


EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – FEES AND CHARGES

SECTION ONE: INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

Author(s):	Commercial Finance Team	Department and service:	Finance	Date of assessment:	23/03/2023
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Overview:	<p>BACKGROUND</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010 harmonised and replaced pre-existing equality legislation and extended statutory protection across nine 'protected characteristics'. It recognised forms of discrimination that were previously beyond the scope of legislation and introduced the concept of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).</p> <p>The protected characteristics include; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.</p> <p>The PSED placed specific responsibilities on public sector organisations to consider equality in their decision making. In summary, those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct. • Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not. • Promote good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. <p>BACKGROUND</p> <p>It is proposed that discretionary fees and charges across the Council are uplifted where possible, by CPI of 10% to keep in line with inflation and rising costs. This is an overarching Equality Impact Assessment for the proposed fee & charges increases.</p> <p>CONTEXT</p>				

It was agreed at Cabinet in November 2022 that fees and charges would again be increased on the 1st April to keep up with rising costs of providing the service. PCC has seen a big impact from the inflation and rising costs and fees need to be increased to ensure cost recovery where possible. The following service areas are increasing their fees:

Strategic Planning & Infrastructure

Review of SPI fees and charges for year 2023-24. Fees and charges include planning pre-application service, viability assessments, design and historic environment advice, planning enforcement, building control, travel planning, bus pass replacement, flood risk advice, highways register, planning obligations services, neighbourhood planning advice

Natural Infrastructure

Tennis Courts

Tennis Pay to Play currently operates at Central Park and West Hoe, managed through an online booking system in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association. Income is ring-fenced into the long term maintenance of the courts to ensure a sustained high quality offer. The current cost to the public is £35 per year for a family membership to play at all sites or £30 concession; or £5 for non-members to play per separate session. Proposed increase of the fees to £40 per year for a family membership to play at all sites (£35 concession) and £6 for non-members to pay to play for separate session, as per advice from Lawn Tennis Association.

Sport Pitches

To increase the following fees and charges by CPI:

- Bowling - Season Ticket from £139.00 to £153.00
- Pitches - Season football/rugby (1 match per week) from £1,150.00 to £1,265.00
- Pitches - Leagues requiring alternate weeks for whole season are changed at 50% of season rate from £577.00 to £635.00
- Pitches - Junior Pitches (per match) from £21.00 to £23.00
- Pitches - Mini soccer (per hour) from £12.00 to £13.00
- Individual pitch booking (football, rugby, cricket, baseball) Per match from £80.00 to £88.00

Allotments

To increase the fees by CPI:

- One of administration fee (non-refundable) – from £20.00 to £22.00
- Annual non-refundable rent - small plot – from £79.13 to £87.00
- Annual non-refundable rent - large plot - £158.26 to £174.00
- Optional pre-start clearance of plot from £40.00 to £44.00
- Replacement/additional key (each) from £10.00 to £11.00

Beach huts

To increase the fees by CPI:

- Tinside Beach hut hire - Yearly charge – from £718.00 to £790.00
- Eastern Kings Beach Hut Hire - Yearly charge – from £992.50 to £1,092.00

PCC Asset and venue Hire

A 10% increase for the fees and charges in respect of Plymouth Guildhall, Harewood House and Tothill Community Centre venue hire was put in place from 1 December 2022 with an additional 10% planned for April 2023.

A review of the impact of these charges to customers who run stand-alone events, weddings, and community based regular activities was undertaken as the charges pre December 2022 were already making the spaces more expensive than the market research indicator. Unless the buildings are going to close, income needs to be maximised by keeping charges at a level that customers will pay and keeping utilisation of the site optimised, thereby supporting the benefits to the community as well as reducing budget pressures.

The analysis of the previous increases of fees and charges in June 2022, market factors and the risk that regular hirers would stop using the venues, mitigated the benefits of increasing the charges to 20%. The proposal was therefore made to increase all new bookings by 10% from 1st December followed by an additional 5% from 1st April, meaning a 15% increase overall.

