

<b>2 September 2014</b>		<b>ITEM: 6</b>
<b>Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>Budget reductions : Voluntary Sector Contracts, Learning Disability Development Fund, HealthWatch and Homeless Early Intervention</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Key	
<b>Report of:</b> Catherine Wilson Strategic Lead - Commissioning and Procurement		
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> N/A		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Roger Harris – Director of Health, Adults and Commissioning		
<b>This report is</b> Public		

### **Executive Summary**

A series of budget savings proposals have been drawn together to contribute to the overall savings targets set by Thurrock Council. The impact of the proposed savings on the citizens of Thurrock has been identified within the attached Equality Impact Assessments.

The Council has a legal responsibility to deliver a balanced budget and the report presented to Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 29<sup>th</sup> July 2014 detailed the background to the financial pressures that the Council faces and the work to date that has achieved significant savings. Over the next 3 years these financial pressures are going to increase and this will limit the extent to which services can be provided without a significant reduction in current spend.

The proposed voluntary sector contracts for budget savings are as follows:

- The World of Work TCIL £60K
- Keeping Safe BATIAS £30K
- Star Dating BATIAS £30K
- Thurrock Asian Association £17,790
- Thurrock Over Fifties Forum £5,000
- Age Concern Thurrock £2,600
- Age UK Essex Home Support £25,000

This is a reduction of approx. £ 170k on an Adults voluntary sector contracts budget of £ 770k

In addition a reduction of £ 50k is proposed to HealthWatch which is an arms-length social enterprise managed by the CVS.

A reduction of £ 34,064 in the Homeless Early Intervention project is also covered in the attached EIA's.

The overall individual impact for each equality group of each proposal together with the cumulative impact is one that reduces the availability of the identified services. Each contract or grant provides a service that supports individuals to gain information and/or direct support with specific issues that affect their lives. The contracts give an independent voice to people in Thurrock to influence and comment on service provision.

For each budget savings proposal mitigation of the impact for each equality group where appropriate has been noted and either officers will support organisations to seek alternative funding or some of the work will be directed to already existing services or forums.

## **1. Recommendation(s)**

**1.1 That the Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee note and comment on the impact across all equality groups of the proposed budget savings.**

**1.2 That the Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee are informed about the proposed mitigation of the impact across equality groups.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

2.1 Each proposed budget saving has been carefully considered balancing the requirement to make savings against the need for each contract to deliver the support and services detailed in the service specifications to the citizens of Thurrock. Each contract or grant has been awarded through a fair and equitable process with, in the case of HealthWatch, a requirement of the Local Authority to commission the services.

2.2 Each individual Equality Impact Assessment has identified the impact across each equality group and it is clear that the impact of the proposed budget savings across all areas will have some negative impacts. In some cases certain equality groups will be disproportionately affected through the proposals particularly older people and disabled people. The savings will mean that the ability of organisations to deliver the services outlined in their contracts or grant agreements will be reduced.

- 2.3 Each individual Equality Impact Assessment outlines where possible the mitigation that will reduce the impact of the budget savings across Thurrock. Officers will, where ever possible, support organisations to find alternative sources of funding. Some recommendations will be made to support organisations to recruit more volunteers to deliver their services. Some of the broader agenda's will be met in part by forums and services that already exist in the community or the Council.
- 2.4 The summary for each Equality Impact Assessment is detailed in the table below outlining the proposed saving, the service and potential impact and the mitigation where appropriate.

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Service and Potential Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation of Impact</b>
The World of Work £60K	This is the only service we commission that supports people with learning disabilities to seek work. The loss of this service will mean that people with a learning disability and Autism may find it difficult to engage in training and find employment, which can cause social isolation and limit participation in public life and the community.	The Job Centre have a programme called 'Work Choice' which is delivered by a provider at a local level for people with long term disabilities and learning disabilities to assist with the developing of CV's and supporting people to be job ready with appropriate skills.
Keeping Safe BATIAS £30K	The Staying Safe project supports people with a learning disability to understand how to keep safe in the home, out side in the community and online there is a risk that without this support people with a learning disability will be at risk and more safeguarding issues will be raised	Thurrock Community Safety Partnership develop and manage the community safety events in Thurrock for vulnerable groups. Some of the topics covered are personal safety, hate crime and internet safety where awareness is raised and the ability to report incidents.
Star Dating BATIAS £30K	The Star Dating project supports people with a learning disability to be able to meet other people in a safe environment with a view to dating but also to learn how to keep safe. It has been successful in	The Thurrock demographic is relatively compact where there are strong local links with voluntary services and the Thurrock Coalition who link in with numerous disability groups including

