

Newport City Council Budget Consultation 2023-24

Response from the Newport Fairness Commission

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1. Preamble and context

- This is our **eleventh annual response** to the Newport City Council budget proposals.
- It comes at a time of **severe challenges to local authority finances**, with the UK facing perilous economic knock-on effects from the Covid-19 pandemic, Brexit, the war in Ukraine, and the UK government’s ‘emergency mini-budget’ of September 2022.
- Thus after an exception in 2022-23 when the budget focused chiefly on investments, this year’s budget reverts to the previous norm of an emphasis on **savings**. As we have noted repeatedly, after years of austerity since 2010, few council services would now be seen as anything other than essential. The public realm has been significantly depleted. Against such a background, it is not self-evident that savings will be positively *fair*. The best that can be achieved is a minimisation of *unfairness*. **While this situation is not new, it is incrementally worse each time decisions are made in this context.**
- Each of our annual responses has differed slightly in form, adapted in light of the nature and scale of the proposals at hand and the current priorities of the Commission. In this report we have focused in on selected proposals – addressed in a discursive way (rather than applying ratings to all proposals as in previous years).
- While our approach has varied over time, we have an increasingly strong sense that we are **repeating ourselves**, in ways which prompt **concerns about the seriousness with which the Council addresses fairness**. These are highlighted in the key points below, and in **orange** throughout the text.

2. Key points

Normally here we would summarise salient points from our coverage of the proposals. On this occasion we are not in a position to offer that kind of overview, for these reasons.

- The public (and so the Fairness Commission) are **not provided with enough information to gauge and compare the impacts of the budget proposals set forward**.
- This makes it **prohibitively difficult to assess the fairness of those proposals**. We can offer loose commentary on the nature of the issues at stake, and observations on possible implications of the savings for particular groups. What we cannot do is fulfil the brief of scrutinising the work of the council and feeding back on the fairness of its decision-making.
- This is partly because the Council is **not meeting its own basic requirements, in terms of the adequate completion of Fairness and Equality Impact Assessments**, and indeed its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- **Presuming that the Council continues to support Newport having a Fairness Commission, it needs to take these concerns seriously**. As we always stress in our annual budget response, our role is not to make policy recommendations. Rather, our role is to facilitate critical reflection and dialogue around the Council’s decisions and direction of travel. On the basis of the kind of information the Council is providing to the public about its budget proposals, this is not realistically possible to do.

None of these points should distract from the commentary below, or be taken as replacing it. It highlights a rich array of issues, gaps, themes and areas for concern. In each case, the points made are precisely the kind which would emerge in an adequately conducted FEIA process.

3. How we put this response together

The compiling of this response unfolded over four stages, between mid-December 2022 and late January 2023:

1. We divided the 27 proposals into 3 service areas (see below), with each then allocated to a team made up of Fairness Commission members.
2. Each team identified two priority proposals in each service area, using criteria below.
3. Each team provided a discussion of its chosen priority proposals.
4. The Chair then incorporated those discussions into this overall report.

SERVICE AREAS

1	2	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Services (5 proposals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Services (4 proposals) • Education (3 proposals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Services – Infrastructure (4 proposals) • Environment and Public Protection (5 proposals) • Finance (2 proposals) • Housing (2 proposals) • Law & Standards (1 proposal) • Regeneration & Economic Development (1 proposal)

Please note that these areas are grouped according to the nature of the issues raised in connection with each service group. There are smaller pools for areas 1 and 2, to allow for increased coverage of adult and children’s services, with education being a natural corollary of children’s services. While service area 3 covers a broader range, that is not to suggest that the issues there are less important – just that there is less risk in combining them together.

CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING PRIORITY PROPOSALS

These are the criteria by which the teams picked out proposals to treat as a priority. They are based roughly on our 4 Principles of Fairness (see Appendix)

How likely (on a scale of 1-3, where 3 is most likely) is the proposal in question...

- To have an especially adverse impact on some groups compared to others, and/or to increase the gap between those with more and those with less?
- To adversely affect those who are already most vulnerable and disadvantaged?
- To threaten the capacity of citizens to participate in society, and (where relevant) to shape the services they use?
- To be difficult to understand by those affected?