The Terms and Conditions for these sites requires PCC to provide 3 months' notice of any increase in the fees and charges meaning that the December increase did not have any financial benefit until 1st March for current bookings. Following financial advice it was agreed that the regular hirers and events that would take place post 1st March 2023 would be charged the 15% from 1st March and fixed until March 2024, allowing for stability for regular hirers and mitigate the risk of bookings being cancelled. It is proposed to increase fees and charges by an additional 5% from 1st April for new business and to extend the 15% for regular hirers until 31 March 2024 with the annual review of fees and charges being conducted in Quarter 4 so that notice can be given and income increased from April 2024.

Street Naming & Numbering

There was a significant review of street naming and numbering charges in September 2017, when a full cost analysis was carried out to calculate the cost of providing the discretionary part of the service in line with the council's corporate charging policy, this was to ensure that the fees are set at full cost recovery to enable continued delivery of the statutory street naming and numbering service without requirement for it to be subsidised. There have been no increases implemented prior to the December 2022 council wide review of fees and charges took place.

Libraries

Plymouth City Council is uplifting fees and charges by 10 percent in April 2023 in line with the prevailing Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The proposals have been considered fully by officers in light of benchmarking (where relevant) and the need to achieve cost recovery. Increased fees and charges are proposed at the level considered appropriate in light of this, and the substantial shortfall in resources needed to set a balanced budget for 2023/24. Setting no increase, or in some cases higher fees, is rejected on the basis that it would not achieve cost recovery and / or may affect the level of income received from services.

CPI has been introduced for all of the library fees and charges which include photocopying, post, printing from microform, overdue items, computer access, books, DVD's & CDs research service, hire of music sets and meeting room hire. Urgent request books, DVDs & CDs have been increased to ensure cost recovery

Registration

Plymouth City Council is uplifting fees and charges by 10% in April 2023 in line with the prevailing Consumer Price Index (CPI). The proposals have been considered fully by officers in light of benchmarking (where relevant) and the need to achieve cost recovery. They are proposed at the level considered appropriate in light of this and the substantial shortfall in resources needed to set a balanced budget for 2023/4. Setting no increase, a lower increase or, in some cases higher fees, is rejected on the basis it would not achieve cost recovery and/or may affect the level of income achieved from services.

Of 43 set fees and charges the Registry Service are increasing only 6. The fees that are remaining the same are either Nationally set or are part of a competitive market which means increasing them is likely to impact on the number of bookings as other LA's provide the same service for a lower rate (Devon County Council & Cornwall County Council).

Of the 6 fees that will increase 3 are approved premises licence fees and are applied to premises who want to hold weddings at their venue. 2 relate to celebratory ceremonies at approved premises being held on (i) a Sunday, or (ii) a bank holiday. The remaining fee increase relates to weddings held in the Raleigh Room, the registry service is going to increase the number of guests allowed at the ceremony in line with the uplift.

Public protection service

Discretionary fees across PPS have been reviewed and are increasing by 10% in line with CPI. Some fees are set by statute and cannot be increased. Those that are being increased include pest control fees, stray dog charges, animal licensing fees, scrap metal, beauty and body art, some licensed fees such as designated premise supervisor and temporary event notice, beauty and body art, some sampling and health certificates for food export purposes.

Maritime Services (storage & mooring)

The Implementation of 2023 Plymouth City Council Fees and Charges policy annual increases. The review includes increasing the cost of mooring fees for Plymouth City Council owned or operated moorings. These changes are included within the Plymouth City Council Fees and Charges policy which itself has had separate consultation on implementation. The increase in mooring fees is in line with the inflationary rises approved by Plymouth City Council and is not subject to any formal or legislative consultation. Whilst it is accepted that these changes will impact on the

general increase to the cost of living in the city, the fees and charges review offers a balance between increased costs borne by the council in delivering this service.

Bulky & Commercial Waste

Bulky waste collection and HWRC commercial waste is increasing by CPI plus rounding, collection of 4 large items and additional items will be increasing.

Public Engagement

Public engagement to support the 2023/24 budget setting process took place between 11 November and 04 December 2022. People were invited to provide their feedback on the proposals and suggest other ideas for saving money. The results of this engagement have been analysed and have been used to inform the development of this EIA.

Although socioeconomic background is not a protected characteristic, it is important to place this year’s budget setting process in the wider socioeconomic context. Whilst our most recent City Survey suggests that 77 per cent of residents agree that Plymouth is a great place to live and over 60 per cent have pride in their local area and also feel as though they belong, this is a challenging time economically for residents and service users. Many are experiencing increased financial and wellbeing pressures from the rising cost of living and the same survey showed that 21 per cent of people agreed that the food they buy doesn’t last and they don’t have money to get more.

