

Cumulative Equality Impact Assessment

February 2026

1. Introduction

This report considers the cumulative equality impacts relating to the budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for approval by Full Council on 26th February 2026.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission advises that alongside ensuring that equality impact assessments are carried out for individual decisions, the Council should also undertake a cumulative impact assessment when there are a range of savings or changes being proposed at the same time. The cumulative impact assessment helps to understand:

- The compounding impacts on a specific equality or vulnerable group
- The potential knock-on impact on other services

A cumulative impact assessment should inform final decisions and identify cross cutting mitigations needed which may need to be made at a corporate level. A set of recommendations are included in this report in response to the impact assessment.

2. Recommendations from cumulative impact assessment

Programme Management and Governance

- The approach to achieving financial sustainability is reliant on the successful delivery of major programmes to achieve financial grip, operational savings and transformational savings. To ensure these achieve the intended benefits, a well-resourced implementation programme will be needed covering:
 - Programme management of transformation
 - Support from corporate services like Digital and Finance, HR and change support
 - Culture change, communications and resident engagement.
- Tracking of financial and other benefits needs to pay close attention to any unintended negative impacts. The council has established a Design Authority to support the implementation of change.
- Programme governance needs to be appropriate for the size and scale of the programme of financial grip, operational savings and transformation.

Continued analysis and cumulative impact assessments

- Where proposals are still under development, business cases should fully assess equality impacts and identify the need for and carry out consultation as required.
- This Cumulative Impact Assessment should also be kept under review
- Given the cumulative impacts identified on low-income groups, work will be needed to target hardship support and to offer this support in hubs and community setting should be supported and developed.

- The proposals also include plans for greater automation and digitisation. The full impact of these proposals are yet to be analysed. An equality impact assessment should be undertaken iteratively to track these impacts, in line with [EHRC guidance points](#).

Communications and Resident engagement

- Establish regular communications and engagement from early in 2026/27 to further test and develop resident views of budget and transformation plans, using more diverse routes. This closer engagement with residents will also help ensure that the lived experience of transformation and change is captured, including any unintended negative impacts. This communications and engagement forms part of resourcing proposals that support transformation.

3. The approach to setting the budget, MTFS and Transformation

The approach to budget setting and the MTFS seeks to improve financial sustainability and provide a balanced MTFS over the medium term. The Council's financial position is acute. To support this process, a provisional request for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) has been submitted to MHCLG as outlined in the main budget report.

Like all local authorities, the Council has had to manage increasing demand in Adult Social Care, Special Education Needs and, particularly, Temporary Accommodation. Ongoing pressures are also evident within Children's Social Care. In response the Council has rebased the budget to address these pressures.

The MTFS seeks to balance the budget through programmes that seek to achieve greater financial grip, operational improvements and an ambitious programme of transformation. Within the transformation plans is the move to a new operating model as an Enabling Council. The other measures being taken to balance the budget are proposals to increase Council Tax and reduce Council Tax Support and apply some discretionary increases to the schedule of fees and charges. Rent increases are also proposed to Council House Tenants in a separate Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

The Transformation Proposals are set out separately in a Transformation Plan update going to Cabinet in February 2026. They deepen and broaden the proposals in the Transformation Plan and Operating Model, published in November 2025. Decisions relating to Council Tax have already been agreed in Council in January 2026, including a Council Tax increase and a reduction in Council Tax support.

4. Assessment of the approach

Given the Council's acute financial position, there could have been considerable cumulative equality impacts relating to the 2026/27 budget. The strategic approach to the MTFS and the move to this new operating model and related Transformation

Programmes have enabled the Council to minimise cumulative equality impacts in the following ways:

