

SSA EQUALITY IMPACT AND NEEDS ANALYSIS

Directorate	Finance
Service Area	Financial Management
Service/policy/function being assessed	Council Tax setting
Which borough (s) does the service/policy apply to	Richmond
Staff involved	Fenella Merry, Katherine Burston, John O'Sullivan
Date approved by Directorate Equality Group (if applicable)	n/a
Date approved by Policy and Review Manager All EINAs must be signed off by the Policy and Review Manager	16th February 2024
Date submitted to Directors' Board	n/a

SUMMARY

Please summarise the key findings of the EINA.

The Council is obliged to set a balanced budget and commensurate Council Tax level in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

For 2024/25, the key features of the proposed budget are a 4.99% increase in the overall Richmond element of the Council Tax which comprises:

- a 2.99% increase in the Richmond element of the Council Tax,
- a 2% precept (as allowed by Government) in support of Adult Social Care services and a 8.6% increase in the GLA element of the Council Tax, leading to an overall increase of 5.7% for average band D, or £122.45 per year.

The analysis is split into 2 parts:

- The impact of increasing the Council Tax
- The impact of the generation of a 2% Adult Social Care precept

The Government's Spending Review announced that local authorities responsible for adult social care would be given additional 2% flexibility on their current council tax referendum threshold to be used entirely for social care. The Council applied an adult social care precept of 2% in 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 3% in 2021/22, 1% in 2022/23 and 2% in 2023/24, which was the maximum flexibility allowed at that time.

The council tax generated from this 2% increase will generate additional income of £3.1 million to be attributed to adult social care. This "precept" also has to be shown on the face of council tax bills and in the "information supplied with the demand notice".

Taking the precept will have a positive impact on users of adult social care in Richmond.

An EINA will be undertaken on any changes to services which result from the setting of this year's Budget.

1. Background

Briefly describe the service/policy or function:

The recommendation in the report is as follows: -

That Members consider the advice of the Executive Director of Finance in respect of Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 in setting the budget.

That the Council be recommended to agree the Revenue Budget for 2024/25.

Recommend to Council to agree that the Band D level of Council Tax for 2024/25, including the Council's increase in Council Tax of 2.99%, the Social Care Precept of 2% and the GLA increase of 8.6%, be set at £2,263.66, an overall increase of 5.7% on 2023/24.

2. Analysis of need and impact

PART 1 - Increasing the Council Tax

In terms of Council Tax liability, residents fall into one of the following 4 categories:

1. those liable to pay full Council Tax,
2. those eligible for some form of discount or exemption (other than Council Tax Support),
3. those eligible for Council Tax Support,
4. those with no Council Tax liability.

A 5.7% increase in the Band D Council Tax would result in a cash increase of £122.45 per year (£2.35 per week) for those required to pay the full charge. Just over a quarter (28%), (66p per week), of the increase in the Richmond element of the Council Tax stems from the Government's offer to allow Councils to increase Council Tax, provided that the additional amount is used in support of Adult Social Care i.e. some of its most vulnerable residents.

All groups experiencing hardship and crisis will be able to apply for support provided under the cost-of-living support programme.

Group 1 - Those liable to pay full Council Tax

For the majority of Richmond residents, the Council believes that the proposed increase will not have a significant impact. Richmond is known as an affluent borough with high levels of employment (82% economically active residents as at September 2023, compared to 78.7% a year earlier; 2,890 out of work claimants as of January 2024, 31.5% above the pre-pandemic level of 2,205 but a significant fall from 5,995 in December 2020). There will be an impact for those Council Taxpayers whose income is just above the threshold for Council Tax Reduction who will face the full increase. The Council has no specific equalities monitoring data on this group of residents.

Group 2 - Those eligible for some form of discount or exemption (other than Council Tax Support)

As per Group 1 but for those in receipt of a discount or exemption the effect of the increase would be proportionately less. Single Person Discount is the main discount allowed amounting to just over 25,996 properties. The Council has no equalities monitoring information about this group. In addition, there are 274 properties where a banding reduction has been awarded in respect of a disability.

For example, a Band D taxpayer who is eligible for a single person discount would be subject to an increase of £91.83 (£1.77p per week) rather than £122.45 (£2.35 per week).

Group 3 – Those eligible for Council Tax Support

The proportion of Council Tax liability on which Council Tax Reduction is calculated is 100%. This is the same as for 2023/24. The number of dwellings that are long term vacant (more than 6 months) is 844 and of these 201 are attracting a council tax premium for being vacant for more than 2 years.

Group 4 – Those with no Council Tax liability

The effect on this group is neutral.

