

Appendix 12 – Annex 2 - Equality Impact Assessment Fees and Charges

Directorate: Crosscutting Council	
Service: Fees and Charges across all Council areas	
Name of Officer/s completing assessment: Sonia Khan, Director of Strategy, Change and Resident Engagement	
Date of Assessment: 10/2/26	
Name of service/function or policy being assessed:	
1.	<p>What are the aims, objectives, outcomes, purpose of the policy, service change, function that you are assessing?</p> <p>This Equality Impact Assessment is of the review of fees and charges included as Appendix 11 of the Budget Report for 2026/27.</p> <p>The existing framework and approved policy for fees and charges sets out the following key principles for setting those fees, in accordance with S93 of the Local Government Act 2003, unless prescribed in other specific legislation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Users pay for the service at full cost recovery b) A strategic and informed approach to subsidy and concessions c) Adopting a strategic approach to new charges d) Appropriate communication and engagement with service users e) Coherence with broader efficiency and framework objectives; and f) Fees and charges will be subject to systematic and in-depth review. <p>A key tenet of the above is that any subsidies or concessions associated with specific charges, which means the cost of delivering the chargeable service is higher than the income derived, are transparent and either prescribed through legislation or as part of an agreed policy that recognises a need to subsidise some or all service users, and the financial impact of that subsidy.</p> <p>Whilst fees and charges are primarily set annually, there is provision within the constitution to enable in year changes to the level of charges, subject to any increase being limited to inflation plus 3%.</p>

	<p>Some fees are set by central government and cannot be amended by the Council. Unless any changes to prescribed charges are announced by government prior to conclusion of the budget process, no increase for 2026/27 has been assumed. Those prescribed charges are highlighted in Appendix 11 to this report.</p> <p>As part of the wider transformation programme a fundamental review of all fees and charges is being undertaken. The review will benchmark all fees against comparator authorities, and provide an updated financial model for ascertaining the full cost, including all overheads and capital charges, of services for which charges should be levied. As the review is currently in progress, for many services, outcomes and recommended changes are likely to follow, with a report back to Cabinet in June with further recommendations, including any in-year options for further increases.</p> <p>For the proposals to be reviewed by Cabinet, prior to Council consideration of the 2026/27 budget proposal a default recommendation of 5% is included, in order that associated fees become more in line with the cost of service provision (unless prescribed by statute, or where there is specific exception, either through initial review of the specific fee, or reason not to increase). The overall estimated increase in General Fund fees and charges is estimated to be some £0.9m, and this is reflected in the draft estimates.</p> <p>Cabinet agreed the 2026/27 fee structure for allotments at its meeting on the 17th November 2025, and the estimated net saving is also reflected in the draft estimates.</p>
2.	<p>Who implements or delivers the policy, service or function? State if this is undertaken by more than one team, service, and department including any external partners.</p> <p>This is a review of fees and charges across the Council. The fees and charges cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and building control fees • Highways development • Local Land Charges • Social Care • Libraries

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registrars • Allotments • Public protection • Customer Services • Environment • Sports Pitches • Facilities Management (venues) • Children's Centres • Revenues and Welfare • Permits • Highways • Parking • Burials and cremation • Waste
3.	<p>Who will be affected by this proposal? For example who are the external/internal customers, communities, partners, stakeholders, the workforce etc. Please consider all of the Protected Characteristics listed (more information is available in the background information). Bear in mind that people affected by the proposals may well have more than one protected characteristic.</p> <p>Anyone who could be impacted by the review of fees and charges, as the services reflect a wide range of Council services.</p>
4.	<p>What are any likely positive impacts for the group/s identified in (3) above? You may wish to refer to the Equalities Duties detailed in the background information.</p> <p>There are not positive impacts, but by seeking, as a default, to increase fees by 5%, the aim is to ensure that full cost recovery continues. This means that no other service is impacted by the need to subsidise a fee, unless for the reasons outlined above</p>

(unless prescribed by statute, or where there is specific exception, either through initial review of the specific fee, or reason not to increase).

5. What are the likely negative impacts for the group/s identified in (3) above? If so then are any particular groups affected more than others and why?
- A review has been undertaken of the fees and charges which are higher than the 5% default, to examine if there are any negative impacts.

Service	Activity	% increase	Fee after increase	Justification	Groups potentially impacted	Next steps
Libraries	Colour A4	100%	£1	To move towards full cost recovery and benchmarked Full EqIA under taken- see note below.	Adults and older adults · Children and families (children's borrowing remains free) · Students and jobseekers · Residents on low incomes · Residents with additional needs requiring digital access	Impacts identified and mitigation provided - see extract of EqIA below*

		Colour A3	200%	£2	To move towards full cost recovery and benchmarked Full EqIA under taken- see note below.	As above	Impacts identified and mitigation provided - see extract of EqIA below*
	Registrars	Weddings and civil partnerships	15-20%	Varies according to activity	Benchmarked against neighbouring Councils	Could affect any group	For full review benchmark against statistical neighbours.
		Citizenship	10%	£161-£223	Benchmarked against neighbouring Councils	Race	For full review benchmark against statistical neighbours.
	Public Protection	Licensing	21.6%	£535	Reflect revised HMO waste conditions which require greater compliance and enforcement activity. S.67(3) Housing Act allows for full cost recovery.	Could affect any group	No further action recommended.

