

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

The Equality Act 2010 introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty which states that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

This document demonstrates how the Council is meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty by setting out the findings of an equality analysis that has been undertaken in relation to a proposed change to assess whether it has a disproportionate impact on people who share a protected characteristic. The Council's Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process covers additional groups not 'protected' by section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, including care leavers and care experienced adults.

1. Background

Directorate	Children and Families
Service area	Vulnerable Children and Other Children Services
Title of the proposed change being assessed i.e. the policy, service or other development	Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25

Describe the purpose of the proposed change and the intended outcomes
<p>The purpose of the MTFS is to give financial expression to the Council Strategy, Building Back Better in Gloucestershire 2022-26 for the next four-year period. The MTFS sets out the Council's high-level funded plan for achieving its vision and priorities, balancing available financing and spending ambitions. It highlights the financial projections for financing, spending (revenue and capital) and reserves.</p> <p>The MTFS is prepared annually and covers the four-year period 2024/25 to 2027/28. It links decisions on resource allocation with decisions on policy priorities as set out in the Council Strategy. This EqIA is Appendix 4 of the MTFS 2024/25 – 2027/28 report being considered by Cabinet on 31 January 2024.</p> <p>Each Directorate's priorities and plans for the year are set out in their Commissioning Intentions which are included in Annex 1 of the MTFS. Proposals for cost increases (investment) and cost reductions (savings) are driven by these Commissioning Intentions.</p>

Who is affected by the proposals?

Service users:	Yes
Wider community:	Yes/No
Workforce:	Yes
Other (please specify):	

Decision to be taken and decision maker	Cabinet decision on 31 January 2024: To recommend the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), 2024/25 revenue and capital budgets and Precept to Council
Person(s) responsible for completing this assessment	Director of Partnerships and Strategy (Children's Services)
Date of this assessment	4 December 2023

2. Information and Data Collection

This table summarises the Council-wide approach to engagement and consultation. Details of the information and data collected (including through engagement and consultation exercises) for each budget proposal are set out within section 3.

Stakeholders	Engagement and Consultation
<p>Service Users / Wider Community</p>	<p>Following a decision by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Change (details here), a public consultation on the Council's draft budget for 2024/25 took place over a five-week week period between 7 December 2023 and 11 January 2024.</p> <p>To raise awareness of the budget consultation and how people could provide their views on the proposals, information was made available via the county council's website, Information was also shared with local media contacts and via the County Council's social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, X, Nextdoor) and with subscribers of Council e-newsletters.</p> <p>Posters were also displayed in libraries and in other GCC buildings.</p> <p>There were reminders throughout the consultation period to make sure there were multiple opportunities for interested parties to see the relevant information and the invite to respond.</p> <p>A budget consultation booklet was produced and made available on-line and in hard copy via libraries. Other formats were available upon request.</p> <p>A questionnaire was also produced to help collate views. This was available online, in hard copy and in other formats, in the same way as the booklet.</p>
<p>Workforce</p>	<p>The formal budget consultation included the sharing of information with the recognised trades unions including council, teaching and fire unions and provision of a collective consultation meeting.</p> <p>Information was shared with County Council staff via the weekly e newsletter and via the front page of the intranet.</p>

	<p>Staff networks were also sent information, with a request to provide their views and promote the consultation through their communications channels and networks.</p>
Partners	<p>Information was shared with public sector partners, via the Warning and Informing Communications Group with a request to raise awareness of the budget consultation within their individual organisations and share information through their communication channels.</p> <p>Information was also shared with town and parish councils, a range of community groups, young people organisations, with a request that they share information through their communication channels and local networks.</p>
Other	<p>Information was shared with county councillors, asking them to take part in the consultation and to support the County Council to raise awareness by sharing information through their communication channels and local networks.</p>

3. Equality Assessment, Actions and Monitoring and Review

3.1 – Status Quo

See the ‘Needs Analysis’ section of the Commissioning Intentions which identifies equality, diversity and inclusion related issues.

3.2 – The Proposed Changes: Revenue

Also see the ‘Equalities Response’ section of the Commissioning Intentions which sets out the equality, diversity and inclusion related priorities identified through the needs analysis and summarises the actions that will be taken to address these.