- **A focus on sustainability over a three-year period:** the proposed MTFS covers three years, aligned to the Government's three-year funding settlement. By taking a three-year approach, it has enabled savings to be achieved through Transformation. **This approach avoids more traditional service cuts which would have led to a greater level of cumulative impacts.**
- The re-basing of the budget to address pressures- including £25m rebasing including Temporary Accommodation and Adult Social Care. This is intended to protect services for highly vulnerable groups. **Whilst this does not bring positive impacts it protects the most vulnerable groups against further negative impacts.**
- A focus on financial grip and operational improvements – **this recognises that there are opportunities to realise efficiencies and increase income which helps protect service budgets.**
- The Transformation Programme is underpinned by the adoption of a new Operating Model that moves to the Council operating as an **“Enabling Council,”** designed to meet the needs of Slough's diverse communities. **The Transformation Programmes seek to tailor services more towards the specific diverse needs of Slough residents, as summarised in the November Transformation Plan.** Programmes therefore focus on services being more enabling, working more in partnership with residents and partners, developing more accessible services that seek to get thing right first time, support independence and work preventatively to tackle root causes
- Alongside this, there are Transformation proposals that are driven by, a strong modernisation agenda, **as it is recognised that there is more to do to make processes more efficient and effective, reducing costs and increasing income. This also helps protect service budgets.**

In order to make a strong case for Exceptional Financial Support, the Council has to show it is doing everything possible to balance budgets. This is why there has been an increase to Council Tax and a reduction in Council Tax support. Council Tax increased disproportionately impact those on lower incomes, as a “regressive tax.” These decisions, however, have been made against a challenging background, and alternative choices would likely result in increasing borrowing or reducing service levels.

The approach will only be successful and minimise impacts if the programmes to achieve financial grip, operational savings and transformational savings are fully realised To ensure this, it will be necessary to resource dedicated capacity and capability. This needs to cover programme management of transformation, close support from corporate services like Digital and Finance, HR and change support, culture change, communications and resident engagement. This is to ensure that

financial and other benefits are achieved, and any unintended negative impacts are identified and mitigated. The resourcing for this, and governance to oversee this is the subject of a separate Transformation Update report going to Cabinet in February 2026.

5. Summary of impacts in 2026/27

Positive impacts

- Single homeless people- a typical single homeless person in Slough is male, aged 26–55, and likely to be an EU national.
- Children /older people /disabled people (who are most impacted by poor air quality)

Impacts as yet to be fully assessed e.g. for proposals marked as TBC in Annex 1, including:

- Reviewing the arrangements between Adult Social Care Mental Health Service commissioned with Berkshire NHS Trust.
- Improving preventative triage.
- SEND transformation proposals
- Redesigning SBC front-door
- Automation

The main groups impacted by transformation include:

- Disabled adults who are mental health service users
- Potential adult social care clients – disabled adults and older people
- Residents in private rented sector
- Residents in housing needs - disabled people, women (especially those affected by domestic abuse or pregnancy), young people and care leavers, ethnic minorities, migrants with insecure status, rough sleepers, older people, and those facing language, literacy, or digital barriers.
- Residents who use customer services: The service responds to between 3500 and 4500 calls per month and also sees between 700-800 people in person. From listening to calls and observing in person sessions, there are a core group of residents who need help and could be more effectively engaged in a different way to meet their needs and reduce repeat contacts – this 5% of callers were responsible for over 30% of all Customer Services calls received.
- Disabled children with SEND

The impacts from these changes are yet to be fully analysed and the intention is for these to be neutral or positive as service cuts are not proposed. Analysis will take place as part of the EIA accompanying the decision-making process.

The proposals also include plans for greater automation and digitisation. The full impact of these proposals are yet to be analysed, These plans seek to make it easier to do business with the Council and within the Council rather than a blanket move to digital by default. Indeed, the Council is committed to developing its face to face offer into a more rounded support offer that resolves issues for the most vulnerable residents as set out in the November Transformation Plan.

Negative impacts:

There are proposals which impact lower-paid residents and staff which are detailed in the full cumulative impact assessment, and include the increase to council tax, the reduction in Council tax support and operational savings affecting low income staff . Lower paid residents in Slough are overrepresented by:

- single parents (mostly women)
- children,
- disabled people and carers
- Asian/Muslim households, who are more likely to have larger families and lower incomes.

There are also potential negative impacts for motorists and passengers, which would include disabled people.

