

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee – 26 February 2024
Council – 1 March 2024

Subject: Budget Equality and Poverty Impact Assessments

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer

Summary

This report provides details on how the approach to Equality Impact Assessments and Poverty Impact Assessments have been embedded in the Budget setting and business planning processes. The report also covers the budget setting process for 2024/25 and the impact this will have on equalities and poverty.

Recommendations

Members are requested to note the contents of this report.

Wards Affected: All

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| <p>Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city</p> | <p>The production of an Equality Impact Assessment does not directly impact on the achievement of the city's zero-carbon target. However, it is recognised that some resident groups in Manchester will potentially particularly benefit from advancement on the zero-carbon agenda. More energy efficient housing, healthier households who are more active, safe and can access active travel and public transport will improve residents' lives. Reducing carbon emissions and improve air quality across the city will in turn help reduce health inequalities. Increasing and improving the quality, quantity and accessibility of green spaces and nature within the city, will enable all people to benefit from spending time in nature, resulting in improved physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents.</p> <p>Manchester City Council is mindful of a just transition to achieving its zero carbon ambitions and is conscious of not creating new forms of inequality and poverty and ensuring everyone benefits from the progress being made.</p> |
| <p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the</p> | <p>Manchester City Council has a long-standing commitment to promote equality, celebrate diversity</p> |

issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments

and advance inclusion. This commitment has underpinned the Council's decision making and business planning processes for some years, with equality featured explicitly in business planning documents and Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) carried out for both budget proposals and business as usual changes to Council functions.

EIAs are a vital component of how the Council as a Public Authority considers its policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010. We consider how we:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't
- foster or encourage good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

This paper outlines the identified impacts through the equalities and poverty assessment of the current budget proposals as well as the future service planning approach to ensure equalities considerations are embedded in future service design and delivery.

| Manchester Strategy outcomes | Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS |
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| <p>A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities</p> | <p>EIAs are a vital component of how the Council has due regard for equality and equitability in its decision-making processes. Communities and customers are the focus of the EIAs and the analysis allows the Council to safeguard and enhance community potential and wellbeing in the delivery of its business. This analysis is relevant across all service areas and functions and covers a diverse range of resident groups. As such, the EIA framework potentially connects with all the Our Manchester Strategy outcomes.</p> <p>As the city's economy addresses the cost-of-living crisis, it is critical that our residents with protected characteristics are appropriately supported and will ultimately benefit from the growth and employment opportunities created.</p> |
| <p>A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success</p> | <p>Achieving good educational attainment for people with protected characteristics is needed, alongside fostering talent diversity, and enabling equality of opportunity amongst the city's workforce. All are needed to ensure we sustain the city's economic success.</p> |
| <p>A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities</p> | <p>Enhancing our understanding about our diverse communities and their inequalities will provide an overview of where further work is needed to tackle inequality.</p> |
| <p>A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work</p> | <p>Events and cultural activity that reflect and celebrate the diversity of the city are essential to making Manchester cohesive and a vibrant place to live and visit. And that we have a built environment that is accessible to all people with protected characteristics</p> |
| <p>A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth</p> | <p>Transport and digital inclusion is a key driver of a connected city and essential to enable residents with protected characteristics to fully participate in the all the city has to offer and digital opportunities in jobs and skills.</p> |

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Making Manchester Fairer: Anti-Poverty Strategy 2023-2027 was approved by Executive on 18 January 2023

[Budget Equality and Poverty Impact Assessments, RAGOS, 27 February 2024](#)

[Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2024/25 and Budget - Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee 11 January 2024](#)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Manchester City Council has a long-standing commitment to promote equality, celebrate diversity and advance inclusion. This commitment has underpinned the Council's decision making and business planning processes for some years, with equality considerations featured explicitly in business planning documents and Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) carried out for both budget proposals and business as usual changes to Council functions. This paper outlines the identified impacts through the Equalities and poverty assessment of the current budget proposals as well as the future service planning approach to ensure equalities considerations are embedded in future service design and delivery.
- 1.2 Following funding announcements in the Government's Autumn Statement on 22 November 2023, the provisional local government finance settlement on 18 December 2023 and final local government finance settlement on 5 February 2024 the Council has been able to propose a balanced one-year budget for 2024/25.
- 1.3 The balanced position for 2024/25 is reliant on delivery of savings of £21.374m. This consists of £10.172m which was previously approved as part of the February 2023 MTFP plus an additional £11.202m identified to offset the ongoing impact of Social Care pressures which have emerged in the current year. A breakdown of the savings is included at Appendix 2 of the Medium Term Financial Strategy report elsewhere on this agenda. The detail was considered by the relevant scrutiny committee meetings in early February 2024. As far as possible the savings are aimed at protecting the delivery of council priorities and represent the least detrimental options. Where the measures require an EIA, these have been undertaken.

2. Overview of decision-making framework, monitoring progress and approach to evaluation

- 2.1 Tackling inequalities is a clear and cross cutting theme of the Our Manchester Strategy for the city that was reset in 2021, and of the Council's Corporate Plan that sets out how the Council will deliver the ambitions for the city. Commitments to tackling inequalities are also central to the Council's Business Plan that is included in the Budget papers for 2024/25. Each service is then asked to develop their own service plan for the year and again, describing how the service will take steps to tackle inequalities is a key part of the service planning process.
- 2.2 The Council uses a wide range of data, intelligence and insight about communities in the city and different neighbourhoods and localities to inform decisions and service priorities. An example is the geographical analysis of the impacts of the cost of living that led to targeted investment and support being delivered in 15 priority wards. The annual State of the City report monitors progress – highlighting strengths and issues that need further development – that the city is making against the Our Manchester Strategy ambitions. The Council's Intelligence Hub provides an online interactive

resource that brings together data on different parts of the city at a range of spatial levels.

- 2.3 The Council has a strong commitment to using evidence and evaluation to inform decision making and improve its services. Public service reform programmes each involve selecting interventions that have the strongest evidence base and can be effectively implemented in the context of Manchester. Evaluation tracks the impacts of reform programmes against key indicators of improved outcomes for residents and of reductions in demand for public services. Examples include the Children's Services reform programme and Better Outcomes Better Lives in Adult Social Care.
- 2.4 Children's Early Help has made a significant contribution to the consistent reduction in referrals to Children's services and reductions in the populations of Looked After Children and Children on a Protection Plan. Outcomes have been tracked over ten years for over 710,300 families during the period of support and whether these are sustained for up to twelve months after support ended, and include:
- Social care: 97% of families who received an offer of Early Help were not known to social work within 12 months of intervention ending
 - Children in Need: 83% of children and families who received a service sustained changes a year later and did not require a statutory intervention.
 - Attending school: 30% of families had children with persistent absence before support, this is reduced to 12% after support
 - Crime and disorder. 59% of families had at least one police call out before support, this is reduced to 35% after support
- 2.5 In relation to Adult Social Care Monthly reporting shows that around two thirds (67%) of those receiving reablement leave with no further care required (62%) or reduced care needs (5%). Around 70% of those people receiving Reablement support do not require a package of care afterwards and stay in hospital on average 4 fewer days for non-elective care.
- 2.6 The Council funds and invests in the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in many ways, including the £2.4 million per year Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (OMVCS) grants programme. Established in 2018, the OMVCS programme has been refreshed for the 2023-2026 financial years and is in the process of awarding funding to VCSE organisations across the city. The 2023-2026 programme specifically aims to support organisations that tackle inequalities, reduce poverty, and improve health and well-being. A balanced portfolio of 60 VCSE organisations across the city will be funded through these programmes. Compared to the 2018-2022 OMVCS programme, and again subject to due diligence, there will be an increased share of funding for organisations in North Manchester and an increased share for organisations supporting Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities.