4. Discussion of priority proposals

SERVICE AREA 1 ADULT SERVICES
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Priority proposals identified:

- 1. Adult Day Opportunities (short break service)**
- 2. Adult contracts: commissioned services**
- 3. Eligible Care and Support Needs Budget**
- 4. Provision of Services to Support Residents with Learning Disabilities**
- 5. Restructuring of Adult Social Care**

Our teams were invited to pick 2 priority proposals in their allocated service area. In this case, we found it impossible to rank them: **precise comparison was made too difficult by the lack of information available**. Having decided to focus both on the scale of those potentially affected and also on relative vulnerability of each group affected. It proved difficult to get any idea of the scale at all for 4 of them as **there is little or no mention** of

- what each budget cut amounts to
- the scale of the impact – either quantitatively or qualitatively – of the loss of the service (in all but one case)
- how each might impact on different vulnerable groups (do some lose more than others, are some groups more protected?)
- any consultations with users

There also seems to be quite a lot of cutting and pasting, with standard responses across proposals and, oddly, often references to children's services for some reason.

The 2 proposals with largest potential impact are possibly the Adult Contracts and Eligible Support Needs proposals but again, it is **very difficult to be certain** because ideas of scale are missing from all but one. Therefore all 5 are discussed here as a precaution.

1. Adult Day Opportunities (short break service)

Why was this proposal identified as a priority?

It has proved impossible to properly or prioritise this over others because of a lack of detail especially of scale and of how it impacts on different groups of users the service currently supports. This is a complete withdrawal of a particular part of the service offering residential breaks.

What fairness issues does it raise?

At the moment it struggles to meet any of the 4 principles: equity because there is no real detail on scale and how it impacts on service users; priority because it fails to break down different groups that might be affected and how these might be prioritised in future; communication because

consultation has not yet taken place and no plan to do so provided; inclusion because service users are not yet part of the discussions.

How informative is the relevant Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment?

The Fairness section has not been completed at all.

What specific fairness-related challenges does this proposal pose for the Council, going forward?

It obviously reduces levels of service and in particular eliminates one type of choice that it is hard to see a viable alternative filling the gap, short breaks are useful to reduce stress and pressures on carers. If stresses are not relieved there may be a greater danger of carers being unable to maintain their role and possibly result in long term residential care. The risks and possible knock on effects and calls for other services may be counter productive in the longer term but these are not properly identified nor assessed – would short term savings results in longer term extra costs?? The proposal lacks realistic risk assessments. Would the complete withdrawal of such a service be open to judicial challenge?? How the council decides to inform and consult users may be crucial to this.

How might the Council address those challenges?

A proper risk assessment for unintended consequences might help together with a real presentation of scale of service withdrawal, numbers affected and proposals to provide alternatives to address the service users' needs. Has the council worked out a viable alternative to this type of provision or not?? **The socio-economic analysis seems to have been cut and pasted:** it is unclear why there is a paragraph on children? Proposals may adversely impact on key partners in health and social relationships.

2. Adult contracts (Commissioned Services)

Why was this proposal identified as a priority?

It has proved impossible to properly or prioritise this over others because of a lack of detail especially of scale and of how it impacts on different groups of users the service currently supports. This proposal is particularly vague but potentially could have the most adverse impacts, very poorly drafted. Like the others it appears a generic response in many sections, often referring to children in many sections – leaves the impression of a cut and paste.

What fairness issues does it raise?

At the moment it struggles to meet any of the 4 principles, equity because there is no real detail on scale and how it impacts on service users; priority because it fails to break down different groups that might be affected and how these might be prioritised in future, communication because consultation has not yet taken place and no plan to do so provided, inclusion because service users are not yet part of the discussions.

How informative is the relevant Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment?

The Fairness section has not been completed at all.

What specific fairness-related challenges does this proposal pose for the Council, going forward?

Any proposal that is so vague should ring alarm bells as little work has been done on the detail, identifying who might be affected, how and to what scale.

How might the Council address those challenges?

Again potentially affects a large number of users. No idea of scale of reduction in % terms and number of users or hours of support packages, nor the shape of a restructured service. No doubt it will mean a reduction in either numbers support or quality of service unless it means screwing contractors who may reduce terms for own workforces. All at a time when social care is known for not paying wages to attract or retain staff . This affects extremely vulnerable groups but no idea idea how it will impact on each different group. Too broad range and vague to work out.

Will likely lead of either less support time or a reduction in quality and consistency of care packages and likely to adversely major partners like Health.

3. Eligible Care and Support Needs Budget

Why was this proposal identified as a priority?

