

Appendix E - Equality Impact Assessment (Budget 2023/24)

1 Overview

- 1.1 This appendix describes the most significant equality pressures confronting each main service area, informed by an equality analysis. It highlights the effect of policy and governance changes; an overview of positive and neutral impacts; and a service impact overview. These outcomes are based upon spending decisions taken during the last two years and changes resulting from the 2023/24 budget. The analysis also highlights a number of cumulative impacts that may arise resulting from the 2023/24 budget.
- 1.2 It is important to note that the budget is the financial expression of the strategic plan and our operational intent, and where known, the equality impact of change is disclosed. There are also a number of individual decisions that will arise over the period of the 2023/24 budget and these will continue to be the subject of specific and more detailed equality impact assessments in line with the Council's Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) guidance. Political decisions will only be taken once effective and meaningful engagement has taken place on a need-by-need basis.
- 1.3 In making this decision we must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, i.e. have due regard to the need to:
 - a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 - b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
 - c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 1.4 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. In addition, marital status is a relevant protected characteristic for 1.3(a)
- 1.5 The PSED is a relevant factor in making this decision but does not impose a duty to achieve the outcomes in s149. It is only one factor that needs to be considered and may be balanced against other relevant factors.
- 1.6 Part of the equalities governance is to ensure that equality impact assessments are undertaken when considering new and/or revised policies to inform and underpin good decision-making processes. This also helps us pay due regard to our equality obligations.
- 1.7 The Equality Act also says that public bodies must pay 'due regard' to equality. This means that we must:
 - move or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;

- take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

2. Identified high level cumulative equality impact

- 2.1 At this stage, it is not possible to fully measure the impact of the proposals on those people who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, or how the geographic spread of budget proposals will be felt across all areas of Slough.
- 2.2 However, our preliminary equality impact analysis of the planned activity and budget proposals for 2023/24 indicates that the council is focused on making a wide range of changes during 2023/24 in order to balance its budget and whilst the majority of identified savings through efficiencies are linked to internal systems and processes there are others that impact our external partners and neighbours.
- 2.3 Key impacts from this initial analysis across the portfolios are outlined from section 5 below.

3. Mitigating actions – our principles

- 3.1 **Monitoring of impact:** Services must ensure ongoing equalities monitoring of the Impact of service changes, to identify trends in disproportionate or unanticipated impact at an early stage to address them. This reporting should be monitored Council-wide at senior levels within the Council in order to identify cumulative impacts and mitigating actions. Consideration should be given to working with other partners in this monitoring and evaluation where appropriate.
- 3.2 **Informing decision-making:** The findings of this monitoring should be used to inform the budget-setting process year on year.
- 3.3 **Equality Impact Assessments:** As the budget proposals are developed, individual Equality impact assessments will be undertaken. This will include an assessment of who is likely to be impacted by the changes, whether they are considered to have 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010 and if they are, what mitigation activity is proposed to ensure that they will not be disproportionately affected. These will all be reviewed to provide an assessment of the cumulative impact of the budget decisions.
- 3.4 **Targeting based on need:** Resources and services should clearly identify specific needs of different groups at an early stage in order to be most effective and meet needs at first contact wherever possible e.g. through consultation.
- 3.5 **Gaps in monitoring:** Where gaps in monitoring have been identified during the equality impact assessment process, steps should be taken to fill these in the forthcoming year. This will enable better modelling of potential impacts and assessments in future.

4. Identified Positive Impacts

- 4.1 The Council is fully committed to addressing the challenges facing communities and supporting residents to live better lives. The Council is on a journey of improvement and transformation in light of the challenging circumstances in which the Council finds itself. As part of this, the Council will be reviewing how the services it provides will respond to and plan for these challenges with a key focus on tackling inequalities

across the Borough. The commitment to equality and inclusion is shared by partners and will be firmly rooted in the long-term vision for Slough.

4.2 The Budget for 2023/24 contributes to this in the following ways:

- By ensuring that the savings are balanced across service areas whilst recognising all service areas will need to contribute including those targeted at the most vulnerable
- By driving savings through the delivery of efficiencies and through the reform of services to improve outcomes and make them more cost effective
- By continuing to invest in services and activities that will reduce inequalities and support better lives for residents
- By being realistic about what is affordable and can be achieved within a significantly reduced resource base

5. Policy and Governance Context

5.1 The proposed social care precept and increase in council tax may adversely impact some residents of Slough; however, residents on the lowest incomes will remain eligible for support with their bills via the local council tax support scheme. The increase proposed from the social care precept relates to a specific social care precept that will be ring-fenced for adult social care. This should positively impact on vulnerable adults within Slough by helping to protect and improve social care services.