Service Users				
Budget Change Proposal	Summary of the information and data gathered, including through engagement and consultation	Protected Characteristics / Additional Groups	Summary of the assessment of the potential or actual impact on those who share the protected characteristics or are in the additional groups	Actions to further maximise the positive impact or minimise the negative impact Arrangements for monitoring and review
Revenue Cost Increases (Investment)				
Special Guardianship Orders – Increased Numbers Investment to increase the number of Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) as a means of achieving permanence	Achieving permanence is a key element within our Ambitions Plan, particularly Ambition 3, to ensure every child can live safely in a secure and stable home. SGOs provide for unfettered parental	Protected Characteristics All Additional Groups Socio-economic disadvantage.	Positive Enabling children to live a stable, safe, and secure family unit has been shown through numerous studies to be the most conducive to	Actions The Children’s Services Ambitions Plan (Ambition 3) sets out the actions to ensure children can live safely in a secure and stable

<p>for children in our care. Achieving timely permanence is positive for children and young people alongside the contribution it can make towards bringing our child in care population in line with comparators.</p>	<p>responsibility for carers while preserving familial or connected persons links that are important to the child.</p> <p>Our most recent published data shows that our use of SGOs as a means of leaving care (6% - past 6 months) is less than comparators (14%) and England av (13%). (Source: ChAT Sept 2023). Analysis of our child in care population highlights more children for whom SGO would provide a timely and suitable route to permanence.</p>		<p>improving their outcomes.</p>	<p>home, including via SGO.</p> <p>Monitoring and Review</p> <p>The Children’s Services (CS) Ambitions Board will oversee progress on this, and the wider range of actions set out in our CS Ambitions Plan. The Ambitions Board is a multi-agency oversight group, replacing the previous Continuous Improvement Board, with the aim of supporting the journey to delivering consistently ‘good’ or better services for children and families.</p>
<p>Increase in Adoption West Contract</p> <p>Adoption West (AW) is a wholly LA owned company providing adoption services on behalf of GCC and 5</p>	<p>Achieving permanence is a key element within our Ambitions Plan, particularly Ambition 3, to ensure every child can live safely in a secure and stable home. Adoptions are an</p>	<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All</p> <p>Additional Groups</p> <p>Carers</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Enabling children to live a stable, safe and secure family unit has been shown through numerous studies to be the most conducive to</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>The AW Business Plan sets out the programme of action to continue to improve services for children and adoptive families.</p>

<p>other local authorities. AW has been operational since 2019 and was judged 'Good' in its most recent Ofsted regulatory inspection in 2022. Over that time the numbers of Adoption Support packages have grown, requiring additional capacity to ensure families can meet the adopted children who are likely to have experienced prior trauma.</p>	<p>effective means of securing permanence for children in our care and our most recent performance shows that the proportion of children in care being adopted (15%) is better than comparators (11%) and England Av. (10%). Adoption support ensures families can meet the needs of adopted children over the longer term post adoption avoiding breakdown and a potential return to care.</p>	<p>Geography Socio-economic disadvantage</p>	<p>improving their outcomes. Adoption support is key to ensuring families across the county can meet the adopted children who are likely to have experienced prior trauma.</p>	<p>Monitoring and Review</p> <p>AW is overseen by the AW Board comprising of Directors drawn from each LA, providing for regular oversight of AW's functioning. There is a comprehensive set of performance and quality metrics that help us measure our impact.</p> <p>Annual reporting to Overview and Scrutiny is also in place.</p>
<p>Implementation of the Systemic Practice model of social work to support the continued practice improvement.</p> <p>The investment will support the roll out of systemic training to all social workers and managers.</p>	<p>Systemic social work practice is an integral element of transforming children's social care in Gloucestershire. It is a practice methodology that focuses on the importance of the relationship between the social worker and child/ren and family they are working with. It</p>	<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All</p> <p>Additional Groups</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>The implementation of the Systemic Practice model of social work aims to deliver improved outcomes for our most vulnerable children and families. The investment aims to close the gap and promote equality, diversity and inclusion,</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>The Ambitions Plan sets out the programme of action to continue to improve services for children and adoptive families, with Ambition 5 encompassing workforce capacity and capability.</p>