It has proved impossible to properly or prioritise this over others because of a lack of detail – especially of scale and of how it impacts on different groups of users the service currently supports. In a similar vein to other proposals this points to reductions in service levels without any detail so it is impossible for the reader to gauge the impact other than it will be negative or maybe very negative. Much of it appears to be a cut and paste job, often references to children in different sections. It gives carte blanche to managers to implement whatever cuts they wish without a proper description of impacts and likely risk to the Council.

What fairness issues does it raise?

At the moment it struggles to meet any of the 4 principles, equity because there is no real detail on scale and how it impacts on service users; priority because it fails to break down different groups that might be affected and how these might be prioritised in future, communication because consultation has not yet taken place and no plan to do so provided, inclusion because service users are not yet part of the discussions.

How informative is the relevant Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment?

The Fairness section has not been completed at all.

What specific fairness-related challenges does this proposal pose for the Council, going forward?

This is almost like signing a blank cheque and it is difficult to see this as a proposal fit enough to be consulted upon. It needs a lot more work and modelling of likely scale of cuts, potential impact and details of how it may affect different groups of service users.

How might the Council address those challenges?

It suffers from same issues as others, no idea of scale, we already know that this service is stretched and severely under resourced given the health crisis. How will this actually impact on waiting times and the level of support offered to each individual? It will affect partners like health badly. It lacks projections, assessments of risk, details on how it may affect different groups of users. **The best suggestion would be to re write it properly.**

4. Provision of Services to Support Residents with Learning Disabilities

Why was this proposal identified as a priority?

It has proved impossible to properly or prioritise this over others because of a lack of detail within the other proposals (and even in this one) especially of scale and of how it impacts on different

groups of users the service currently supports. This is the only proposal to mention a figure of 10% for a reduction in services. There is still no detail on what this means in hours of support provided, numbers of service uses and how these are affected. Does it mean a tightening of thresholds or restricted groups that receive a service, are all groups of users affected equally or is there likely differentiation proposed. Again it seems parts are cut and pasted, with references to children etc.

What fairness issues does it raise?

At the moment it struggles to meet any of the 4 principles, equity because there is no real detail on scale and how it impacts on service users; priority because it fails to break down different groups that might be affected and how these might be prioritised in future, communication because consultation has not yet taken place and no plan to do so provided, inclusion *because service users are not yet part of the discussions.*

How informative is the relevant Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment?

The Fairness section has not been completed at all.

What specific fairness-related challenges does this proposal pose for the Council, going forward?

The only one to talk about a reduction of 10% which will be significant although whether each package reduces by 10% or whether the service is given to less users is not clear. It covers a wide range of degrees of vulnerability, will the most vulnerable be more protected ie the threshold be raised. Not clear how groups will be consulted. There is an absence of detail and no proper risk assessment of impact and potential unintended consequences.

How might the Council address those challenges?

It would help if the proposal attempted to identify the challenges it possibly poses. It needs more detail to make any informed decision.

5. Restructuring of Adult Social Care

Why was this proposal identified as a priority?

It has proved impossible to properly or prioritise this over others because of a lack of detail especially of scale and of how it impacts on different groups of users the service currently supports. It talks of reducing 8 posts but it is not clear what this means in relative scale of reduction, how it impacts on numbers of service users, waiting lists, hours of support etc, the detailed description of impact is missing. Like the others it includes references to children which suggests large parts have been cut and pasted and not given specific thought to the actual proposal. The impact could be marginal or massive.

What fairness issues does it raise?

At the moment it struggles to meet any of the 4 principles, equity because there is no real detail on scale and how it impacts on service users; priority because it fails to break down different groups that might be affected and how these might be prioritised in future, communication because consultation has not yet taken place and no plan to do so provided, inclusion because service users are not yet part of the discussions.

How informative is the relevant Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment?

The Fairness section has not been completed at all.

What specific fairness-related challenges does this proposal pose for the Council, going forward?

The FEIA appears incomplete at this stage. Consultations have not taken place yet with affected service users. Reduction in posts of 8 but no idea of scale of impact on numbers that can be helped. The fact that there are currently vacant posts is already impacting. How many people should be supported with current staffing (if full presumably causes waiting lists), how many could be supported with restructure? It covers services to a some very vulnerable groups old, disabled possibly mental health and others. No idea how this will as yet impact on quality of service to be given or whether some groups will fare worse than others. It lacks detail and risk assessments of impact. It is likely to exacerbate the existing social care crisis further with knock on impacts in health.

How might the Council address those challenges?