The Council Tax support scheme decision was accompanied by its own EIA which included potential mitigations including continuation of the hardship fund, using the crisis resilience fund to support residents and providing debt and welfare advice.

As with the impacts as yet to be fully assessed, analysis will take place as part of associated the decision-making process, as set out in Annex 1.

Appropriate consultation will take place where necessary on proposals affecting staff.

6. Consultation responses

A survey was published online from 09/01/2026 to 30/01/2026 to gauge views on the plans that were published in the budget update agreed by Cabinet in December 2025. In total 38 responses were received. The demographic of respondent was:

- **Female (55%)** and **Male (37%)**, with small numbers preferring not to say.
- Mainly aged **40–69** (66% combined).
- Predominantly **White British** (50%), with small representation from Asian, Black and mixed-heritage groups.
- **55%** reported no disability, while **~30%** reported a disability or long-term condition (hearing impairment, long-term conditions, mental health).

These demographics reflect some of the groups who are anticipated to be most impacted – women, older people and disabled people. Younger people and ethnic groups are not represented.

Respondents usage of services was as follows:

- Adults: 87% of respondents did not use Adult Social Care. Only a small number were carers or had family users.
- Children's Services – 19 % have direct involvement (carer/family)
- Regeneration and Environment: 55% use these services There was strong representation from residents affected by changes to Housing, Waste and recycling, Street cleansing and Parking and enforcement
- Council Management & Support Functions: 42% use these services

The limited number and range of responses reflect the challenging context in which this budget was set. Now that a three year MTFs and transformation programme has been established, communications and engagement will be planned from early in 2026/27 to further test and develop resident views, using more diverse routes. This communications and engagement forms part of resourcing proposals that support transformation.

Residents expressed the importance of the following as part of the budget setting process:

Place

1. Cleaner, safer streets and better waste management
2. Stronger enforcement (parking, fly-tipping, ASB) and community safety
3. Visible regeneration, not decline

There were concerns raised about how the budget may impact negatively on cleanliness and safety.

People

4. Protecting vulnerable residents (adults & children and their carers)

Concerns were raised about whether proposal would affect this group of residents, and whether Children's services were already stretched

Council

5. Better council efficiency and accountability and collaboration with neighbouring authorities

There was stronger support for savings proposals in this area

7. Identifying cumulative equality impacts

During the budget setting process equality impacts were identified for the different components of the budget where changes were proposed:

Type of change	Summary of change	Impacts
Demand Growth	<p>As part of the budget process, Directorates have been asked to quantify demand pressures for 2026/27 based on the most robust data currently available to them. This has resulted in the budget pressures as set out in the Cabinet report totalling £34.6m. £25m of this relates to rebasing the budget for pressures identified in 2025/26, particularly in Temporary Accommodation and Adults.</p> <p>This growth is therefore intended to mitigate worsening impacts from increased demand on residents in: temporary accommodation, Adult Social Care and Children's</p>	<p><u>+ Positive (or at least protected)</u></p> <p>This protects the impact that might otherwise have fallen on:</p> <p>Children in need of social care support Disabled children People in receipt of adult social care support (older people and disabled people) People in Temporary Accommodation - who are most likely to be: Disabled people, women (especially those affected by domestic abuse or pregnancy), young people and care leavers, ethnic minorities, migrants with insecure status, rough sleepers, older people, and those facing language, literacy, or digital barriers. (Report to CISC - TA Homelessness 10th Feb 2026 - Final.pdf)</p>
Operational Savings Proposals	<p>£10.202m</p> <p>The operational savings have been reviewed. There is one proposal with a potential negative equality impact:</p> <p>Reduction in overtime for lower paid staff</p>	<p><u>- Negative</u></p> <p>Lower paid staff – who could be impacted by a reduction in overtime</p>