	<p>avoids pathologising families and is a more inclusive way of working, recognizing change happens reflexively. It incorporates an explicit recognition of power and culture in the way social work is undertaken and is aimed at delivering improved outcomes for children.</p> <p>Gloucestershire' staffing establishment includes around 380 qualified social work and social work manager posts. The systemic practice programme invests in the training of these workers and managers over a five-year period, with match funding secured from Department for Education on an annual basis.</p>		<p>as children's social care disproportionately serves those in deprived groups and those with protected characteristics who currently are more likely to come into contact with Children's Services. At the heart of the model is anti-discriminatory practice and tackling inequality.</p>	<p>There is a comprehensive set of performance and quality metrics that help us measure our impact.</p> <p>Monitoring and Review</p> <p>Progress is overseen by an Ambitions Board to which key performance and quality metrics are reported.</p> <p>Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee also receive regular updates regarding challenges and progress in delivering the improvements for children and families that systemic practice contributes towards.</p>
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	<p>Social work services our most vulnerable children and families. At the end of October 2023, the local authority was supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,100 Children in Need • 604 children with a child protection plan • 885 children in care • 556 care leavers 			
<p>Increase in children’s social work posts based on caseload, includes disability and admin support.</p> <p>The additional investment will deliver on the increase in locality safeguarding teams, and associated business support, as part of children’s social care transformation and move towards a locality based model.</p>	<p>Our quality assurance activity and data performance data show that when teams are stable, with manageable caseloads, and have completed systemic training – practice is improved.</p> <p>Our most recent data shows that 77% of practitioners are at our target caseload of 18 children.</p>	<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All</p> <p>Additional Groups</p> <p>Carers Care Leavers/Care Experienced Adults Socio-economic Exclusion</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Direct, child centred and trauma informed social work aims to deliver improved outcomes for our most vulnerable children and families. The investment aims to ensure we the practitioner resource necessary to ensure families receive an effective service and close the gap, promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, as children's social care</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>This is about improving services to our most vulnerable children and families and is a key element within our Ambitions Plan – Ambitions 1 and 5 provide the detail.</p> <p>There is a comprehensive set of performance and quality metrics that help us measure our impact.</p>

			disproportionately serves those in deprived groups and those with protected characteristics who currently are more likely to come into contact with Children's Services	<p>Monitoring and Review</p> <p>Progress will be overseen by an Ambitions Board to which key performance and quality metrics are reported.</p> <p>Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee also receive regular updates regarding challenges and progress in delivering the improvements for children and families that systemic practice contributes to.</p>
<p>Disabled Children and Young People (DCYP) Uplift in Direct Payments</p> <p>The investment will enable those in receipt of direct payments to</p>	Our data shows that inflationary pressures are particularly acute in this area, leaving families struggling to commission the care they need.	<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All Particularly Age and Disability</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Direct Payments enable parent carers to commission the care they feel is most appropriate to their needs, risks and circumstances. This, in</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>This is about improving services to our most vulnerable children and families and is a key element within our Ambitions Plan.</p>