5.2 The localisation of council tax benefit (introducing new payees to council tax as a result of national policy changes) was implemented in 2013/14 alongside a scheme for hardship and investment in collection initiatives including provision of debt and welfare support. Over this time, the Council has sustained collection rates against this backdrop, ensuring no negative impact on other council taxpayers. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic we saw a reduction in collection rates. This position is now improving again and our budget proposes a continuation of the focus on collection activities for 2023/24 to maintain this trend and performance.

5.3 We have invested in a team within the Finance and Commercial Directorate to tackle council tax fraud across the borough. The programme:

- ensures those entitled to discounts or exemptions on their council tax are receiving the right support;
- has introduced extensive regular reviews to ensure the levels of benefits people receive are correct;
- encourages people to notify councils if their circumstances change, and the consequences of not doing so, to enable councils to take swift and appropriate action against people fraudulently claiming council tax benefit.

5.4 With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic impacting household incomes, there was an increase in the number of claims for the local council tax support schemes. There is a risk this will potentially grow with the current cost of living crisis climate. As the Council has been granted the ability to apply an increase in the level of the Council

Tax of up to 9.99%, it will do so whilst also creating a more generous Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS). There will be a revision in the number of CTRS bandings and reductions offered to residents that fall into these bandings, with more generous reductions and a new band in which no council tax will be payable. This will enable the Council to help those households hardest hit. The current day pressures on local people and their household budgets are becoming greater than ever before with significant pressures on energy, fuel and high inflation affecting day-to-day living costs impacting the most vulnerable within the borough. The council tax reduction scheme is expected to contribute more support to residents in 2023/24 as a result.

6. Portfolio Impacts Overview

Overview

Equality impact assessments were produced for all of the savings proposals put forward for scrutiny through December to February and can be found within the papers for each of the key scrutiny committees. A summary of the findings in also set out in Annex A. Links to the Council's web pages where the EIAs can be found are listed below:

[Overview & Scrutiny Committee 1st December 2022](#)

[Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2nd February 2023](#)

[Customer and Community Scrutiny Panel 7th December 2022](#)

[Customer and Community Scrutiny Panel 1st February 2023](#)

[People Scrutiny Panel 15th December 2022](#)

[People Scrutiny Panel 31st January 2023](#)

People (Children)

- 6.1 The portfolio has identified budget savings proposals of £0.8m for 2023/24. The main area of saving relates to the home to school transport offering, with a further saving coming from a restructure of the Education and Inclusion service.
- 6.2 The service has completed initial assessments of the equality impacts for both savings areas and determined that none of the proposals will have a negative impact from an equalities point of view. A number of positive impacts have been identified for specific groups and these will be monitored during the development of all proposals.
- 6.3 In order to ensure that the Council pays due regard to the PSED, individual equality impact assessments have been undertaken and will continue to be kept under review as the proposals are developed in order to ensure there are mitigating actions, where possible, to minimise any adverse impact on children, young people and their families. An overview is set out in Annex A.

Slough Children First Company Contract

- 6.4 The Company has been refining its business case which has yet to receive formal approval from the Council, but within the latest version it has identified budget savings proposals of £1.140m in 2023/24 across 6 main areas of focus.

- 6.5 It is looking to drive savings from commissioning local provision for a block contract of beds for placements; increase the number of children placed through in-house fostering provision from the development of the fostering agency; there are discussions on the potential use and development of a property which could house UASC aged 18+; and two new grants are to be used in order to extend the level of evening/weekend support provided and reduce reliance on the out of hours service provided by another authority.
- 6.6 Caseload reductions are being targeted from Edge of Care and cost of living impact leading to a fall in legal hours, court and counsel fees. More manageable caseloads lead to better compliance and reduced court delays and lengthy proceedings. Community Based parenting assessments are expected to reduce the cost of external court appointed expert fees.
- 6.7 Through recruitment and retention activity in targeted early help, a reduction in casework and need for additional safeguarding will allow the safe removal of the two Innovate teams.
- 6.8 In order to ensure that due regard is paid to the PSED, individual equality impact assessments will continue to be undertaken as proposals are developed in order to ensure there are mitigating actions, where possible, to minimise any adverse impact on children, young people and their families. No adverse implications have been identified from the work undertaken to date on the proposals put forward.

