

Equality Impact Assessment / Equality Analysis Budget Proposals

This template has been developed for the specific purpose of analysing the equality impact of proposals that have been put forward as part of budget setting. Use this template to identify what impact or likely impact the proposal will have on people with protected characteristics.

Title of savings proposal	Improving Customer Communications Project			
Growth or Savings/Income?	Savings	FTE Reduction/Increase		Reduction
Brief Description and Aim (no more than 100 words)	<p>This is a phased implementation of a new communications platform with the intended outcome being a significantly improved experience for residents and service users. The platform has been implemented and Phase 1 rollout completed in September 2025. Next phases include the centralisation of more services into Council Connect. Currently 14 of the 87 service queues are with Council Connect including high volume services such as Highways and Waste.</p> <p>Next phases include more self-service options for residents to reduce staff demand along with a centralised contact centre. Efficiency savings will be made across multiple council services. We currently employ ~400 staff across services who as part of their role directly receive contact from our residents and service users. ~15% saving on staff time will deliver the savings proposed.</p>			
Budget Reduction / Growth Value (note year 2 value is the increase/decrease on year 1)	Year	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	Value (£000)	-£300k	-£100k	-

Directorate/Service area and Cabinet Portfolio	All Directorates
Impacts to Service Delivery <i>(no more than 100 words)</i>	An improved and more consistent service for our residents
Delivery Risk Rating (High/Medium/Low) <i>(Please detail reasons and actions to reduce risk)</i>	<p>Medium – Two risks below</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Services not engaging with the centralisation into Council Connect and delaying efficiencies being realised. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Director of Place Management is executive sponsor on the Improving Communications Board along with key Heads of Service covering Revs & Bens, Registrars and others. Continual engagement with these senior leaders will mitigate services not engaging. 2) Continued finance support for in year adjustments and budget transfers along with role removals where appropriate. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Finance is engaged and agreed on how we track the efficiencies for in year adjustments
Do the aims of this proposal link to any other budget proposals? <i>(no more than 100 words)</i>	No
Consider whether this proposal has any knock-on impacts to other services. If so, please provide service and detail <i>(no more than 100 words)</i>	This proposal will deliver an improved and more consistent service for our residents.

Assessment of impact: 'Equality analysis'

Use the spaces below to demonstrate you have analysed how this proposal:

- Meets any needs of equality groups or helps promote equality in some way.
- Could have a negative or adverse impact for any of the equality groups - and if so, mitigating actions.
- Could have potential knock-on effects for other service areas or create problems because of cumulative impacts.

	All equality areas/characteristics	How this proposal might advance equality	Potential negative or adverse impacts - and what steps can be taken to mitigate this	Potential knock-on impacts for other service areas/other proposals
1	Sex		<p>For all equality areas, employees will require training and may need individual support to move towards a multi-communication channel service.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to how best communicate the available options to service users as and when available.</p>	
2	Pregnancy & maternity		<p>Employees who are on maternity leave during the implementation stages can access training and individual support on their return to work or during KIT days.</p>	
3	Gender reassignment		<p>Communication with residents and services users will be respectful of using correct pro-nouns and names.</p> <p>The project team has also raised a configuration request such that a gender neutral option be made available within the pre-canned text to speech options</p>	

4	Disability	<p>The project offers improvements in communication means and accessibility options for all residents, visitors and staff.</p> <p>The project has launched a British Sign Language live video translation service called BSL video relay service, partnering with SignVideo by Sorenson. This enables deaf and hard-of-hearing residents to contact B&NES for general inquiries. This service allows BSL users to communicate with the council through a video relay interpreter.</p>		
5	Race	<p>Zoom Contact Centre offers comprehensive language translation features, including real-time AI translation for both messaging and voice channels, as well as manual translation options, to help.</p> <p>The Zoom Virtual Agent can be set up automatically detect a resident's language and thereby respond in the correct language.</p>		
6	Sexual orientation	.		
7	Marriage and civil partnership			

8	Religion/belief			
9	Age	Younger people are likely to be familiar with digital technology and may prefer to communicate through email, social media, WhatsApp and Webchat.	Some people may find new technology channels such as WhatsApp or social media more challenging to access. Telephony and in person support services will still be available for all to use.	
B&NES Local Priority				
10	Socio-economically disadvantaged	Improved access through a variety of communication options is supportive of people on lower incomes.		
11	Rural communities		Reduced access to quality broadband and phone signal is an issue however all existing contact channels will remain available alongside introducing new ways for residents to contact us. E.g. Telephone, Webchat, Social Media, WhatsApp etc.	
12	Armed Forces Community			
13	Care Experienced			

Name of officer(s) conducting equality analysis: Siobhan Danylko, IT Project Manager

Signed off by: Liam Abbott – Head of Digital and Customer Experience

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