<p>meet inflationary pressures.</p>		<p>Additional Groups</p> <p>Carers Care Leavers/Care Experienced Adults Socio-economic Exclusion</p>	<p>turn, supports them in caring for some of our most complex and vulnerable children.</p>	<p>Monitoring and Review</p> <p>Progress will be overseen by an Ambitions Board to which key performance and quality metrics are reported.</p> <p>Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee also receive regular updates regarding challenges and progress in delivering the improvements for children and families including the take up of Direct Payments.</p>
<p>Placements and allowances budget: to meet additional activity and higher unit costs.</p> <p>Investment to provide for the increased cost and number of placements for children going into care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASGLB (Adoption and Special Guardian Leadership Board) – quarterly and annual data. County Council Internal performance and tracking reports. 	<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All</p> <p>Additional Groups</p> <p>Carers Care Leavers/Care Experienced Adults</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>To enable the Council to continue to provide placements to meet the needs of its children in care, including those with a protected characteristic(s), by ensuring it can provide sufficient placements.</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>Gloucestershire has recently refreshed its Sufficiency Strategy Homes@Heart and will continue to work with providers to stimulate the marketplace and review its current</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of October 2023, there 885 Children in Care reflecting a sustained upward trend over recent years. In meeting their needs there were 440 external placements, of which 110 were residential and 134 were supported living placements. 	<p>Socio-economic Exclusion</p>		<p>framework. The resulting action plan will ensure the provision of a range of placements that are available. locally, that deliver value for money and are sufficient to meet the needs of all children including those with a protected characteristic(s).</p> <p>A focus on securing move-on accommodation for those young people aged 18+ who were unable to move-on during the pandemic and who continue to require suitable accommodation will help us (together with this investment) to balance our placement budgets in 2023.</p>
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<p>Additional funding to meet the cost of high-cost placements for Disabled Children and Young People</p> <p>Investment to meet the increased demand for care and support for disabled children and young people and their families in the community.</p>	<p>There has been a significant increase in demand for social care (including care) for all children as set out below, however, there has been a reduction in the number of children in care with a recorded disability. This reflects the increase in provision of care and support into the family home, helping children remain with their families. Over that same period however, the level of complexity of the children being looked after has increased and the cost of packages have increased both into the home and in care. This funding will ensure that we can continue to design and deliver services aimed at meeting the specific needs of disabled children and young people.</p>	<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All Particularly Age and Disability</p> <p>Additional Groups</p> <p>Carers Care Leavers/Care Experienced Adults Socio-economic Exclusion Geography</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>This further investment will enable the Council to meet its statutory responsibilities and continue to provide support within the home and communities, including those with a protected characteristic(s), by ensuring it can provide sufficient support.</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>Gloucestershire has recently refreshed its Sufficiency Strategy Homes@Heart and will continue to work with providers to stimulate the marketplace and review its current framework. The resulting action plan will ensure the provision of a range of providers that are available locally, sufficient to meet the needs of all disabled children and young people including those with a protected characteristic(s).</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18.5% increase in referrals to social care compared to pre-pandemic levels (average of the three previous years). • 36% increase in care population over past five years. • 25.5% reduction in the number of children in care with a recorded disability. 			
<p>PAUSE – To support parents to care for their children reducing the number of children in care.</p> <p>The Pause Programme is an evidence led supportive intervention that aims to enable mothers to continue to care for children that would otherwise be at significant risk of</p>	<p>As of October 2023, there were 885 Children in Care, reflecting a sustained upward trend over recent years.</p> <p>Alongside our work to achieve timely permanence for children in our care we also aim to reduce new entrants to care. Learning through the Vulnerable Women’s Project and</p>	<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All.</p> <p>Additional Groups</p> <p>Carers Care Leavers/Care Experienced Adults Socio-economic Exclusion</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Enabling children to live a stable, safe and secure family unit has been shown through numerous studies to be the most conducive to improving their outcomes. PAUSE is key to ensuring carers, who have had previous children removed and are likely to have</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>The Children’s Services Ambitions Plan (Ambition 3) sets out the actions to ensure children can live safely in a secure and stable home, including PAUSE.</p> <p>Monitoring and Review</p>

<p>entering care. Pause was developed with the aim of supporting mothers who have had previous children removed but who wished to become a parent in future. The investment would enable GCC and its safeguarding partners to deliver the PAUSE programme in Gloucestershire.</p>	<p>analysis of our child safeguarding population has identified a cohort of vulnerable women who would benefit from the PAUSE and avoid further removals of children from their care. Many are care experienced themselves and have multiple ACEs.</p>		<p>experienced prior trauma, are effectively supported.</p>	<p>The Ambitions Board will oversee progress on this, and the wider range of actions set out in our CS Ambitions Plan.</p>
<p>TACS –Turnaround children’s team additional capacity</p> <p>The Turnaround programme is Gloucestershire version of a Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC), but with additional support. The aim is to provide support for parents and carers with addiction and substance misuse to enable them to continue to care for their children. The</p>	<p>Alongside our work to achieve timely permanence for children in our care we also aim to reduce new entrants to care.</p> <p>There is a considerable body of evidence at the national levels, and locally through Turnaround, that FDAC is effective in enabling adults struggling with addiction to continue to care for their children.</p>	<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All</p> <p>Additional Groups</p> <p>Carers Care Leavers/Care Experienced Adults Socio-economic Exclusion Geography</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Enabling children to live a stable, safe and secure family unit has been shown through numerous studies to be the most conducive to improving their outcomes.</p> <p>Parents and carers who are subject to socio-economic exclusion and/or care experienced are overrepresented in the FDAC cohort and</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>The Children’s Services Ambitions Plan (Ambition 3) sets out the actions to ensure children can live safely in a secure and stable home, including Turnaround.</p> <p>Monitoring and Review</p> <p>The Ambitions Board will oversee progress on this, and the wider range of actions set out</p>

