructure: Reviewing services to identify opportunities to reduce costs through small reduction in officer capacity. • Increased fees and charges across Place Management • Bereavement services • A review of free car parks and permit schemes <p>Details of proposals can be found in the corresponding report.</p>			
What are the possible solutions you have been / will be exploring? You should refer to any business cases, issues papers or options appraisals			
<p>All proposals being explored are listed in the corresponding reports.</p>			

<p>Who has been involved in the solution exploration? Please list any internal and external stakeholders</p>
<p>Senior management from CSS and Place directorates and relevant service teams, including Neighbourhoods, Libraries and Strategic Infrastructure, have been consulted during proposal development.</p>
<p>What evidence have you gathered as a part of this EqIA? Which groups have you consulted or engaged with as part of this EqIA? Sources can include but are not limited to: Statistics, JSNAs, stakeholder feedback, equality monitoring data, existing briefings, comparative data from local, regional or national sources. Groups could include but are not limited to: equality / disadvantaged groups, VCSFE organisations, user groups, GM Equality panels, employee networks, focus groups, consultations.</p>
<p>This equality impact assessment is a live document and will include evidence gathered from engagement and consultation as the project progresses.</p> <p>Population information gathered from: Census 2021 data; service user data, JSNA data.</p> <p>At present, service user data recorded by our Libraries does not include information on the range of protected characteristics (although Libraries membership data does provide an age breakdown).</p>
<p>Are there any evidence gaps that make it difficult or impossible to form an opinion on how the proposed activity might affect different groups of people?</p>
<p>It is important to note that details for a large part of the proposals are not known at time of writing. It is recommended that EqIAs are performed at the project level whilst these projects are being shaped.</p>

Step 1: Establishing and developing the baseline

Characteristic	Demographic of residents / service users
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stockport has more older people and fewer younger adults than the national average. The median age of Stockport is 42 compared to the national average of 40. 2021 data shows 20% of Stockport's population are over 65. 61% are aged 15-64, and 20% are under 15 years old.

Characteristic	Demographic of residents / service users																										
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is likely that the older population of Stockport will increase – projections show that 2 in 9 residents will be aged 65 or over by 2030. Older populations are more common in more affluent areas. Older residents are less likely to have the means (whether connection, devices or skills) to access services and information digitally. 2023 service data shows the following age breakdown for Library membership: <table border="1" data-bbox="638 400 1079 1018"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="638 400 846 523">Borrower Age</th> <th data-bbox="846 400 1079 523">Percentage Breakdown of borrowers based on age</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td data-bbox="638 523 846 563">Under 5</td><td data-bbox="846 523 1079 563">3.35</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="638 563 846 603">5 - 10</td><td data-bbox="846 563 1079 603">13.75</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="638 603 846 643">11 - 13</td><td data-bbox="846 603 1079 643">8.85</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="638 643 846 683">14 - 17</td><td data-bbox="846 643 1079 683">10.20</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="638 683 846 722">18 - 25</td><td data-bbox="846 683 1079 722">8.81</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="638 722 846 762">26 - 30</td><td data-bbox="846 722 1079 762">3.10</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="638 762 846 802">31 - 40</td><td data-bbox="846 762 1079 802">9.69</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="638 802 846 842">41 - 50</td><td data-bbox="846 802 1079 842">10.64</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="638 842 846 882">51 - 60</td><td data-bbox="846 842 1079 882">9.68</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="638 882 846 922">61 - 70</td><td data-bbox="846 882 1079 922">7.35</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="638 922 846 962">71 - 80</td><td data-bbox="846 922 1079 962">8.11</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="638 962 846 1018">81 - 100</td><td data-bbox="846 962 1079 1018">6.33</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Borrower Age	Percentage Breakdown of borrowers based on age	Under 5	3.35	5 - 10	13.75	11 - 13	8.85	14 - 17	10.20	18 - 25	8.81	26 - 30	3.10	31 - 40	9.69	41 - 50	10.64	51 - 60	9.68	61 - 70	7.35	71 - 80	8.11	81 - 100	6.33
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<p>Disability Consider people with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities and mental health issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 44% of Stockport residents have a long-term health condition, which increases with age with 92% of those 85 and over. 34% of Stockport households have at least one member with a disability. The proportion of children with SEND is twice as high in more deprived areas of Stockport. An estimated 6,430 of young people (age 5-19) have a mental health disorder. 																										
<p>Gender reassignment A person whose individual experience of gender may not correspond to the sex assigned to them at birth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2021 data suggests that less than 0.5% of the Stockport population is transgender. 																										
<p>Maternity and pregnancy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Birth rates have risen since 2000 in Stockport, although over the last 5 years, fertility rates have been stable, with 3,302 live births in 2018, a rate of 64.3 per 1,000 women. Birth rates have grown most rapidly in the most deprived areas of Stockport, which represent 35% of the population yet account for 45% of new births. 																										