- 2.7 The 2023/24 approved budget included investment of an additional £2 million in support for vulnerable and at-risk residents and the VCSE sector. In 2024/25 the £2m will be used as follows:
- £1m is providing support to Voluntary and Community groups that provide Community Hubs, Good Neighbours Groups and other locally focused activities that support residents in all parts of the city. This has been allocated as part of the Our Manchester grants programme.
 - £770k for the changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme which was approved by Executive in January 2024. The changes followed a consultation exercise and include:-
 - Increase the maximum CTS award from 82.5% to 85% for working age households
 - Adjust the universal credit excess income bands upwards by 2.5% to maintain parity with the 85% maximum award
 - Extend the maximum backdating period from 6 months to 12 months.
 - Following the introduction of a range of measures at June 2023 Executive to support residents who were struggling to pay their council tax, £230k will be used to continue these into 204/25. These include a range of flexibilities in the approach to Council Tax collection and recovery, including a more generous approach to making Discretionary Council Tax Payments (DCTP) to residents. The measures include:
 - Payments of up to £500, or an amount equivalent to three monthly instalments, to be made by staff in the Customer Service Organisation where they believe it will allow residents to continue to meet their regular monthly instalments in the future.
 - An informal breathing space for residents when referred by an Advice Agency or a Manchester Councillor
 - Writing off all but the most recent set of summons costs when a resident in receipt of maximum CTS engages with the Council Tax Service. Non collection of these costs has already been accounted for in the Council's bad debt provision.
 - Writing off summons costs incurred in the current year when residents who have been summonsed contact the Council to make an arrangement.

3. Overview of decision-making framework, monitoring progress and approach to evaluation

- 3.1 The completion of equality analyses, to assess the implications of the business planning and budget proposals process for protected groups under the Equality Act 2010, is now a well-established approach and work has been continuing to ensure it is fully embedded and used effectively.
- 3.2 The Council EIA template was amended in 2020 and there has been a further revision in 2023 to streamline the process and allow for robust decision-

making and ensure accountability and having 'due regard' is embedded through the process. This involves;

- Removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics and their intersectionality.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of the general population.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

3.3 The Council has included additional 'priority groups' as part of the equality impact assessment, in addition to groups protected by the Equality Act 2010. These additional priority groups reflect a greater breadth of inequalities than those addressed by the Act, and touch upon the provisions of Section 1 of the Act, the Socio-economic Duty (which was not enacted). The additional priority groups are:

- Carers
- Care experienced people and care leavers
- Current and former Armed Forces personnel and their families
- People experiencing homelessness
- People living in poverty including socio-economic deprivation

3.4 In October 2022, a Council motion was agreed to give formal recognition to 'young people in care' and 'care experienced people' as additional priority group to be considered in all equality impact assessments carried out during the decision-making and policy-making process. This has also been included in the EIA template.

3.5 The inclusion of poverty in the template is particularly useful as it is recognised that inequalities linked to age, ethnicity, disability, and sex in particular are intrinsically linked to poverty with these groups most likely to be impacted by budget reductions and service changes. The EIA template allows for a high-level assessment of poverty impact, and where it is identified that there is disproportionate impact related to the proposals, a more in-depth analysis and stakeholder engagement will be undertaken using a fuller Budget Impact on Poverty Assessment template.

3.6 The Making Manchester Fairer: Anti-Poverty Strategy 2023-2027 was approved by Executive on 18 January 2023. It replaces and builds on the previous Family Poverty Strategy and covers all ages and all households. It sits within the Making Manchester Fairer framework and focuses on delivering positive changes to tackle poverty in the medium to long term. Priorities for delivery sit under four themes:

- Preventing Poverty – what we can do to prevent residents experiencing poverty
- Mitigating Poverty to make life easier for people experiencing poverty and ensuring their basic needs are met

- Pathways out of Poverty – raising people’s incomes so they can move out of poverty, and
- Inclusive and Effective delivery making sure that people with lived experience of poverty have a voice in anti-poverty work and that interventions are targeted to make sure we consider inequalities and inequity in how poverty is experienced.