PART 2 – USE OF THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE PRECEPT

Protected group	Findings															
Age	<table border="1" data-bbox="459 286 1390 450"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="459 286 767 315">Age band</th> <th data-bbox="767 286 1075 315">Census data (2021)</th> <th data-bbox="1075 286 1390 315">Adults cohort</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 315 767 344">18-64</td> <td data-bbox="767 315 1075 344">79.2%</td> <td data-bbox="1075 315 1390 344">39.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 344 767 374">65-74</td> <td data-bbox="767 344 1075 374">11.3%</td> <td data-bbox="1075 344 1390 374">11.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 374 767 403">75+</td> <td data-bbox="767 374 1075 403">9.5%</td> <td data-bbox="1075 374 1390 403">49.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 403 767 432">Total</td> <td data-bbox="767 403 1075 432">151,279</td> <td data-bbox="1075 403 1390 432">2,030</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="459 479 1422 539">Adult Services support significantly more older residents than the borough average.</p>	Age band	Census data (2021)	Adults cohort	18-64	79.2%	39.4%	65-74	11.3%	11.5%	75+	9.5%	49.1%	Total	151,279	2,030
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Disability	<p data-bbox="459 600 1422 660">Census data 2021: 12.1% of residents defined as disabled under the Equality Act.</p> <p data-bbox="459 696 1422 815">Profile of Adult Social Care Service Users: The majority of service users have physical disabilities or physical frailty as their main area of difficulty. In 2022/23, 594 individuals had a mental health condition as their main difficulty and 461 individuals had learning disability (all ages).</p>															
Sex	<p data-bbox="459 846 1422 875">Census data 2021: 52% of residents are female.</p> <p data-bbox="459 911 1422 940">Profile of Adult Social Care Service Users: 54.8% are female</p> <p data-bbox="459 976 1422 1037">Adult Services support significantly more female residents than the borough average.</p>															
Gender reassignment	<p data-bbox="459 1090 1422 1308">The 2021 Census for the first time collected data on gender identity. The question was voluntary and only asked of people aged 16+. • 146,446 (93.98%) said their gender identity was the same as their sex registered at birth, higher than London and England. In total, 610 (0.39%) Richmond residents indicated a change in gender identity. Of the 610 residents who indicated a change in gender identity, 53% were female with highest proportion aged 16-34 years; compared to 47% male with highest proportion aged 35-54.</p>															
Marriage and civil partnership	<p data-bbox="459 1339 1422 1400">Half of the borough (49%) is 'married or in a civil partnership' which is higher than Outer London (45%), London (39.4%) and England (44.3%)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="459 1429 1374 1765"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="459 1429 1075 1489"></th> <th data-bbox="1075 1429 1374 1489">Richmond upon Thames</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 1489 1075 1550">Never married and never registered a civil partnership (%)</td> <td data-bbox="1075 1489 1374 1550">35.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 1550 1075 1597">Married or in a registered civil partnership (%)</td> <td data-bbox="1075 1550 1374 1597">49.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 1597 1075 1657">Separated, but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership (%)</td> <td data-bbox="1075 1597 1374 1657">1.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 1657 1075 1704">Divorced or civil partnership dissolved (%)</td> <td data-bbox="1075 1657 1374 1704">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 1704 1075 1765">Widowed or surviving civil partnership partner (%)</td> <td data-bbox="1075 1704 1374 1765">4.7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Richmond upon Thames	Never married and never registered a civil partnership (%)	35.9	Married or in a registered civil partnership (%)	49.5	Separated, but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership (%)	1.9	Divorced or civil partnership dissolved (%)	8	Widowed or surviving civil partnership partner (%)	4.7			
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<p>Race/ethnicity</p>	<p>Census data 2021: 19.6% of residents are from black and minority ethnic (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) communities.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="660 284 1209 584"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">ONS Census 2021</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Ethnicity</th> <th>Richmond (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>White</td> <td>80.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>8.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed</td> <td>5.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>3.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black</td> <td>1.9</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Profile of Adult Social Care Service Users: 14.6% of service users were from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. The largest proportion of which come from the Asian or Asian British community. 4.9% Asian or Asian British, 3.9% are from Other Ethnic group, 3.5% are Black/Black British, 2.3% are of Mixed ethnic background</p>	ONS Census 2021		Ethnicity	Richmond (%)	White	80.5	Asian	8.9	Mixed	5.5	Other	3.3	Black	1.9						
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<p>Religion and belief, including non-belief</p>	<p>Census data for all population of Richmond:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="459 891 1179 1211"> <thead> <tr> <th>Religion</th> <th>Census Data</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Christian</td> <td>45.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Buddhist</td> <td>0.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hindu</td> <td>2.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jewish</td> <td>0.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Muslim</td> <td>4.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sikh</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Religion</td> <td>0.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No Religion</td> <td>37.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No response</td> <td>7.1%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Religion	Census Data	Christian	45.3%	Buddhist	0.8%	Hindu	2.1%	Jewish	0.6%	Muslim	4.3%	Sikh	1%	Other Religion	0.7%	No Religion	37.9%	No response	7.1%
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<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>For the first time in 2021, Census data included questions about sexual orientation, voluntary for individuals aged 16 and older. In Richmond, 89% identified as straight or heterosexual, 1.9% as gay or lesbian, 1.2% as bisexual, and 0.3% under 'all other sexual orientations.</p>																				
<p>Across groups i.e. older LGBT service users or Black, Asian and minority ethnic young men</p>	<p>Data not collected via the Census.</p>																				