Characteristic	Demographic of residents / service users
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to 2021 data, in Stockport 46.4% of people are married or in a civil partnership. • 45.1% are same-sex couples living together, and 0.4% are opposite-sex couples living together. 0.9% of residents are married or in a civil partnership but are not living together.
Race Not all ethnic groups will have the same experiences so if possible specify whether the impact is likely to be different for different ethnic groups e.g. Indian people, people of Black Caribbean heritage. This also includes Gypsy and Traveller populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 data shows that Stockport is as ethnically diverse as the national average for England. 87% of Stockport residents are White and 12% are from a Black, Asian or Ethnic Minority background. • Ethnically diverse communities tend have a younger age profile than the rest of the borough. • People who are Pakistani are the biggest non-White British / Irish population. • The distribution of diverse communities within Stockport is not even, with the areas of Heald Green, Gatley, and the Heaton being particularly diverse. Some of these areas, the proportion of ethnically diverse communities is over a third of the total population.
Religion or Belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to 2021 data, the largest religious group in Stockport is Christianity with 48% of the population identifying as Christian, although this is decreasing over time (a 15% percentage point decrease since 2011). Those with no religion are the second-most common (40%), which has been increasing alongside the Muslim population (5.5%). • These populations are also not even across Stockport. People living in the south of the borough are more likely to be Christian and Muslims make up around 20-25% of the population in areas of Heald Green and Gatley. Gatley also has a large Jewish community.
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51% of Stockport residents are female and 49% are male, in line with the national average.
Sexual orientation People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 data shows that around 3% of the Stockport population are lesbian, gay, bisexual or other. • 2021 data shows 1.2% of the Stockport population is living as a same-sex couple (this includes couples who are married, in a civil partnership, or unmarried / never registered a civil partnership).
Socioeconomic status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 data looking at 4 areas of potential deprivation (education, employment, health and housing) shows that 49% of households in Stockport were deprived in at least one of these 4 areas. • Areas of deprivation were more common in the central and northern parts of the borough. • 6% of residents in Stockport claim Job Seekers' Allowance / Universal Credit. From October 2019 to February 2021, Universal Credit claimants doubled from 4,725 to 10,685. • 2019 data showed that 0.56% of households in Stockport were noted to have destitution, and it is likely that the pandemic and the cost of living crisis has increased this.
Other Please add in here any additional relevant comments or feedback where the protected characteristic is not known	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to 2021 data, 2.3% of households in Stockport had no members that have English as their main language, and 0.8% cannot speak English at all. • 91% of people living in Stockport were born in the UK. 4.8% of people in Stockport have a non-UK identity
Carers	
Care leavers	

Characteristic	Demographic of residents / service users
Those experiencing homelessness	
Veterans	
Asylum seekers and refugees	