People (Adults)

- 6.9 The portfolio has identified budget savings proposals of £5.7m for 2023/24, a continuation of its Transformation Program. The priority is to operate sustainably while fully meeting legal obligations and in so doing ensure adults, carers and families have access to the information, advice and tools they need to enable them to live ordinary lives, safely and independently, for as long as possible.
- 6.10 The budget proposals will see improved value for money in continuing to meet residents' needs via an improved offer providing greater independence, improved preventative options and access to community provision.

a) Younger Adults-

- i. **Learning Disability** – The Council aims to support individuals with learning disabilities and/or autism to ensure their needs are being met safely, whilst enabling them to achieve their outcomes and life aspirations. A refresh of the LD / Autism strategy is being undertaken to support the planning and delivery, incorporating a consultative process.
 - ii. **Mental Health** – The intention is to ensure we provide effective support for adults in the most efficient manner possible with clear pathways for stepdown and move-on to support recovery. Thus minimising readmission and working with the wider system to better understand and manage future demand.
- b) **Older People** – we continue to review the critical pathways that support adults going into and leaving hospital. The objective is to ensure that the adult is offered the most appropriate support for them, with an emphasis on people being enabled to return home where this is possible, with support to regain as much independence as possible. It is anticipated that this approach will enable us to both fully meet the needs of adults and continue generating efficiencies in

2023/24 and pave the way for a more sustainable operating model in future years especially in managing the anticipated increase in demand and complexities.

- c) **All care groups** - In addition to the work set out above we will continue to work with our market (including 3rd sector partners) to develop new models for meeting need, managing the cost of care crisis and recruitment requirements to ensure there is sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the Council and its residents.
- 6.11 In order to ensure that the Council pays due regard to the PSED, individual equality impact assessments have been undertaken and will be refreshed in order to ensure there are mitigating actions, where possible, to minimise any adverse impact on citizens accessing Adult Services. A high-level summary of each proposal is shown in Annex A.

Place and Community

- 6.12 The portfolio has identified budget savings proposals of £3.700m in 2023/24, the majority of which cover a wide range of service areas, both in terms of cost reduction and income generation. Individual equality impact assessments have been undertaken on all proposals.
- 6.13 The budget proposals identified are categorised into the main areas outlined below:
- a) Waste management – a garden waste collection subscription service has already been brought in, which will generate income to contribute towards the service; other collections will transition to a fortnightly collection cycle later in the year; and there is additional income being generated from the trade waste business which will be recognised in the budget. A management fee for the Chalvey HWRC will be applied to a neighbouring borough whose residents share the use of the site.
 - b) In respect of transport and highways, there are a number proposals – borough-wide controlled parking zones will be introduced to better manage on-street parking, whilst there will also be increases in the charges for parking permits. Highways maintenance spend will be reduced, bus subsidy contracts will not be renewed, and by identifying spend that can be capitalised it can also be funded through an annual grant which will be maximised.
 - c) The library service will rely more on facilities officers rather than library staff; and while the CCTV will continue until the end of 2023 it is then envisaged to be offered to the police to continue. Trials are being carried out on the further dimming of streetlights which will reduce energy costs.
 - d) Other savings reflect more effective staff planning which will not impact on service delivery.
- 6.14 In order to ensure that the Council pays due regard to the PSED, individual equality impact assessments have been undertaken in order to ensure there are mitigating actions, where possible, to minimise any adverse impact. A high-level summary of each proposal is shown in Annex A.

Housing, Property and Planning

- 6.15 The portfolio has identified budget savings proposals of £0.750m in 2023/24, these relate to a number of efficiency savings across the Council's estate of operational properties in respect of facilities management and cleaning. These changes are therefore not expected to impact on the level of service provided to residents.
- 6.16 It is not considered that any of these savings proposals will have an adverse impact on persons who share any relevant protected characteristic. However, an equality impact assessment has been completed as part of the governance and decision-making process for all savings and published as per the links above. A high-level summary of each proposal is shown in Annex A.