	Parks	Sports Pitches	20%	Varies	In line with benchmark of other pitches in a 20-mile radius.	Could affect low income groups or certain communities/ faith groups more- or younger people.	For full review benchmark against statistical neighbours.
	Venues		20%	Varies	In line with benchmark.	Could affect low income groups or certain communities/ faith groups more	For full review benchmark against statistical neighbours
	Council tax summons	Increase in summons fees	8%	£90.50	Statutory prescribed.	Could affect any group	No further action recommended.
	Highways	Adaptations to road	10%		To move towards full cost recovery.	Could affect any group	No further action recommended.
	Burials and cremations	Renewal of burial rights	New fees	Varies	Aligns fees.	Could affect any group- but certain faith groups (significantly in Slough Muslim groups) have requirements to use burials which are more costly.	Keep under review.

	Burials and cremations	Other fees	5-16%	Varies	In line with benchmarking	Could affect any group- but certain faith groups (significantly in Slough Muslim groups) have requirements to use burials which are more costly.	Keep under review
	Bulky waste	Increase in charges for fridges/ freezers	10%	£29.70	Full cost recovery	Low income groups	Moving towards full cost recovery but a further review may be required.
	Bin sales	Increase in residual waste and new charges for food waste	6%	£52-£385	Full cost recovery	Low income groups	Moving towards full cost recovery but a further review may be required.

***Libraries**

The proposal introduces moderate increases to selected library fees (reservations, late returns, printing/photocopying). The aim is to ensure that Slough Libraries remain financially sustainable by achieving cost recovery while continuing to offer a high-

	<p>quality, accessible service. Benchmarking against neighbouring and comparable local authorities shows that Slough's fees remain below regional averages even after these changes.</p> <p>Summary of Key Findings · Most protected groups will not be disproportionately affected. · Where potential impacts exist (e.g., age, disability, low income), they are low level and the introduction of enhanced discretionary support significantly mitigates these risks. · Free statutory and children's services remain unchanged. · Fees remain lower than those of many comparator authorities. · Overall, the impact is assessed as Low, with strong mitigation.</p>
6.	<p>Have the impacts identified in (4) and (5) above been assessed using up to date and reliable evidence and data? Please state evidence sources and conclusions drawn (e.g. survey results, customer complaints, monitoring data etc).</p> <p>Benchmarking has been undertaken to inform fees and charges review. Equality impact assessments of other Councils have been reviewed.</p>
7.	<p>Have you engaged or consulted with any identified groups or individuals if necessary and what were the results, e.g. have the staff forums/unions/ community groups been involved?</p> <p>No – these fees and charge increases have not necessitated any consultation.</p>
8.	<p>Have you considered the impact the policy might have on local community relations?</p> <p>The increase in fees and charges in line with full cost recovery is intended to achieve a fair policy that does not impact on other services.</p>
9.	<p>What plans do you have in place, or are developing, that will mitigate any likely identified negative impacts? For example what plans, if any, will be put in place to reduce the impact?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a planned full review of fees and charges as part of transformation plans. It is recommended that this is guided by equality analysis from the outset. • Neighbouring councils have been included in benchmarking, however Slough is statistically more deprived than other areas and more diverse; it is therefore recommended that when appropriate, benchmarking is undertaken with statistical rather than geographic neighbours These areas are identified as statistically significant demographically by ONS and are also in the London/ south east region: Hounslow, Croydon, , Luton, , Redbridge ,Harrow, Enfield, Brent, Hillingdon, Swindon, Watford, Reading Greenwich,, Ealing,, Bexley Barking and Dagenham, , Waltham Forest,

10.	<p>What plans do you have in place to monitor the impact of the proposals once they have been implemented? (The full impact of the decision may only be known after the proposals have been implemented). Please see action plan below.</p> <p>Each service will be asked to review impact for any unintended impacts. A full review of fees and charges as part of Transformation will have an equality impact assessment underpinning the approach taken.</p>
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What course of action does this EIA suggest you take? More than one of the following may apply	✓
Outcome 1: No major change required. The EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken	✓
Outcome 2: Adjust the policy to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better promote equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers identified? (Complete action plan).	
Outcome 3: Continue the policy despite potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality identified. You will need to ensure that the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You should consider whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact (see questions below). (Complete action plan).	
Outcome 4: Stop and rethink the policy when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. (Complete action plan).	

Action Plan and Timetable for Implementation

At this stage a timetabled Action Plan should be developed to address any concerns/issues related to equality in the existing or proposed policy/service or function. This plan will need to be integrated into the appropriate Service/Business Plan.

Action	Target Groups	Lead Responsibility	Outcomes/Success Criteria	Monitoring & Evaluation	Target Date	Progress to Date
Each service will be asked to review impact for any unintended impacts.	All	Service lead	Unintended impacts avoided.	Review once implemented in-year.	30/11/2026	
A full review of fees and charges as part of Transformation will have an equality impact assessment underpinning the approach taken.	All	Finance	Ensure EIAs undertaken where transformation proposals include further uplifts.	EIA assessment to accompany Cabinet report and then reviewed in-year.	Determined by Cabinet date.	
Signed: Sonia Khan (Person completing the EIA)						
Date: 10/02/2026						