Step 2: Identifying impacts the proposal will have compared with the baseline

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
1	Age – older people	Negative	Proposals	Libraries Older people will be able to access library buildings during Open Plus hours every day of the week by swiping library membership cards. However, older people are more likely to be digitally excluded; they are less likely to have the skills and knowledge to be able to self-serve (e.g. borrow books, use library PC's) without the support of a member of staff during these unstaffed hours. The reduction in hours when staffed support is available may also impact older people who may be experiencing social isolation, as well as impacting access to information, advice and guidance provided or signposted by staff members.	
2	Age – older people	Negative	Proposals	Increased fees & charges Older people are potentially more likely to rely on private cars as transport and so increases to parking charges may affect this group, although there are reduced / free bus fares for pensioners.	
3	Age – younger people	Negative	Proposals	Libraries	

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
				Young people under 16 years of age will not be able to access libraries alone during Open Plus hours.	
4	Disability Consider people with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities and mental health issues	Negative/ Positive	Proposals	Libraries People with disabilities will be able to access library buildings during Open Plus hours every day of the week by swiping library membership cards. However, people with disabilities are more likely to be digitally excluded; they are less likely to have the skills and knowledge to be able to self-serve (e.g. borrow books, use library PC's) without the support of a member of staff during these unstaffed hours. The reduction in hours when staffed support is available may also impact access to information, advice and guidance provided or signposted by staff members to this group. Impacts will vary and feedback from some residents with special educational needs and disabilities suggests that there are benefits to them of accessing libraries during these quieter times.	
5	Disability	Negative	Proposals	Increased fees & charges People with mobility issues and physical disabilities often rely on private cars as transport and so increases to parking charges may affect this group. Although, people with blue badges will maintain parking access and will be unaffected by the proposals.	
	Gender reassignment A person whose individual experience of gender may not correspond to the sex assigned to them at birth.	-		There is no known evidence to suggest that these groups will be disproportionately impacted by the proposals.	
6	Maternity and pregnancy	-		There is no known evidence to suggest that these groups will be disproportionately impacted by the proposals.	

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
	Marriage and Civil Partnership	-		There is no known evidence to suggest that these groups will be disproportionately impacted by the proposals.	
	Race Not all ethnic groups will have the same experiences so if possible specify whether the impact is likely to be different for different ethnic groups e.g. Indian people, people of Black Caribbean heritage. This also includes Gypsy and Traveller populations	-		There is no known evidence to suggest that these groups will be disproportionately impacted by the proposals.	
	Religion or Belief	-		There is no known evidence to suggest that these groups will be disproportionately impacted by the proposals.	
7	Sex	Negative	Proposals	Service efficiencies The majority of council staff are women, therefore any impacts of this proposal on staff such as staffing changes are likely to disproportionately affect women.	
	Sexual orientation Consider how the proposed policy may differently impact people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual	-		There is no known evidence to suggest that these groups will be disproportionately impacted by the proposals.	
8	Socioeconomic status	Negative	Proposals	Increased fees & charges	

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
				Increasing the charge for services will likely negatively impact those on low incomes, in receipt of benefits or who are experiencing poverty. The people will be less likely to afford the additional charges and therefore may be unable to access this service.	
9	Socioeconomic status	Negative	Proposals	Libraries People living in poverty may be negatively impacted by a reduction in hours when staffed support is available in terms of access to information, advice and guidance provided or signposted by staff members, including cost of living support. People living in poverty are more likely to be digitally excluded; they are less likely to have the skills and knowledge to be able to self-serve (e.g. borrow books, use library PC's) without the support of a member of staff during these unstaffed hours.	
You are encouraged to consider the below characteristics where you have relevant data, especially if your proposal is predicted to disproportionately impact one or more of these groups.					
	Carers	-		There is no known evidence to suggest that these groups will be disproportionately impacted by the proposals.	
	Care leavers	-		There is no known evidence to suggest that these groups will be disproportionately impacted by the proposals.	
10	Those experiencing homelessness	Negative		Libraries People experiencing homelessness may be negatively impacted by a reduction in hours when staff support is available in terms of access to information, advice and guidance provided or signposted by staff members, including cost of living support. People experiencing homelessness are more likely to be digitally excluded; they are less likely to have the skills and knowledge to be able to self-serve (e.g. borrow books, use library PC's) without support of a member of staff during these unstaffed hours.	
	Veterans	-		There is no known evidence to suggest that these groups will be disproportionately impacted by the proposals.	