Strategy and Transformation

- 6.17 The portfolio has identified budget savings proposals of £1.823m in 2023/24, these relate to a number of efficiency savings across support services. These changes are not expected to impact on the level of service provided to residents.
- 6.18 It is not considered that any of these savings proposals will have an adverse impact on persons who share any relevant protected characteristic. However, an equality impact assessment has been completed as part of the governance and decision-making process for all savings and published as per the links above. A high-level summary of each proposal is shown in Annex A.

Finance and Commercial

- 6.19 The portfolio has identified budget savings proposals of £7.506m in 2023/24, these relate to a number of efficiency savings across back office services, corporate budgets and the Revenues and Benefits service. These changes are not expected to impact on the level of service provided to residents.
- 6.20 It is not considered that any of these savings proposals will have an adverse impact on persons who share any relevant protected characteristic. However, an equality impact assessment has been completed as part of the governance and decision-making process for all savings and published as per the links above. A high-level summary of each proposal is shown in Annex A.

Cross-Council initiatives

- 6.21 The Council has identified further budget savings proposals of £2.150m in 2023/24 relating to proposals which span more than one directorate. These are as follows:
- a) Fees and charges increases. A number of fees and charges will increase by up to c10%, with a smaller number which will increase by more than this level, which approximates to the recently announced rate of inflation which will impact on the cost to the Council of delivering the services.
 - b) Support Services will be combined to create further back office efficiencies.
 - c) Commissioning efficiencies – a review is being procured to assess the opportunity to drive further savings from commissioning activities, whether through looking at what is being commissioned or the way in which it is commissioned and managed.

- 6.22 It is not considered that any of these savings proposals will have an adverse impact on persons who share any relevant protected characteristic. However, an equality impact assessment has been completed as part of the governance and decision-making process for all savings and published as per the links above. A high-level summary of each proposal is shown in Annex A.

Other Operating Costs – Capital

- 6.23 The Council's financial position requires total borrowing to be reduced, therefore the strategy is to minimise the extent to which capital schemes require additional new borrowing. Last year a number of schemes were therefore removed from the programme in order to reduce the impact of the programme on the revenue budget. An EIA has been undertaken at a high level in respect of the schemes left in the programme and no adverse implications identified. A number of the schemes in the programme are for the positive benefit of certain protected groups, in particular schoolchildren and disabled adults and children and these schemes will continue while fully funded from the sources such as the Disabled Facilities Grant or the DfE capital grant.

ANNEX A

ANALYSIS OF EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS BUDGET 2023/24

Cross-Council

Proposal	Groups positively impacted	Groups negatively impacted	Mitigations
Fees & Charges increases	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Support Services	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Review of Strategic Commissioning	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A

People (Adults)

Proposal	Groups positively impacted	Groups negatively impacted	Mitigations
Demand management initiatives.	All residents with potential Social care needs, who are 18 and over regardless of race, gender with potential need support.	Potential for some users to be affected including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Men/Women - Disabled People - People of ethnicity/race - Particular age groups - People on low income 	Coproduction, consultation, and reviews to be carried out, to shape transformed services. Ensure communication and consultation materials are provided in an accessible format. Practitioners to support service users to engage with any engagement activities. Support through change to be considered as part of implementation planning. Ensure transformed services maintain opportunities for people to come together and share experiences. Updating and better applying the Fairer Charging Policy will ensure fair and consistent contributions from adults receiving services. Any changes to the Fairer Charging Policy, or application of this policy, will be done in consultation and to improve fairness and improve access to services.
Reablement stretch	Older Persons & People with Physical Disabilities	None identified	N/A
Direct payments	None identified	None identified	N/A
Mental Health Review	People with Mental Health Problems	None identified	N/A
Transitions	Young Adults with Learning Disability	None identified at this stage	N/A
Financial Assessment and charging	None identified	None identified	N/A

Proposal	Groups positively impacted	Groups negatively impacted	Mitigations
Levying the OPG charge rate	None identified	None identified	N/A
Joint Funding Protocol	None identified	None identified	N/A
Integration	All residents with potential Health &/or social care needs, who are 18 and over regardless of race, gender with potential need support	Carers, foreign language speakers, People with disabilities, Older Persons, People with particular faiths & beliefs and people on low incomes	Coproduction, consultation, and reviews to be carried out, to shape transformed services. Ensure communication and consultation materials are provided in an accessible format. Practitioners to support service users to engage with any engagement activities. Support through change to be considered as part of implementation planning. Ensure transformed services maintain opportunities for people to come together and share experiences. Updating and better applying the Fairer Charging Policy will ensure fair and consistent contributions from adults receiving services. Any changes to the Fairer Charging Policy, or application of this policy, will be done in consultation and to improve fairness and improve access to services.
Better use of the DFG and equipment	People with Disabilities	None Identified	N/A
Assistive Technology	All Client groups	None identified	N/A
Review of contractual and funding arrangements for care home placements	None Identified	None Identified	N/A