Socio-economic status
(to be treated as a protected characteristic under Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010)
Include the following groups:

- **Deprivation (measured by the 2019 English Indices of Deprivation)**
- **Low-income groups & employment**
- **Carers**
- **Care experience people**
- **Single parents**
- **Health inequalities**
- **Refugee status**

Deprivation – Indices of Deprivation 2019
The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 rank each small area (Lower Super Output Area) in England from most deprived to least deprived, with 1 being the most and 10 being the least. Income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services and living environment are the seven domains of deprivation.
Between 2015 and 2019 Richmond was within the 10% least deprived Local Authorities in England and was the least deprived London Borough. The borough ranks amongst the least deprived third of LAs in England for five of the seven deprivation domains (Barriers to Housing & Services; Education, Skills & Training; Employment; Health Deprivation & Disability; Income) and is the least deprived in England for Education, Skills and Training.

Low-income groups & employment – DWP 2023		
Measures	Richmond population (%)	London population (%)
People on Universal Credit	7.9	16.2
People claiming out of work benefits	2.3	5
Richmond has a considerably lower percentage of residents claiming Universal Credit or out of work benefits compared to London.		

Income and Poverty- DWP and ONS		
Measure	Richmond population (%)	London population (%)
Households living in fuel poverty (2020)	8	NA
Children living in families with Relative Low Income (2021/22)	5.1	15

Households - ONS Census 2021	
Measures	Value
Lone parent family	7078

Data gaps

Data gap(s)	How will this be addressed?
	n/a

Impact

Protected group	Positive	Negative
Age	As 60.6% of Adult Social Care service users are aged 65 and over - taking the precept will have a positive impact in that it will ensure these vulnerable	Although the increase in council tax will support vulnerable residents who are service users of adult social care it will mean that residents will see an increase in their council tax.

	residents continue to receive support.	The Council has a Council Tax Reduction Scheme which reduces the tax liability for certain classes of residents i.e. pensioners and those in receipt of certain disability benefits.
Disability	As the majority of Adult Social Care service users have physical disabilities or physical frailty as their main area of difficulty taking the precept will have a positive impact in that it will ensure these vulnerable residents continue to receive support.	As above
Sex	As 54.8% of Adult Social Care service users are female taking the precept will have a positive impact in that it will ensure that vulnerable female residents continue to receive support.	As above
Gender reassignment	Taking the precept will support Gender reassignment service users of Adult Social Care and ensure they continue to receive support.	As above
Marriage and civil partnership	Taking the precept will support service users of Adult Social Care regardless of their relationship status and will ensure they continue to receive support.	As above
Pregnancy and maternity	Taking the precept will support service users of Adult Social Care regardless of whether they are pregnant or have recently given birth and will ensure they continue to receive support.	As above
Race/ethnicity	Taking the precept will support Black, Asian and minority ethnic service users of Adult Social Care and ensure they continue to receive support.	As above
Religion and belief, including non-belief	Taking the precept will support service users of Adult Social Care and ensure vulnerable residents, regardless of their faith or belief, continue to receive support.	As above
Sexual orientation	Taking the precept will support service users of Adult Social Care and ensure vulnerable residents, regardless of their	As above

	sexual orientation, continue to receive support.	
<p>Socio-economic status (to be treated as a protected characteristic under Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010)</p> <p>Include the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deprivation (measured by the 2019 English Indices of Deprivation) ● Low-income groups & employment ● Carers ● Care experienced people. ● Single parents ● Health inequalities ● Refugee status 	<p>Taking the precept will support service users of Adult Social Care and ensure the most vulnerable residents, continue to receive support. Some social care provision is means tested, which will provide further support for those in socio-economic groups or situations that are more difficult. This council tax decision is separate from any decision on services provision which may impact residents.</p>	As above.

3. Actions

Action	Lead Officer	Deadline
Individual EINAs are undertaken alongside any decision to change or reduce a service as a result of budget changes	Individual officers reporting	As changes are implemented

4. Consultation. (optional section– as appropriate)

Statutory consultation on the Council’s service expenditure and council tax setting has been undertaken with business ratepayers’ representatives.