<p>investment provides for a family support wraparound to the FDAC model.</p>			<p>will benefit from this proposal.</p>	<p>in our CS Ambitions Plan.</p>
<p>Commissioning staff to support capital and commissioning developments.</p> <p>The investment will enable the integrated commissioning team to respond to the demand pressures arising from an increased child in care population and the wider programme of commissioning activity, including the work to deliver the revised Sufficiency Strategy Homes@Heart.</p>		<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All</p> <p>Additional Groups</p> <p>Carers Care Leavers/Care Experienced Adults Socio-economic Exclusion Care Leavers</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>This further investment will enable the Council to meet its statutory responsibilities in relation to the Sufficiency Duty.</p> <p>It will also enable us to develop options for children with disabilities and/or multiple complex needs which the market is currently struggling to provide.</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>The Children’s Services Ambitions Plan (Ambition 3) sets out the actions to ensure children can live safely in a secure and stable home.</p> <p>Monitoring and Review</p> <p>The Ambitions Board will oversee progress on this, and the wider range of actions set out in our CS Ambitions Plan.</p>

<p>Short Breaks contracts increasing availability across the County.</p> <p>The investment will deal with inflationary pressures impacting on short breaks provision and extend short breaks coverage to ensure parent carers and children across the county have access to provision.</p>	<p>Those providing care for the most vulnerable and complex children require support themselves. Access to regular short breaks is essential to ensure parent carers can meet the challenges they face. Currently we don't have accessible short breaks across the county which this investment will address.</p>	<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All, particularly those with a disability.</p> <p>Additional Groups</p> <p>Carers Care Leavers/Care Experienced Adults Socio-economic Exclusion Care Leavers</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Enabling children to live a stable, safe and secure family unit has been shown through numerous studies to be the most conducive to improving their outcomes. This is particularly the case for children with complex needs and disabilities.</p> <p>It will also enable us to develop options for children with disabilities and/or multiple complex needs which the market is currently struggling to provide.</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>The Children's Services Ambitions Plan (Ambition 3) sets out the actions to ensure children can live safely in a secure and stable home, including Short Breaks provision to support this.</p> <p>Monitoring and Review</p> <p>The Ambitions Board will oversee progress on this, and the wider range of actions set out in our CS Ambitions Plan.</p>
<p>Children Centre building maintenance to cover additional centres and higher costs.</p>	<p>An effective early help – ensuring families receive the 'right help at the right time' is essential in ensuring that risks do not</p>	<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All</p> <p>Additional Groups</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Enabling children to live a stable, safe and secure family unit has been shown through</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>The Children's Services Ambitions Plan (Ambitions 1 and 3) sets out the actions to deliver the right support at the</p>

<p>The Children’s Centres are important delivery platforms for multi-agency family support and the development of a family hub model for the county. The investment will ensure the sites are fit for purpose and able to realise our ambitions for a vibrant family support offer.</p>	<p>escalate drawing families into statutory services. The Children’s Centres will be key access and delivery points – the investment will ensure we can maximise their use by partners and community groups. This aligns with the direction of national policy.</p>	<p>Carers Care Leavers/Care Experienced Adults Socio-economic Exclusion Geography</p>	<p>numerous studies to be the most conducive to improving their outcomes. An effective early help is key to preventing risk escalating.</p>	<p>right time and ensure children can lively safely in a secure and stable home.</p> <p>Monitoring and Review The Ambitions Board will oversee progress on this, and the wider range of actions set out in our CS Ambitions Plan.</p>
<p>One-off funding for unaccompanied asylum seeker young people</p> <p>Investment will meet those costs for UASC not met from central government funds.</p>	<p>The number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and associated cost have increased over recent months. This has created a pressure due to the shortfall in central government funding when set against costs incurred.</p>	<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All, particularly age and ethnicity.</p> <p>Additional Groups</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Meeting the needs, risks and circumstances of UASC will be key to safeguarding them and improving their outcomes over the longer term.</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>The Children’s Services Ambitions Plan sets out the actions to deliver the right support at the right time to children and families, including UASC.</p> <p>Monitoring and Review The Ambitions Board will oversee progress on this, and the wider range of actions set out</p>