3.7 In December 2022 the Council appointed a Joint Director for Equality, Inclusion and Engagement working across MCC and the NHS. This role is responsible for the current council equalities team (effective from 1 March 2023) and their work programme will be synthesised with wider work on Making Manchester Fairer and engagement, therefore ensuring the future delivery of this work in an integrated way. In addition, MCC will be publishing its Equality Objectives for 2024-2028, which will have a focus on employment, community involvement and engagement and inclusion service delivery.

4. 2024/25 Budget proposals

4.1 Service Reductions and Efficiencies - The savings proposals for 2024/25 are largely budget adjustments which do not directly impact on service delivery. Of those proposals recommended to Council the following have been identified as requiring an Equality Impact Assessment.

- Adult Social Care and Homelessness are both progressing with significant transformation programmes. These programmes (Better Outcomes, Better Lives and A Place Called Home) are designed to focus more on individual needs, adopting a person-centred approach with greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention. The models do not propose to reduce the service offer but to reduce future demand for services through this approach. In ASC this approach has been in place for some time and is showing positive impacts and outcomes.
- In Adult Social Care the My Life, My Way transformation programme is progressing. This programme was named after consultation with people with lived experience and is focused upon transforming MCCs in-house services that either support or are accessed by people with a learning disability and/ or autism. The vision of the programme is to transform the services to ensure that they are able the needs of residents with the most complex needs. An Equality Impact Assessment was completed at the programme's inception and is periodically reviewed to ensure the consideration of all protected characteristics within programme activity. This is supported by an iteratively developing communication and engagement approach and plan for the programme. The approach is building upon past engagement with service users, families, carers, and advocates such as, during the commissioning day services review, to ensure that the future service offers are inclusive and equitable without being detrimental to any residents.

- Work is also underway on the way in which equalities data is collected in ASC, supporting the ability to be better informed on the impact of changes being made to services. This will be informed by greater emphasis on Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) including stakeholder engagement, working with the Equalities and Engagement Team, on emerging new approaches.
- From a homelessness perspective, the Council's allocation policy was amended in February 2023 to enable the Council to prevent homelessness at a much earlier stage and provide more accommodation options, as well as retain priority on the housing register. The Council is also creating alternative accommodation options to temporary accommodation through a series of innovative leasing schemes. Homelessness has identified that changes in service provision are required to reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation, and to reduce, and ultimately eradicate, the need for rough sleeping on the streets. It is anticipated that there will be a continued reduction in use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation and a reduced number of homeless presentations through improved prevention.
- A full Equalities Impact Assessment of the Homelessness changes was undertaken in January 2023. 2024/25 is the second year of the three-year plan and the assessments are subject to frequent review and updating. Using data from statutory presentations as well as monitoring collected from street-based outreach and engagement teams, the service has put forward mitigation and an enhanced offer by commissioning services for specific protected characteristic and other groups, for example LGBT youth and asylum seekers.
- These are service redesigns with a clear purpose, and which identify a change of ethos and methodology, as opposed to simply reducing the cost of provision. The impact on individuals, and cohorts of individuals is factored into the monitoring and evaluation of the transformation programmes, and it is essential that these considerations do not lose traction as progress is made.
- The Resident and Business Digital Experience Programme has also completed an Equality Impact Assessment which continues to be reviewed and updated throughout the lifecycle of the programme. This assessment considers the impact changes delivered by the programme will have on our diverse communities in particular the channel shift anticipated to be delivered through the implementation of an improved digital offer which we anticipate will become a preferred method of contact for most of our residents and businesses. Similar to the approaches outlined above, this project does not recommend a service reduction but service changes which will ultimately reduce costs. The needs of our diverse communities have been considered during the early stages of the project with inclusive design embedded in the approach and resident accessibility and digital inclusion being factored into the testing and implementation of new systems and services. An in person and alternative offer will also be

maintained for those residents unable to access the digital offer. The project team has invited the Staff Disability Network to take part in the forms testing and consult with the Equalities team on an ongoing basis to ensure that inclusion is kept at the forefront of the project.