People (Children)

Proposal	Groups positively impacted	Groups negatively impacted	Mitigations
Reduction of costs in home to school transport through the implementation of route efficiencies and ensuring	Children with a disability will be more empowered and better prepared for later life with greater resilience.	None identified at this stage	N/A

Proposal	Groups positively impacted	Groups negatively impacted	Mitigations
robust application of statutory policy.			
Staff restructure of the Education and Inclusion Service	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A

Slough Children First

Proposal	Groups positively impacted	Groups negatively impacted	Mitigations
Commissioning - best value, packages of care and placements	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Carer recruitment	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Develop semi-independent accommodation for young people in care	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Reduced use of joint out of hours contract	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Edge of care – contextual safeguarding	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Recruitment and retention	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A

Housing, Property & Planning

Proposal	Groups positively impacted	Groups negatively impacted	Mitigations
Savings from reduction in building management costs	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Reduce spend on repairs and maintenance at Corporate Buildings	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Reduce spend on cleaning at Corporate Buildings	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Corporate Contract efficiencies	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Savings from additional efficiencies in facilities management	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A

Place and Community

Proposal	Groups positively impacted	Groups negatively impacted	Mitigations
Reduce staff costs in Planning Development	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Adopt fortnightly waste collections	None identified at this stage	Large/multi-generational households, more prevalent in certain communities, and families with young children in nappies, those with learning difficulties	Provide larger bins Clear comms
Chalvey HWRC Management Fee	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Borough Wide Controlled Parking Zones	None identified at this stage	Low income families. Addressed in parking permit proposal	Disabled users exempt if parking bay provided
Stop Bus Subsidy - Service 4, 5 and 6	None identified at this stage	Disabled/elderly	Alternative routes are being planned that do not require financial support from the Council
Government tapering of concessionary fares	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Improve Trade Waste Business	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Increase charges for Parking permits	None identified at this stage	Larger low income families	Review of terms and conditions before Cabinet decision is taken in order to introduce discretionary rates where appropriate
Streetworks Section 50 licences	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Streetworks Road Closure fees	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Transport and Highways grant swap	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Green waste collection charges	None identified at this stage	People on low incomes	The Chalvey HWRC will still be available for those residents to tip for free Green Waste
Reduce Highways maintenance works	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
All leisure services to be externally funded	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Switch off streetlighting and park lighting	None identified at this stage	Elderly, those with visual impairments, females	Trial and engagement with key stakeholders to identify real impacts
2023-24 Library Service model	None identified at this stage	Children and their mothers, people with MH issues, low income households	Develop events and activities which attract these groups to continue to use and access the services and ancillary voluntary

Proposal	Groups positively impacted	Groups negatively impacted	Mitigations
		and groups with disproportionate representation	groups that partner with library services
Stop SBC funded CCTV Monitoring of public spaces	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Delete vacant AD post	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A

Strategy & Improvement

Proposal	Groups positively impacted	Groups negatively impacted	Mitigations
Electoral Canvass reform	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Assistant Electoral Officers	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Events	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Slough Citizen	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Vacancy factor	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Reprovision of the ITSM Contract	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Reprovision of the landline telephony contract	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Reduction in the mobile connections/devices	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Termination of Xen Mobile Licences	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Reduction in Microsoft Licencing	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Reprovision of the Data Centre Hosting Contract	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Reprovision of the ERP (Agresso) Hosting Contract	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Reduction in services and efficiencies	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A

Finance & Commissioning

Proposal	Groups positively impacted	Groups negatively impacted	Mitigations
Staffing reduction - Fraud dept	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Increased taxbase and collection rate	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Reduced audit fee, reduced duplicate payments and income	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Single Person Discount monitoring and other initiatives	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Early payment of pension contributions	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Vacancy factor	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Budgeted overheads cleanse	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Efficient working practices in Revenues and Benefits	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Revenues and Benefits agency savings	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A
Minimum Revenue Provision	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	N/A