	<p>reducing people's social isolation. Without this service people with a learning disability will be less likely to have the opportunity to find a partner and get married / live together within a relationship and live a life that reflects their dreams and wishes.</p>	<p>Thurrock Diversity Network and Water Assisted Disabled Exercise and Rehabilitation Scheme (WADERS).</p>
<p>Thurrock Asian Association £17,790</p>	<p>TAA provides opportunities for socialisation to Asian elders and to signpost people to other services. Those individuals who are non-English speaking are supported in accessing services and volunteers advocate on their behalf. The TAA also provide facilities to other groups working with older people (especially those from a BME background). Please note that £11,000 of this funding is for rent on the centre (former shop) owned by the Council. If alternative funding is not found there would be an adverse impact on Asian Elders.</p>	<p>The actions that will be taken (apart from assistance to seek alternative funding) will need to ensure that additional mechanism for equality of access are put in place e.g. greater availability of information in Asian languages.</p> <p>Advocacy is available through another contract. This includes the provision of a translator for people who are non-English speaking.</p>
<p>Thurrock Over Fifties Forum £5,000</p>	<p>Thurrock Over Fifties Forum (TOFFs) was set up to represent the needs and interests of older people in Thurrock and to ensure that older people were engaged in the planning, development and evaluation of services and the local community.</p> <p>If alternative funding is not</p>	<p>This organisation was put in place to ensure that the voice of older people was heard in decision making. Alternative mechanisms of engagement would need to be strengthened to ensure that this continues e.g. Older People's Partnership Board, Thurrock Coalition and links created with other</p>

	secured there would be the risk of an adverse impact on older people.	older people organisations e.g. U3A
Age Concern Thurrock £2,600	<p>A volunteer led organisation that provides information and advice to older people and their families from the availability of local social activities to more specific help around the completion of attendance allowance forms (last year to supported older people to claim £82k).</p> <p>If alternative funding is not secured there would be an adverse impact on older people. There could also be an impact on other services as people may seek alternative help with the completion of forms. This may also result in increased social isolation and poverty for older people.</p>	<p>It is difficult to mitigate the risk and reduce it to a low rating without significant investment (investing in hard copies of information about social activities, greater use of LAC's and publishing more advice about completing forms). This investment would likely to cost more than the annual grant.</p>
Age UK Essex Home Support £25,000	<p>This service provides practical help to stay at home e.g. help with shopping and cleaning. If alternative funding is not secured there would be an adverse impact on older people. The funding has been used to subsidise the unit cost (hourly rate). This will result in the organisation having to introduce a full cost recovery model.</p>	<p>There is no mitigating action; removal of this funding will result in a higher hourly rate for older people if they continue to choose to stay with this provider.</p>

<p>Homeless Early Intervention Contract £34,064</p>	<p>The current contract provides support to 7 individuals/families at any one time and is available to all sectors of the community. Whilst there are additional Council-commissioned services that aim to prevent homelessness, these services are not available to everyone. For example, the homelessness prevention service commissioned by Housing is only available to Council tenants and deals with rent arrears only. Therefore it is likely that those most affected by this proposed termination of service will be people in the private sector.</p>	<p>The Family Intervention Project that is commissioned by Children's Social Care has a primary objective of stopping the anti-social behaviour of families and restore safety to their homes and to the wider community. The project also tackles the causes of anti-social behaviour, with issues such as drug and alcohol misuse, poor health, domestic violence, unemployment and debt. As a result the project also delivers other objectives such as preventing homelessness, enabling families to sustain tenancies and helping to achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>For those families and individuals that do not meet the criteria of the above services, then the Council will signpost enquirers to alternative support services and community support organisations.</p>
<p>HealthWatch £50K</p>	<p>This reduction represents 30% the current grant to HealthWatch and would effectively reduce the organisations capacity to offer the current levels of service.</p> <p>The organisation undertakes an invaluable role in monitoring local health and social care</p>	<p>The organisation would be supported to find alternative funding to replace the reduction in funding</p>

	<p>services and supports service users, carers and patients. It is a requirement that each local authority commissions a local service however there is no ring fenced grant for health watch it is now part of the general fund</p>	
	<p>HealthWatch provides a vital independent role in supporting the population of Thurrock and this ability would be reduced significantly if funding was reduced</p>	

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

3.1 N/A

### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

4.1 Thurrock Council are required to deliver a balanced budget.

4.2 That Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee are informed regarding the potential impact on all equality groups of the proposed budget

### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

5.1 Further discussions will be held with the groups affected.

### **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

6.1 In order to continue to deliver services to people in Thurrock the Council is required to make significant savings. The budget savings proposals will support Adult Social Care to deliver the proportion of the Council's savings allocated to the Directorate. In so doing it will have a significant negative impact on the wider corporate policies and priorities together with the community of Thurrock. The reduction in the HealthWatch contract and the grant for TOFF's will lessen the independent voice of those who use services

### **7. Implications**

7.1 **Financial**

Implications verified by: **Roger Harris**  
**Director Adults Health and Commissioning**  
**Mike Jones**  
**Management Accountant**

This report adds more detail to the impact of the proposed budget savings contained within the report presented to Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 29<sup>th</sup> July 2014. The financial implications are the same.

## 7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**

**Deputy Head of Legal & Deputy Monitoring Officer**

There are no direct legal implications within the context of this report although there is the possibility of legal challenge if budget savings are realised and EqIA's were not appropriately completed.

## 7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Teresa Evans**

**Equalities and Cohesion Officer**

This report details the impact across all equality groups, the risks and mitigation. The Community Development and Equalities Team will prepare a report with regards to the cumulative impact of all budget proposals on the Thurrock community. Commissioning managers will ensure the actions identified to mitigate impact are implemented Consultation and engagement will continue.

## 7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

N/A

## 8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- N/A

## 9. **Appendices to the report**



- EqlA's HealthWatch, Older People, Learning Disability (LDDF) and Homelessness Prevention

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