				in our CS Ambitions Plan.
<p>Home to school transport - growth needed to cover expected increase in 23/24 SEN pupil transport entitlements plus increase in parent transport allowance.</p> <p>Investment to meet the growth needed to cover expected increase in 23/24 Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupil transport entitlements plus increase in parent transport allowance.</p>	<p>Information on contractual actual and projected cost increases provided by Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) who are in day-to-day contact with transport contractors and the transport marketplace more generally.</p> <p>Information and data on the growth of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) has been provided by the Head of Service Children with Additional Needs.</p>	<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All – particularly Age, Disability</p> <p>Additional Groups</p>	<p>Neutral</p> <p>Eligibility for support with transport to school is in accordance with published policy, accessible on the Council’s website. This is a demand led statutory service. It is the Council’s responsibility to ensure all those children and young people who are entitled to support with transport to school, can get it, which involves an assessment of their needs, including consideration of their protected characteristics in providing support for school transport.</p> <p>The Council has also developed specific policies which take into account the specific protected</p>	<p>Monitoring and Review</p> <p>Policies and processes are constantly monitored and also reviewed annually.</p>

			<p>characteristics in supporting young people:</p> <p>Mainstream: https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2082383/home-to-school-transport-policy.pdf</p> <p>Children with SEN: u16-travel-assistance-policy-22-23.pdf (gloucestershire.gov.uk)</p>	
<p>Provision for Statutory SEND services and SEND support services.</p> <p>Investment to enable SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) services to respond to increased demand for EHCP's.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND and Inclusion Strategy engagement. • EHCP pathway and digitalisation engagement • SEND customer experience. • EHCP Parent Survey • January 2022 	<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All – particularly Age and Disability</p> <p>Additional Groups</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Services will be made available to advance equality of opportunity for children and young people with SEND. The funding in all aspects is with regard to fostering good relations between those who do have SEND and promote</p>	<p>Monitoring and Review</p> <p>Monitoring and review of equality will be made through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of the new EHCP pathway. • Implementation of

	<p>special educational needs dataset- nationally published</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local SEN data- Monthly SEND dashboard • High Needs budget 		<p>inclusion and support for children and families where they need this and provide the right support to children and families at the right time.</p> <p>The funding is to reduce or minimise disadvantage due to SEND, meet the needs of children and families where SEND is a protected characteristic and encourage participation in public life where participation and achievement is disproportionately low.</p>	<p>EHCP digital portal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting statutory timeframes • Slowing and/or reducing demand for EHCP's. • Feedback from the Parent Carer Forum on the impact of their work for children with SEND and their families. • Feedback from SENIDASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Services) of the impact of their work for children, young people with SEND and their families. • SEND inspection outcomes. • SEND strategy objectives for
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				<p>children with SEND.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering Better Value plan implemented, monitoring of High Needs budget.
<p>Post 16 statutory obligations and tackling NEET.</p> <p>This investment will increase practitioner capacity – in the form of Post 16yrs Co-ordinators, alongside a number of initiatives such as Transition Chat, Building Connections Groups and Works for Me Mentoring - to increase the numbers of post 16yrs vulnerable young people accessing employment, education or training.</p>	<p>Our most recent data (October 2023) shows just under half of care experienced adults are in employment or training (EET) (47%, against a target of 75%). Performance was at the lowest level since June 2021. This compares with 58% in October 2022. Performance was lowest for over 21's at 44%.</p> <p>There were 33 care experienced adults in higher education at the end of August (5.9%). Performance is within tolerance of target (6%) but slightly better than</p>	<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All</p> <p>Additional Groups</p> <p>Carers Care Leavers/Care Experienced Adults Socio-economic Exclusion Geography</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Engagement with education, employment and training is key to improving life opportunities for young people, particularly the most vulnerable.</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>This is about improving services to our most vulnerable young people and is a key element within our Ambitions Plan.</p> <p>Monitoring and Review</p> <p>The Ambitions Board will oversee progress on this, and the wider range of actions set out in our CS Ambitions Plan.</p>