- The project has engaged with Manchester Disability Collaborative and are working with Invuse, accessibility specialists, to carry out a full accessibility compliance test for the CRM against the WCAG 2.2 AA criteria. We will use this to inform the accessibility statement for the new CRM, to outline compliance with the new accessibility guidelines, WCAG 2.2 AA. Work has also been carried out with disability charities such as Breakthrough UK and RNIB to plan in usability testing with disabled consultants.
- Highways maintenance completed an EIA for restrictions on planned works to hold maintenance vacancies but did not identify any impacts.

4.2 Increasing income

- The budget will include a proposal to increase Council Tax in line with the Spending Power assumptions set by national Government, with an increase of 4.99%. This increase in Council Tax payable will directly impact on all Manchester residents, especially those already, or at risk of, living in poverty, in particular disabled people, communities experiencing and impacted by racial inequality and women. As part of the budget setting process, a comprehensive Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment has been completed and indicates extensive use of data from the most recent Census, Indices of Multiple Deprivation, and statistics from Council Tax relief. The assessment considers the impact of the council tax increase as well as indicating what mitigations need to be put in place for any cohorts of citizens with protected characteristics who may be adversely affected by an increase in Council Tax in Manchester. The range of support provided to Manchester residents includes discretionary support schemes, as well as support to manage the payments and repay debt.
- As part of the budget proposals, Council housing rents are to increase in line with the Government cap, that is 7.7% for both social rented stock and PFI properties. Government has announced that benefits are to increase in line with the September 2023 CPI rate with effect from April 2024, this will help mitigate any impact of the increase for tenants in receipt of benefits. Additional financial support is available which is targeted at those most affected by the cost-of-living crisis and provides support relating to rent, energy bills or other household bills to all City Council tenants, which includes residents within PFI areas. The Community Living Fund is proposed to be retained for 2024/25 with £300k being made available, alongside the carry forward of any funds remaining from the 2023/24 scheme.
- Housing Services are developing an EIA on both rent and heating charges to ensure that services understand and are aware of the support needed

by the residents who are most significantly impacted by the increases. This will include both PFI stock and Council managed stock to establish whether there are any specific cohorts with protected characteristics who will be impacted. As part of the budget process a £300k budget has been established to provide support to any households who may require support. An EIA will be undertaken during March 2024 and any identified impacts will be reviewed and a suitable mitigation plan will be agreed with consideration to the additional support outlined in section 5 of this paper.

- As part annual budget process all sales, fees and charges have been reviewed to ensure that they are services are fully recovering fees where appropriate, and also to ensure that budgets are uplifted where possible to reflect any realignment of budgets because of increased activity, or any increased income from proposed price increases. As part of the review it was recommended that some external charges are increased by up to 5% from 1st April. Rather than increasing by September CPI which was 6.7% it was proposed to cap the non-contractual increases at 5%.
- Planned increases with a potential impact on residents include a 5% increase to Compliance income, inflationary increase to bulky waste collections, 5% increase for highways fees and permits, increased vehicle clamping income and increased registrars fees to align to other Core Cities. Minimal equalities impacts were identified in relation to these planned changes.

5. Increased Investment and support for people experiencing poverty

- 5.1 Manchester City Council is committed to tackling poverty and inequity through the Making Manchester Fairer action plan which sets out Manchester's response to the Sir Michael Marmot report "Build Back Fairer in Greater Manchester: Health Equity and Dignified Lives". It sets out the City's whole system approach to addressing health inequalities across a five-year period 2022-27. The plan includes tackling poverty and debt as one of the most significant routes to improving health outcomes in Manchester. The Manchester Anti-Poverty Strategy sits under the '[Making Manchester Fairer](#)' Plan to support the delivery of these priority actions. It covers all life-stages and households and also includes a spatial focus. The strategy will strongly influence the work in ASC by ensuring there is a heightened focus on more marginalised communities and those with protected characteristics. The Carers Emergency Fund, for example, is one way of supporting unpaid carers to receive emergency help at a time of genuine crisis with small cash grants, white goods etc. to carry on caring.
- 5.2 A core team has been created to drive delivery of both the Making Manchester Fairer Action Plan and the Anti-Poverty Strategy. This team supplements existing Public Health resources allocated to this work and is complemented by a virtual team drawn from each of the council's directorate. In addition, there is a Making Manchester Fairer investment fund of £3 million to support two 'kickstarter' schemes, to improve health equity on an invest to save approach. The schemes prioritised for phase 1 are: (1) improving health