It seems counter intuitive given the acknowledged social care crisis and all the recent publicity around this. It is interesting that WG did not anticipate this in the settlement and seek to ring fence this sector. It does smack of a silo approach and not joining up the dots. It does help explain how the current crisis has developed over time without obvious linkages being made by planners.

<p>SERVICE AREA 2 CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION</p>

Priority proposals identified:

- 6. Barnardo's Partnership**
- 7. Educational Psychology**

6. Barnardo's Partnership

Why was this proposal identified as a priority?

The impact of this proposal is extensive and affects families who appear to access various services and programmes within the partnership. The partnership also works with a number of people who are vulnerable – looked after children, families of looked after children, teens at risk of exploitation etc.

What fairness issues does it raise?

To have an especially adverse impact on some groups compared to others, and/or to increase the gap between those with more and those with less? **Unable to assess as the FEIA is lacking in information.** It is also potentially inaccurate when stating that this proposal will not impact those with protected characteristics.

To adversely affect those who are already most vulnerable and disadvantaged? Rated 3 due to the nature of the service being provided that is primarily for those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

To threaten the capacity of citizens to participate in society, and (where relevant) to shape the services they use? **Unable to assess as the proposal is unclear on how service users have been able to provide input.**

To be difficult to understand by those affected? Rated 3. The proposal is likely to be difficult to be understood as it could be unclear for children and young people (especially who are vulnerable) to understand why services that are meant to support them have been cut, or that they are no longer eligible for the service. It is also unclear as to how service users will be able to apply for and access alternative services to support them.

How informative is the relevant Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment?

The FEIA is poorly written. For example, this proposal will most definitely affect service users with protected characteristics across the city – and yet the ‘neither’ impact box has been ticked. **The proposal does not provide a breakdown of service users by protected characteristics.**

What specific fairness-related challenges does this proposal pose for the Council, going forward?

Potentially damaging to a vulnerable group of service users who are not in a position to advocate for themselves.

In the long run, it appears that this cut will result further costs being incurred elsewhere as service users will need to access alternative support and this will require new assessments.

The service users (particularly young people) are the most at risk of exploitation and future offending – the cut at this stage will reduce the amount of preventative support for them.

How might the Council address those challenges?

Revisit the FEIA to provide a more accurate picture on who will be impacted by the proposal.

Additional information on alternative services should also be included to provide reassurance that the service users will not be left without support.

7. Educational Psychology

Why was this proposal identified as a priority?

When reviewing the FEIA, this proposal had multiple protected characteristics that would be negatively impact as well as a long list of moderate to significant negative impact related to socio-economic disadvantage.

What fairness issues does it raise?

To have an especially adverse impact on some groups compared to others, and/or to increase the gap between those with more and those with less? Rated 3. Those with learning difficulties etc, would have a reduced access to the service, furthering the gap between those with LD and those without LD. The FEIA has also acknowledged the potential increased negative impact (ranging from mild to significant) of the proposal for young people already experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

To adversely affect those who are already most vulnerable and disadvantaged? Rated 3 as the group most affected are vulnerable and disadvantaged by their LD and may not be in a position to advocate for themselves.

To threaten the capacity of citizens to participate in society, and (where relevant) to shape the services they use? Rated 3 as the service itself is meant to assess those who require additional support, and this reduced service means there will be those who will struggle without that support and impact on their ability to participate in society.

To be difficult to understand by those affected? Rated 3. Most families have to go through a difficult and challenging process to enable their children to be assessed and there is usually a waiting list. Reducing the service will not be easy for the families to understand as there is a need for assessments to take place and that the Council is admitting that it is reducing its ability to meet its statutory requirements in relation to ALN.

How informative is the relevant Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment?

The FEIA has been poorly considered. Whilst it is positive that the impact on those with protected characteristics have been acknowledged, **the FEIA does not provide clarity on any mitigating actions.**

What specific fairness-related challenges does this proposal pose for the Council, going forward?

The FEIA has acknowledged that the proposal will impact the ability for statutory requirements to be met, but the way this will be mitigated is unclear.

The reduction in staffing will create a 'slowing-down' of the service which will reduce support for young people whose needs are not deemed essential. This potentially will impact their ability to participate in society.

The potential for sourcing out-of-county placements may not only cause distress for service users and their families, but the Council may incur additional (and most likely substantial) costs.

How might the Council address those challenges?

The FEIA should be revised and the solution of 'redistributing the work to the existing staff' should be reconsidered as it is unclear whether the existing staff will have capacity to undertake additional work.

