

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

The purpose of this form is to ensure that the Council's equality duty can be shown to have been properly considered in the decision-making process. An EIA should be completed and attached to any reports or proposals put forward for decision by the Council. Please read the Council's Equality Impact Assessment Guidance before beginning the process.

Name of proposal being assessed	
Stoke-on-Trent City Council Budget Statement and Consultation 2026/27	
Directorate/Service Area	Date EIA Completed
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	05 January 2025
Lead Officer for this EIA	Contact Number
Lisa Dale	01782 231877

### Section 1 – Aims and objectives

1. Background / Context
<p>This Equality Impact Assessment relates to Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Budget Statement and public consultation for the 2026/27 MTFS. The budget has been developed in the context of sustained financial pressures arising from increasing demand for statutory services, inflationary costs, workforce pressures, and ongoing challenges within Children's and Adult Social Care.</p> <p>The proposals set out the Council's approach to achieving a balanced budget through a combination of council tax increases within government limits, continued transformation and efficiency activity, budget assumptions regarding Fair Funding Review and the use of Exceptional Financial Support. Reflecting the nature of these proposals, the consultation seeks views on the overall budget strategy rather than individual service reductions.</p>
2. Who will be affected?
<p>All people living and working in the City may be affected by the Council's budget, including council tax payers, service users, employees and workers in partner organisations. Indirect impacts may arise for vulnerable groups including those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.</p>



## Section 2 – Analysis of Impact

**The EIA must get to evaluate fully and properly the actual and potential impacts, both negative and positive and any barriers. Please explain the likely differential impact on each of the 9 equality strands, whether positive or negative. Where it is anticipated there will be no impact or a neutral impact from the proposal, please outline the evidence that supports this conclusion.**

The budget proposals do not introduce specific service changes. Any impacts are therefore indirect. Council tax increases may disproportionately affect some groups, but mitigations include the Council Tax Support Scheme, hardship support, Money MOTs, and continued investment in preventative and early help services.

### Note on the Use of Technology

Although the Budget does not propose any specific technology solutions, it is understood that the use of technology in service delivery is likely to become more widespread. When taking decisions these matters, the Council will remain committed to digital literacy and inclusion, and to the continued provision of alternatives means of access for those who need them. This commitment will be reflected in future service design and appropriate consultations.

3. What is the likely impact of the proposal on groups of residents, service users and/or staff that share the protected characteristics?				
	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	Neutral Impact	Reason(s)
Age			X	The proposals relate to the overall budget strategy and do not introduce specific age-related service changes. Indirect impacts are possible, with older people potentially being more affected by Council tax rises. However this is mitigated through statutory duties and continued prioritisation of vulnerable age groups. Mitigations include the Council Tax Support Scheme, hardship support, Money MOTs, and the continued investment in preventative and early help services. Without this increase, funding for the services upon which older people rely will likely be jeopardised. The increase is comparatively minor equating to £1.09 per week for Band A and is offset by these important services.



3. What is the likely impact of the proposal on groups of residents, service users and/or staff that share the protected characteristics?				
	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	Neutral Impact	Reason(s)
Disability			X	No specific service changes are proposed. Indirect impacts are possible, with disabled people potentially being more affected by Council tax rises. The Council remains committed to meeting its duties under the Equality Act and Care Act, with mitigations through existing support and access arrangements. Mitigations include the Council Tax Support Scheme, hardship support, Money MOTs, and the continued investment in preventative and early help services. Without this comparatively minor increase, funding for the services upon which vulnerable people rely would likely be jeopardised. It is considered that any hardship caused by the tax rises is offset by these important services.
Gender Reassignment			X	No direct or indirect impact has been identified. The proposals do not affect access to services or policies related to gender reassignment, and services will continue to be delivered in line with equality duties.
Pregnancy and Maternity			X	No direct impact has been identified. There may be limited indirect impact linked to household financial pressures; however, these are mitigated through existing support including Council Tax Support, hardship assistance, and continued investment in early help and family services.
Race			X	No direct impact has been identified. Indirect impacts are possible where financial pressures disproportionately affect some communities. These



3. What is the likely impact of the proposal on groups of residents, service users and/or staff that share the protected characteristics?				
	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	Neutral Impact	Reason(s)
				are mitigated through the Council Tax Support Scheme, hardship support, Money MOTs, the continued investment in preventative and early help services and continued monitoring of equality impacts. Without this comparatively minor increase, funding for the services upon which vulnerable people rely would likely be jeopardised. It is considered that any hardship caused by the tax rises is offset by these important services.
Religion or Belief			X	No direct or indirect impact has been identified. The proposals do not affect services, policies or access arrangements linked to religion or belief. Impacts will continue to be monitored as budget proposals are developed.
Sex			X	No direct or indirect impact has been identified. While some households may be more sensitive to financial pressures, mitigations are income based rather than sex specific.
Sexual Orientation			X	No direct or indirect impact has been identified. The proposals do not affect services or policies related to sexual orientation, and equality protections remain in place.
Care Leavers		X		The budget proposals for 2026/27 are expected to have a positive impact on care leavers. The Council is proposing additional investment of approximately £360,000 to enhance support for care leavers, which includes extended council tax exemptions, increased council