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
11	Asylum seekers and refugees			<p>Libraries</p> <p>Asylum Seekers and refugees may be negatively impacted by a reduction in hours when staff support is available in terms of access to information, advice and guidance provided or signposted by staff members, including cost of living support.</p>	

Step 3: Identifying mitigating factors to minimise negative impacts

Impact no.	Impact summary	Suggested mitigation and rationale	Evidence for solution	Feasibility
1, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11	An increase in Open Plus unstaffed/ self-serve hours may present a barrier to access for certain groups such as older people, disabled people, young people	<p>The Home Library Service continues to be available for residents who cannot physically access a library.</p> <p>Whilst there will be additional unstaffed days, there will always be a library with staff in available to use within a cluster area.</p> <p>Whilst access to digital support in libraries to do things online may be impacted, digital skills support is available elsewhere through the DigiKnow programme - a growing network of support for the digitally excluded in Stockport.</p> <p>At least one staffed library will be open until 6pm every day of the week and all libraries will be open Saturday 10-2pm.</p> <p>The Council Contact Centre is available for residents who require libraries support over the phone.</p>		Included in proposals
2, 4, 5, 7	Increases in fees and charges may exclude those on lower incomes.	<p>Prices will be benchmarked with others across GM to ensure market comparison.</p> <p>With regards to the bereavement service increase in fees, there will be a range of prices to ensure there is an affordable offer for residents. In addition, there is support available for any families who are struggling through the Funeral Support payment.</p>		Included in proposals
6	Service restructures and subsequent staffing changes could result in redundancies and council staff feeling stressed	Careful and skilful design will be needed to mitigate this and increased wellbeing support should be made available to all affected colleagues.		Included in proposals

Please state if there are any additional comments or suggestions that could promote equalities in the future.

Step 4: Conclusions and outcome

If you have not undertaken any community engagement for this EqlA, please indicate this and explain why.

We have sought views on all our change proposals through our overall budget public consultation.

If there are impacts identified that cannot be mitigated against, are there any justifications for not taking any action to improve the negative impacts that have been identified?

The council faces many challenges including external financial pressures, balancing the pandemic response while continuing to deliver core service. Ensuing all this is delivered whilst delivering longer term change is acutely challenging. Delivering a resilient budget can only be achieved through difficult decisions, robust prioritisation and ambitious change. The way we work and the services we provide should meet the needs of local people today and in the future.

Are there any adverse impacts that can be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason? Please state why.

Are there any other proposals or policies that you are aware of that could create a cumulative impact?

This is an impact that appears when you consider services or activities together. A change or activity in one area may create an impact somewhere else.

Please see MTFP cumulative equality analysis.

Based on your equality impact analysis, please indicate the outcome of this EqIA.

Please indicate the outcome of the EqIA and provide justification and / or changes planned as required.

A.	No major barriers identified, and there are no major changes required – proceed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
B.	Adjustments to remove barriers, promote equality and / or mitigate impact have been identified and are required – proceed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C.	Positive impact for one or more of the groups justified on the grounds of equality – proceed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
D.	Barriers and impact identified, however having considered available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice – proceed with caution, knowing that this policy or practice may favour some people less than others. Strong justification for this decision is required.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
E.	This policy identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination – stop and rethink.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please describe briefly how this EqIA will be monitored.

When will this be reviewed? What mitigating actions need to be implemented and when?

This EqIA will be returned to at various stages of proposal development.

It is recommended that EqIAs should be implemented at the project level.