equity for children and young people and (2) early help for adults experiencing multiple and complex disadvantage.

- 5.3 In the context of rapidly rising inflation and significant increases in energy and food costs, MCC undertook analysis in summer 2022 to identify households who would be particularly hard hit because they have very low discretionary spend. A recent update of the intelligence underpinning this work, showed that the number of households with £30 or less discretionary income per month rose from 40,000 households to 41,300 households and the 60,000 households with between £30 and £124 per month stayed broadly the same. The data included the relevant Census and Family Poverty data. The areas with the greatest increase in numbers and concentrations of financially vulnerable households showed the need to add 4 additional wards to the original 11 priority wards for the Cost-of-Living response.
- 5.4 The Council reinstated the Residents at Risk group in October 2022. The group brings together MCC services and health partners to support our residents and neighbourhoods who need it most. Underpinned by the Cost-of-Living Advice Line (freephone & online), the offer includes financial support and advice, community food response, support for VCSE organisations to increase their resilience and capacity, targeted support for communities experiencing the most adverse impacts, neighbourhood response with events targeted at priority wards, warm spaces, work with schools and digital inclusion.
- 5.5 The Cost-of-Living Advice line was set up to provide advice and guidance for benefits, help with rent, debt and bills advice, food support and getting online. Over 8,900 residents have contacted the Cost-of-Living advice line either by telephone or online, since it was launched in October 2022. They include residents from every ward in the city, with the greatest number of contacts coming from Harpurhey, Miles Platting & Newton Heath and Moss Side. As with last year, where people are happy to share their demographic information, more women than men contacted the advice line, a much greater number in the 26- to 39-year-old age group than any other with fewer older people, the majority were unemployed and there were more residents from a social rented household followed by private rented than other tenures.
- 5.6 The main reasons our residents contact the advice line are request for support relating to Benefits and Help with Rent (31.8%), Help & Advice with Debt and paying bills (26%) and help with food (24.8%). Residents often receive support from multiple sources including warm handover to advice agencies, help with benefits from DWP, food and other support.
- 5.7 The 2023/24 budget included a further £3.55m to provide direct support to residents, and this has been protected for 2024/25 to invest in mitigating the impact of the Cost of Living on our poorest households. This will be even more critical if national Government doesn't provide Household Support Fund resources that year (as of yet not announced), which will leave a big gap. As well as additional payments to vulnerable residents the Fund enabled free

school meal provision to be extended to cover school holidays. The Council does not have the resources to mitigate the loss of this funding.

- 5.8 Despite the challenge of no additional national government funding, as well as continuing to support the Cost-of-Living advice line and response, the Council has in line with Making Manchester Fairer principles agreed to allocate £350,000 of the £3.55m to progress priorities in the Anti-Poverty Strategy including income maximisation, debt and financial education. The remainder will continue to be used to address immediate response.
- 5.9 A report was taken to RAGOS in January 2024 on Anti-Poverty Budget Options and the recommendations in that report have been incorporated into the below.