How statutory requirements relating to ALN will continue to be met despite the reduction to the service should be made clear, not only to alleviate concerns for service users and their families but to also ensure that the proposal does not undermine legal obligations.

SERVICE AREA 3 OTHER PROPOSALS

Priority proposals identified:

- 8. Reducing funding to the Shop Mobility scheme in 2023-24**
- 9. Educational Psychology**

8. Reducing funding to the Shop Mobility scheme in 2023-24

Why was this proposal identified as a priority?

This proposal appears to offer a relatively minimal financial saving to the local authority whilst imposing a significant cut (in terms of % of the overall budget) to a targeted service supporting people who are older, with disabilities and/or limited mobility. It therefore has a disproportionate effect on people who represent at least two protected characteristics in exchange for relatively modest savings. The people served by the ShopMobility scheme may also be disproportionately affected by the

cost-of-living crisis and by cuts to services identified elsewhere (adult services, city services, regeneration). It is important not to see the possible effect of this reduction, or any other reduction, in isolation. ShopMobility users are more likely to experience compounded and intersectional disadvantage when the cost of living crisis, national social policy and welfare changes and other reductions in Newport's services are considered.

What fairness issues does it raise?

This proposal relates to at least three out of the four principles of fairness. It has an especially adverse impact on some groups compared to others, it may increase the gap between those with more and those with less, it adversely affect those who are already most vulnerable and disadvantaged, it threatens the capacity of citizens to participate in society (i.e. town centre based activity/services) and although the FEIA identified age and disability as two effected protected characteristic it suggests that there has been no direct consultation with existing, previous or potential users of the service, or their family members. Lack of consultation and communication along with the % cut that is proposed, from a relatively small total budget, means that it may be difficult to understand by those affected.

The possible effect on town centre activity and engagement (in terms of businesses and services) is a secondary but important one. Of greater significance however is the effect on older people and people with disabilities in terms of civic engagement, isolation, reduced access to services and social activity. Given the needs of this group of citizens, arguably one of the most vulnerable and excluded, a proposed saving of this nature is indicative of the level of pressure on the local authority to make savings. However, the proposed involvement of Community Development workers to support Shop-Mobility is vague. I have assumed this is in relation to income generation but that is not made clear. There is a host of income generation expertise within voluntary sector organisations in Newport and this does not always appear to be recognised or capitalised upon by the local authority in terms of coordinated rather than competitive approaches to bid writing and income generation. A forum where cross sector priorities could be discussed, and income generation opportunities and skills shared, could offer a more strategic approach to fundraising by groups such as ShopMobility.

How informative is the relevant Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment?

The FEIA offers some acknowledgement of possible impacts on different parts of the community, although under Socio-Economic Duty **it is overly restricted in its estimation of those groups likely to be affected**. (If as is rightly acknowledged, the proposal 'could affect economically disadvantaged people who rely on subsidised access to the equipment Shop Mobility provides' it is not clear why this is deemed only to apply to 'Low income households without dependent children', among the list of disadvantaged groups. No consultation has been undertaken on the proposal, except via the general budget consultation.

What specific fairness-related challenges does this proposal pose for the Council, going forward?

If this service fails due to the reduction in funding from Newport Council it may prevent people with restricted mobility from accessing the city centre for shopping or social meetings, creating more social isolation and possibly greater dependence on other services in vulnerable groups. People with limited mobility, who have been supported by Shopmobility's equipment, may experience deterioration in mental and physical health leading to increased demand on primary, secondary and social care, ultimately increasing cost pressures to statutory services. The loss of the service may have a detrimental impact on city centre trade.

No indication is given of the numbers of people who use the service daily but it impacts citizens who have protected characteristics – disability and or age. It would seem that there might be beneficial promotion of the service through (paid) carers and perhaps physiotherapists, mental health workers etc.

How might the Council address those challenges?

This seems to be an example of a service which is ideal for placement in the realm of charitable enterprises, providing services to more vulnerable people, with the potential to equip volunteers with useful skills, working with other registered voluntary sector businesses (eg ReMake etc) who have broadly similar aims. There could also be interest from the Newport Business Improvement District (BID). It could provide opportunities for the Social Registered Landlords to engage their tenants where disabilities or age affects their mobility. It would appear that there are organisations, other than NCC who this service could engage with to maintain its sustainability.

This represents a very small saving and there is not sufficient information on how the service will be affected.

9. Proposed Increase in Council Tax

Why was this proposal identified as a priority?

