

## **Appendix 10 - Equality Impact Assessment of the Budget Proposals**

**Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed:** 2025/26 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2025/26 – 2027/28

**Directorate:** All

**Service:** Council-wide

**Name and job title of person doing the assessment**

**Name:** Clare Muir

**Job Title:** Senior Policy Officer

**Date of assessment:** 23/01/2025

**What is the aim of your policy or new service?**

The Council still has a significant budget gap across the three years of the MTFS. The Council needs to consider implementing additional savings in a range of areas.

**Who will benefit from this proposal and how?**

Residents and service users will benefit from the Council setting a balanced and affordable budget that ensures the Council's finances are sustainable.

**Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?**

Residents, businesses, councillors and council staff in Reading. A public consultation on the MTFS Update took place between 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024 to 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025. It asked for views on:

### *Council Tax*

Should the Council look to increase Council Tax by 2.99% plus 2.00% Adult Social Care precept to reduce the financial gap for 2025/26? 60% supported this.

### *Budget savings*

Which areas, shown in a list would they be MOST/LEAST comfortable with the Council reducing spending on, or increasing income from?

Top 3 MOST comfortable were Home to school transport, Income from fees and charges, Voluntary sector funding.

Top 3 LEAST comfortable were Street cleaning, Homelessness prevention, Facilities in parks and open spaces.

### *Capital programme*

Of a list of capital projects the Top 3 for stopping or scaling back were New performance space at the Hexagon Theatre; John Rabson skatepark, Digitised Traffic Regulation Orders.

### *Social housing rents*

79% supported the Council implementing a 2.7% increase in social housing rents.

### **Assessment of Relevance and Impact**

The Equality duty has been considered for each proposed budget business case.

For the majority of these the Equality Duty is not relevant.

Appendix A sets out the budget business cases where the Equality Duty is identified as relevant and summarises the Equality Impact Assessment.