| | 2023/24 Allocations £000's | Proposed 2024/25 Allocations £000's | Comments |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Food Response | 1,200 | 1,300 | Working with Community Food partnership and purchasing ambient food stock for access by food providers |
| Local Welfare Provision | 650 | 0 | Additional funding for the Local Welfare Provision scheme. The funding helps cover essential costs for households, including one off crisis payments, basic white goods and furniture for residents moving from temporary accommodation. These costs will now be funded from the existing mainstream budgets. |
| Discretionary Housing Payments | 500 | 400 | The primary aim is to support people in their own tenancies and to help prevent people becoming homeless. |
| Community Health Equity for Manchester (CHEM) | 250 | 250 | To support Communities experiencing racial inequality and other inequalities more likely to be impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. |
| Support to VSCE | 600 | 700 | To increase the capacity of the VSCE sector to respond to the cost of living crisis in the wards most affected and citywide. |
| Expand advice and debt offer | 250 | 100 | Expand the advice and debt support offer across the City. |
| Other | 100 | 307 | Includes additional communication and engagement for residents and support to increase digital inclusion. |
| Carers Leavers support payment | | 208 | To provide £10 per week to a growing cohort of c400 care leavers. |

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| | | | This was previously funded as part of HSF. |
| Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) | | 285 | This is to compliment the £4.1m government funding to enable activities to take place in half terms and well as the main school holidays. This was previously funded as part of HSF. |
| | 3,550 | 3,550 | |

5.10 In addition to support outlined above, changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme were approved by Executive in January 2024. The changes followed a consultation exercise and included:

- Increase the maximum CTS award from 82.5% to 85% for working age households
- Adjust the universal credit excess income bands upwards by 2.5% to maintain parity with the 85% maximum award
- Extend the maximum backdating period from 6 months to 12 months.

5.11 The Council follows the government guidance on supportive debt recovery in the different stages of the Council Tax enforcement and recovery process including scheme design, working with the debt advice sector, effective use of data and enforcement action. A feasibility study into ending the use of Enforcement Agents for debt collection was considered by Resources and Governance Committee 11 January 2024. The recommendations were as follows:

- Noting all the information provided, recommend that the City Council continues to use EAs in the collection of Council Tax against individual residents.
- Recommend that it is not appropriate for any case in receipt of any level CTS to be referred to EAs and agrees that recovery via an attachment of benefits is more appropriate, including for those currently in receipt of maximum CTS.
- Recommend that further consideration is given to implementing the recommendations made by CAM.

6. 2024/25 Collective impact of proposals and ongoing management

6.1 The work that has been carried out on individual business cases and EIAs are being reviewed to consider the collective impact of the options proposed and how the overall budget changes will impact on equalities, poverty and ultimately our residents. Given the minimal impact of the proposed service changes it is considered that the greatest impact will be the collective impact of increased Council Tax, rent, energy charges and other costs. The Council has been mindful of this, and the analysis undertaken on cost-of-living impacts will support services to identify households requiring support and the range of financial support measures outlined in the paper (section 5) are

intended to mitigate this. This work will be managed and reviewed through the Making Manchester Fairer Programme and the Anti-Poverty Strategy, as outlined above.

- 6.2 The budget setting process is integrated with the Council's Corporate Plan, Business Plan and Service planning process. Each service has responsibility to review how the use of their budget as a whole, not just any savings proposed, might mitigate or positively impact on equality, anti-poverty, and how social value can be maximised. The service plan template also incorporates financial planning and performance management information, ensuring these are more closely aligned. The individual Equality Impact Assessments will remain live documents, ensuring the mitigations and action plans are managed throughout the year.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Overall, the most significant identified impact on equalities is the increase in costs as it is recognised that some of the protected groups more likely to be disproportionately impacted and are also most likely to be living in poverty. It is considered that the package of support provided and the detailed analysis to target provision will support the mitigation of this impact. However, it is imperative that this is closely monitored and managed throughout the year.
- 7.2 Further work will be completed by services in their service plans to demonstrate how equalities considerations are embedded within the design and delivery of the services, supported by good financial planning and performance management.
- 7.3 The ongoing review and implementation of the mitigation and action plans identified in the individual Equality Impact Assessments will be essential. Additionally, further understanding the impact of this on our diverse communities and those experiencing poverty will be considered within the overall context of the Anti-Poverty Strategy evaluation.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this report.