<p>Transformational Savings</p>	<p>£5.248m</p> <p>The transformational savings have been reviewed. There are a limited number of equality impacts from these savings in 2026/27.</p>	<p><u>+ Positive</u></p> <p>Children /older people /disabled people (who are most impacted by poor air quality) and who may benefit from parking proposals (Slough Air Quality Action Plan 2024-26)</p> <p>Single Homeless People- impacted by strategic commissioning proposals who are more likely to be male, aged 26–55, and likely to be an EU national. (Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024)</p> <p><u>? As yet unknown impact</u></p> <p>Disabled adults who are mental health service users Potential adult social care clients – disabled adults and older people Residents in private rented sector Residents in housing needs - disabled people, women (especially those affected by domestic abuse or pregnancy), young people and care leavers, ethnic minorities, migrants with insecure status, rough sleepers, older people, and those facing language, literacy, or digital barriers. (Report to CISC - TA Homelessness 10th Feb 2026 - Final.pdf)</p> <p>Residents who use customer services: The service responds to between 3500 and 4500 calls per month and also sees between 700-800 people in person. From listening to calls and observing in person sessions, there are a core group of residents who need help and could be more effectively engaged in a different way to meet their needs and reduce repeat contacts – this 5% of callers were responsible for over 30% of all Customer Services calls received. There were also a large proportion of calls that were transactional, where residents could potentially have resolved their issues online (service data)</p>
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Fees and charges annual review	<p>In March 2022 Cabinet approved a framework for fees and charges objectives. Fees and charges should be set on an annual basis prior to the commencement of the financial year.</p> <p>Appendix 11 provides a full schedule of proposed fees and charges for 2026/27.</p>	<p>An EIA for the proposed fees and charges is to follow.</p>
Council tax increase	<p>An increase of 4.99% (standard increase 2.99% and adult social care increase of 2.00%), rising from band D £1,923.09 in 2025/26 to £2,019.05 in 2026/27;</p> <p>Future years assume a 4.99% council tax increase;</p>	<p>The increase in Council Tax will impact all groups but the increase will be a greater proportion of household budgets for low income groups, as Council Tax is recognised to be a “regressive tax.” Groups most likely to be on low incomes in Slough are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • single parents (mostly women) • children, • disabled people and carers • Asian/Muslim households, who are more likely to have larger families and lower incomes. <p>(Poverty in Slough)</p>

<p>Council tax support – reduction of maximum discounts</p>	<p>A proposal to reduce the maximum Council Tax Support from 80% to 70% for non-working and by 20% for those who are working was approved by Full Council in January 2026.</p>	<p>The people who are directly impacted by the changes to Council Tax Support are the 6,453 working age households who are currently supported by the scheme, and those who are dependents in their households, including children. This will affect groups on low incomes (see above for demographic analysis of low income group). This decision was taken in January and was accompanied by its own EIA.</p>
<p>HRA</p>	<p>Social & affordable housing dwelling rent increase of 4.8% (CPI plus 1%) from 6th April 2025 in line with current national rent setting formula.</p> <p>Tenant service charges increase of 4.8% from 6th April 2026 in line with the agreed phased recovery of additional service costs provided to and recoverable from relevant tenants.</p> <p>Garage rents for council & private tenants and leaseholders increase of 4.8% from 6th April 2026 in line with the rent increase.</p>	<p>Social tenants on low incomes will be impacted by rent increases (see above for demographic analysis of low income groups), 7,372 residents are directly impacted by the increase to Rent and Service Charge (5,948 tenants & 1,424 leaseholders) Children and families in larger homes may see higher absolute rent/charge increases; overcrowding is prevalent locally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled residents and those with long-term conditions may be disproportionately affected by damp & mould and by temporarily disruptive works; reasonable adjustments and decant support may be required. • Women (over-represented among lone parents) may be more exposed to affordability pressures. • Ethnic minority residents (notably Asian/Asian British and Black groups) are over-represented in low-income cohorts locally; language and accessibility needs must be addressed. • Older residents may be on fixed incomes but are less impacted by rent restructuring where HB/UC covers housing costs; attention needed for service charges in sheltered/communal settings.

Supporting information:

Annex 1: Review of impacts of savings and growth proposals

Annex 2: EIA on Fees and Charges Proposals [TO FOLLOW]