3. What is the likely impact of the proposal on groups of residents, service users and/or staff that share the protected characteristics?				
	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	Neutral Impact	Reason(s)
				<p>tax discounts, funding support for broadband and digital connectivity and comprehensive public transport support. These measures directly reduce financial pressures and support independence, access to education, employment and training. The proposed support for broadband and digital connectivity also reinforces the Council's commitment to digital inclusion, ensuring care leavers can access online services and opportunities.</p> <p>While care leavers may be more sensitive to wider financial pressures, any potential indirect impacts arising from council tax changes are mitigated through this targeted investment alongside existing support such as the Council Tax Support Scheme, hardship support, Money MOTs, and the Council's ongoing corporate parenting responsibilities.</p>
<b>Veterans / Reservists</b>			X	<p>Veterans and reservists are not identified as being directly impacted by the proposals. Any indirect impacts would relate to individual financial circumstances and are mitigated through universal support measures available to all residents.</p>
<b>Economically Deprived</b>			X	<p>Residents experiencing economic deprivation may be more sensitive to council tax increases and wider financial pressures. The impacts of a tax rise are indirect and mitigated through inclusive service delivery and ongoing monitoring.</p>



3. What is the likely impact of the proposal on groups of residents, service users and/or staff that share the protected characteristics?				
	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	Neutral Impact	Reason(s)
				Mitigations include the Council Tax Support Scheme, hardship support, Money MOTs, and the continued investment in preventative and early help services. Without this comparatively minor increase, which equates to £1.09 per week for Band A, funding for the services upon which vulnerable people rely would likely be jeopardised.
4. Are there any other groups (e.g. travellers, single parents, those on low income, care leavers, etc) who may be disadvantaged by the proposal's operation, or who may not benefit equally from it?				
In addition to those with protected characteristics, other residents with low incomes or experiencing financial hardship may be more sensitive to budget pressures or council tax changes. This may include single parent households. Mitigations include the Council Tax Support Scheme, hardship support, Money MOTs, and the continued investment in preventative and early help services.				

### Section 3 – Evidence and Engagement

5. What evidence and sources have you used? <i>This could include consultations, surveys, meetings, monitoring data and other evidence</i>
Evidence includes budget modelling, equality and demographic data for Stoke-on-Trent, service usage information, previous budget consultation feedback, national research on deprivation and demand-led services, and engagement will be via Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The public budget consultation itself provides an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to comment on the overall document, which will be taken into account prior to full cabinet consideration.
6. If you have not been able to use reliable monitoring data, please describe what process(es) you have used to assess the potential equalities impact(s) of your proposal.
Where detailed statistics are not available, professional judgement has been applied drawing on previous Equality Impact Assessments, and demographic analysis. The Equality impact will continue to be monitored as the budget is finalised and implemented.

## Section 4 – Outcome of the Assessment

The purpose of the EIA is to consider the implications and the likely impact on people with these protected characteristics, minimising any negative impacts.

Please tick what the overall outcome of the assessment was and follow the next steps.

The EIA did not identify any significant concerns OR the concerns have already been addressed	<b>x</b>	Proceed with the implementation
The EIA identified SOME negative impacts that need addressing		Complete an action plan setting out adjustments that will address any negative impacts
The EIA identified MAJOR concerns and would be unable to reduce or remove the negative impacts		Stop and revise the activity thoroughly

## Section 5 – Action Plan

Action to be undertaken	Leader Officer and/or Lead Strategic Group	Timescale
Launch Budget Statement and Consultation	s151 Officer Head of Finance – Financial Planning	5 January 2026
Budget Consultation OSC	s151 Officer Head of Finance – Financial Planning	14 –15 January 2026
Budget Consultation ends	s151 Officer Head of Finance – Financial Planning	9 February 2026
Cabinet – MTFS (paper publication)	s151 Officer Head of Finance – Financial Planning	3 February 2026
Cabinet – MTFS	s151 Officer Head of Finance – Financial Planning	17 February 2026
City Council – MTFS (paper publication)	s151 Officer Head of Finance – Financial Planning	18 February 2026
City Council – MTFS	s151 Officer Head of Finance – Financial Planning	26 February 2026

Signed (lead officer): ----- *R Dale* -----

Signed (lead manager): -----

Date: 05/01/2026

If your EIA is for any decision that is published on the Council's website, you will need to ensure the EIA accompanies it. If your EIA is for a project that is not published, such as a restructure or an internal policy, please ensure that you keep a copy on record with a date of when the decision was published. For any additional support please contact [equality@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:equality@stoke.gov.uk)