	<p>the peer group average (5%). Moreover, engagement with Higher Education tends to reduce throughout the academic year.</p>			
<p>Education Safeguarding additional post.</p> <p>This investment will provide a dedicated child safeguarding lead in the LA education team to the support the Director of Education in engaging the education and early years sector in the county around safeguarding issues.</p>	<p>Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) and Working Together (WT 2018) have significantly enhanced the expectations for child safeguarding in the education and early years sectors. GCC has residual responsibilities as one of the three statutory safeguarding partners. With over 300 schools and 700 early years settings in the county this has required the creation of dedicated post to ensure GCC can meet its obligations.</p>	<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All</p> <p>Additional Groups</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Ensuring children are effectively safeguarded across the education and early years sectors, through effective multi-agency working, is a key responsibility of GCC as a statutory safeguarding partner under WT 2018.</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>The Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) annual plan sets out the programme of action for child safeguarding, supported by an education and early years sub group.</p> <p>Monitoring and Review</p> <p>The GSCP Executive provides oversight of progress supported by a comprehensive performance framework and programme of quality assurance activity.</p>

Revenue Cost Reductions (Savings)				
<p>Through social care interventions to reduce the number of Children in Care to meet statistical neighbours average of 57 CiC per 10k pop, by March 2026 leading to lower placement costs and reduce the need for residential placements by 5 per year.</p>	<p>Our most recent data shows that our rate of Children in Care (67 per 10K) is greater than comparators (60 per 10K) but below Eng Av (70 per 10K).</p> <p>Analysis of our CiC population and those at risk of entering care has highlighted the opportunity to bring our population more in line with comparators over time, in a child centred manner, through a range of targeted actions.</p>	<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All</p> <p>Additional Groups</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Enabling children to live a stable, safe and secure family unit has been shown through numerous studies to be the most conducive to improving their outcomes.</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>The Children's Services Ambitions Plan (Ambitions 1 and 3) sets out the actions to deliver the right support at the right time and ensure children can live safely in a secure and stable home.</p> <p>Monitoring and Review</p> <p>The Ambitions Board will oversee progress on this, and the wider range of actions set out in our CS Ambitions Plan.</p>
<p>Home to school transport route efficiencies while meeting statutory requirements for service provision. A project is in place supported by external</p>		<p>Protected Characteristics</p> <p>All – particularly Age, Disability</p>	<p>Neutral</p> <p>Eligibility for support with transport to school is in accordance with published policy, accessible on the Council's website. This</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>An approved plan and timeline is in place to deliver these savings while ensuring statutory duties are being met.</p>

<p>consultants to carry out a detailed review of all SEN routes, implementing appropriate efficiencies through route planning and the procurement of routes through e-auctions.</p>		<p>Additional Groups</p>	<p>is a demand led statutory service. It is the Council's responsibility to ensure all those children and young people who are entitled to support with transport to school, can get it, which involves an assessment of their needs, including consideration of their protected characteristics in providing support for school transport.</p> <p>The Council has also developed specific policies which take into account the specific protected characteristics in supporting young people:</p> <p>Mainstream: https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2082383/home-to-school-transport-policy.pdf</p>	<p>Monitoring and Review</p> <p>All plans and savings are monitored through the Transport Board involving the Integrated Transport team, education commissioners and the external consultants</p>
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			Children with SEN: u16-travel-assistance- policy-22-23.pdf (gloucestershire.gov.uk)	
Income Target				
Income 3% Increase Review of fees and charges in line with inflation		All	To ensure that fees and charges keep pace with the true cost of providing services	Actions Where relevant a specific Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken to consider the equality impact as detailed proposals are developed

3.3 – The Proposed Changes: Capital

Service Users				
Capital Programme	Summary of information and data gathered, including through consultation and engagement	Protected Characteristics / Additional Groups	Summary of assessment of the potential or actual impact on those who share the protected characteristics or are in the additional groups	Actions to further maximise the positive impact or minimise the negative impact. Arrangements for monitoring and review
Capital Cost Increases (Investment)				
Children's homes sufficiency	We have received DfE capital funding which together with GCC capital investment has enabled us to being the development of 4 children's homes, including staying close provision. This will provide around 20% of our current need.	Protected Characteristics All Additional Groups Care Leavers	Positive To enable the Council to continue to provide placements to meet the needs of its children in care, including those with a protected characteristic(s), by ensuring it can provide sufficient placements.	Actions Gloucestershire has recently refreshed its Sufficiency Strategy Homes@Heart and will continue to work with providers to stimulate the marketplace and review its current framework. The resulting action plan will ensure the provision of a range of placements that are available.