This year's proposal is unprecedented and it appears that most other Welsh councils will be in a similar position. The amount raised by households paying council tax is only 23% of the total needed for all services. If the council were to reduce the amount they claim they need to collect to balance the budget, revenue will have to be found elsewhere.

Newport has a high proportion of deprived areas. It also has a high proportion of vulnerable groups experiencing financial pressures due to illness, chronic conditions, disability, refugee and migrant status etc. It should be considered that Newport has a substantial amount of poor housing: in need of significant maintenance and with poor insulation and these residents may face higher outgoings.

What fairness issues does it raise?

The groups most vulnerable to pressures from the increases in cost of living will be, in some part, people with protected characteristics. However, this is the fastest growing area of Wales and with that growth come indicators that the new demographic will comprise now, and into the future, younger people. This is a positive outlook but will not ease the situation for many who will be facing difficulties during 2023. The way in which the amount of council tax is calculated for most properties is from 1991 evaluations. The majority are in bands A to C. (Band D is generally quoted for comparisons.) It seems probable that most properties constructed since that date have attracted proportionately higher ratings. All single occupancy households can claim a 25% reduction. There are also several other schemes available if properties are not occupied due to specific circumstances. The council have a council tax alleviation scheme for households in more extreme financial circumstances, which has been provided by Welsh Government.

How informative is the relevant Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment?

No FEIA has been provided in relation to this proposal.

What specific fairness-related challenges does this proposal pose for the Council, going forward?

Inflation now appears to be falling but reached over 11% during 2022 and this figure was used in

assessing increases in state benefits for the financial year 2023/24. The amount proposed is below inflation and clearly householders will experience many unavoidable increases which are substantially higher and will take away more of their disposable income than their council tax demand. There are no proposals for making the charging of council tax progressive – based on occupant’s income. Considering those in protected groups, it needs to be kept in mind that not all characteristics automatically mean those individuals are in hardship. The council need to maintain its income to continue to provide the services it has a statutory duty to deliver because these contribute to the survival of many vulnerable people. Also, arrangements have been proposed to alleviate the most financially deprived via the benefit system and council tax scheme.

How might the Council address those challenges?

Consideration needs to be given to whether disabled and the elderly will find weekly increases of £2.00-3.00 excessive against other rises, and if they do will they have access to readily accessible council advice services which will guide them towards help. The majority of citizens at any one time do not require the services which are most costly to the council – these being education or social services functions. They also have a right to expect that when cuts have to be made those services they find themselves valuing most will be maintained, although the costs may be a bit higher.

Will a substantially higher than usual rise in council tax have an impact on communities and the well-being of individuals within them? Consideration needs to be given as to which circumstances could change relations between individuals. The consequences, for example of fewer collections of clinical waste or nappies would upset neighbours, though it could be suggested that sensitive decisions about managing service delivery in challenging times is more crucial. The council should continue to provide current levels of information and consultation routes on budget proposals and these should be further developed in future. The option continues to exist to take out money previously reserved for the repayment of long-term schemes, such as revamps of roads or new schools. These debts will continue to exist because of statutory duties to deliver these schemes, and pay for them. However, in the short-term borrowing could take place. While this is a temporary solution (though not providing massive alleviation to hard-pressed citizens) this would be a fresh debt that had to be taken on in a time of elevated interest rates. These would increase budgetary pressures in future years.

Appendix: Principles of Fairness

Equity

We should acknowledge differences but also treat people in a consistent way, while aiming to reduce the gap between those with more and less.

- *Are people being treated in a consistent way, while acknowledging their differences?*
- *Will the gap between those with more and less be reduced?*
- *Have the interests of different groups affected (such as minorities) been taken into account?*

Priority

We should prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

- *Have the needs of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable across the city been given priority?*
- *Have we taken care to consider possible indirect consequences for these people of decisions made with other priorities in mind?*

Inclusion

Citizens should be given the opportunity to participate in the shaping of how services are decided upon, designed and delivered.

- *Will the voices of all those affected be heard?*
- *Have possible impacts on the well-being of future generations been taken into account?*
- *Are all relevant citizens able to participate in and shape the service, as well as receiving it?*
- *Has consideration been given to the impact on citizens' relations with each other, and the spaces they share?*

Communication

All decisions should be clearly communicated to those affected, in a way which allows for feedback and recognises the obligations between citizens and their Council.

- *Are decisions being made transparently and consistently?*
- *Will relevant decisions be communicated to those affected in a clear way, with the opportunity for feedback?*
- *Are the obligations of citizens to the Council, and vice versa, clear?*