				<p>locally, that deliver value for money and are sufficient to meet the needs of all children including those with a protected characteristic(s).</p> <p>A focus on securing move-on accommodation for those young people aged 18+ who were unable to move-on during the pandemic and who continue to require suitable accommodation will help us (together with this investment) to balance our placement budgets in 2023.</p>
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3.4 The Proposed Changes: Workforce

As at 30 September 2023, 4,244 individuals were employed by the County Council, including employees from the Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service, but excluding those individuals who are engaged on casual or temporary contracts. The relevant workforce equality reporting is available online ([here](#)) including the Annual Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report.

The proposals within this year's MTFs do not require large scale workforce change. There are a number of proposals which increase staffing to support the delivery of services including increasing the capacity to support the delivery of the council's equality objectives. There are also individual proposals which may require some local service restructuring and therefore may impact the nature and number of roles. The Council provides a toolkit and specialist HR (Human Resources) advice to assist managers when planning restructures and other organisational change projects. This helps to ensure that the process of change management is carried out fairly and on an equitable and transparent basis, incorporating the principles of the Public Sector Equality Duty and other statutory requirements. This toolkit is kept under review and updated as necessary to ensure it remains relevant and legally compliant. The Council proactively seeks to minimise compulsory redundancy via the use of redeployment. Where service organisational changes involve alterations to buildings or office accommodation, the Council ensures that the design of such changes comply with accessibility standards together with making reasonable adjustments to support the workforce to undertake their roles.

The Council will continue to support the retention of staff. To achieve this, we offer and promote a range of flexible working practices and family friendly policies as well as agile working. We continue to operate voluntary purchase of additional leave and voluntary reduction to working hour's schemes, which were initially launched in 2013 and have been extended due to their popularity. We also provide several sacrifice schemes and other staff benefits. We actively promote our hard to fill professional roles and are reviewing our pay and reward scheme to ensure that it is fit for purpose and attracts a wide range of candidates including those with protected characteristics. We are a Disability Confident employer and have signed the Race at Work charter.

The Council communicates and engages with staff through a variety of processes including employee voice groups, staff networks, formal consultation and negotiations with Trade Unions, internal communications channels and team meetings.

The Council is in the third year of the three-year action plan and continues to develop actions for the future; this includes having regard to the Equality Framework for Local Government to inform the future equality strategies. We have employee networks for black, asian and minority ethnic employees; employees with caring responsibilities; employees with disabilities; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees and young employees. The Dignity at Work


network is one of the initial points of contact for any employee who believes they are experiencing bullying and harassment in the workplace.


The Employee Networks have continued to engage and support workforce equality projects alongside our colleagues in Human Resources and Organisational Development. The Employee Networks provided input on this Workforce Equality Report, providing feedback on the findings, suggesting recommendations, and agreeing terminology.

Support is provided through the Occupational Health and Safety services, including professional face to face counselling to support staff in appropriate cases. The Council continues to sign up to the Mindful Employer Charter and the Occupational Health team keeps support and advice under review to enable managers and staff to have relevant information available. A Health and Wellbeing Action Plan was agreed in 2023 and this is currently being implemented.

During the pandemic, we have piloted programmes to proactively encourage employees to improve their health and reduce the potential for future physical and mental health problems. Some of these programme are on-going. We have also introduced MIND (managing mental health at work) training for all managers. In addition, we have proactively worked with managers to help them support their teams recognising that this was a very difficult period for many individuals and families, and this has had an impact on both physical and mental health.

4. Approval

Signature of Executive Director	
Name of Executive Director	Ann James, Executive Director of Children's Services
Date	18.01.24

Signature of Cabinet Member	
Name of Cabinet Member	Cllr Lynden Stowe Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Change
Date	22 January 2024