The social and economic impacts of the rising cost of living are felt differently across the social strata but they should not be underestimated. The 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation highlighted that of the 317 local authority districts in England, Plymouth is ranked as the 64th most deprived. For those people in some of the city’s most deprived wards, the rising cost of living places them in an increasingly uncertain financial position which will only worsen inequality in the city.

Impacts and mitigation

The impacts from the Council’s budget decisions are likely to be felt by people with protected characteristics. These impacts will primarily be felt by younger and older people and, those with disabilities. Those already in precarious financial positions or with multiple vulnerabilities may also feel some impacts. Where possible adverse impacts have been identified, the impact and any relevant mitigation activities have been included within the relevant columns below.

DECISION

The proposal for the increase of discretionary fees and charges is in line with the Fees, Charges and Concessions Policy 2016. This policy states that all fees and charges should recover costs. When costs increase it is important that fees and charges also increase

to keep pace with those rising costs. The current budget position at the Council means that these cost increases cannot be absorbed. By implementing Consumer Price Index (CPI) increases each year this will avoid long periods of no review and any subsequent need for sudden increases.

Failure to implement full cost recovery increases in discretionary fees and charges will require alternative savings to be developed and agreed by the Council. Parking charges have been excluded from this review of discretionary fees and charges and are subject to a separate review.

SECTION TWO: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

AGE

Overarching insight/ data e.g census data

Plymouth

1. 16.4 per cent of people in Plymouth are children aged under 15.
2. 65.1 per cent are adults aged 15 to 64.
3. 18.5 percent are adults aged 65 and over.
4. 2.4 percent of the resident population are 85 and over.

South West

- 15.9 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14, 61.8 per cent are aged 15 to 64.
- 22.3 per cent are aged 65 and over.

England

- 17.4 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14.
- 64.2 per cent of people are aged 15 to 64.
- 18.4 per cent of people are aged 65 and over.

(2021 Census)

Proposed fee/charge increase and evidence	Adverse Impacts	Mitigations	Timescale and Responsible Department

<p>Venue hire</p>	<p>Increasing the fees above market rates is likely to result in regular community activities being cancelled.</p> <p>These type of activities are after school clubs, clubs for elderly or retired members of the public, hard to reach groups and groups that need support in their well-being i.e., local AA group, befriending society, Art classes, Taekwondo and dance classes, bingo, church groups etc.</p>	<p>A review of market factors and maintaining the fees and charges within these and where possible operating a full cost recovery model will help to support usage at the venues and enable individuals to access support and activities that benefit their health and well-being</p> <p>Increasing fees and charges by 15% over two years rather than 20% allows community groups stability in their running costs and the keep charges for their clients at a reasonable levels,</p> <p>Stable costs for attending activities will mitigate the risk of individuals not accessing activates that support their health and well-being, especially for those who are on low income or vulnerable.</p>	<p>Soft FM Completed</p>
<p>Maritime services</p>	<p>Plymouth City Council are aware that there will be limited impact on older people with the implementation of the annual fee increases</p> <p>This policy and assessment will be regularly reviewed to ensure the impact is understood and mitigated ongoing, this will be achieved through Attendance at Disability Involvement Group meetings (PADAN), engagement with customers through the Have Your Say function, Twitter, emails, phone calls, etc.</p>	<p>Ensure all fee payers are made aware of increase in advance of go live date to allow customers to seek an alternative provider</p>	<p>Maritime Services Ongoing</p>

DISABILITY

Overarching insight/ data e.g census data

- 9.4 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited ‘a lot’ because of a physical or mental health problem.
- 12.2 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited ‘a little’ because of a physical or mental health problem (2021 Census)
- A higher proportion of individuals who live in families with disabled members live in poverty, compared to individuals who live in families where no one is disabled ([EHRC 2017](#)).

Proposed fee/charge increase and evidence	Adverse Impacts	Mitigations	Timescale and Responsible Department
Pre-planning applications	Higher planning pre-app fees may adversely impact people with disabilities who need to adapt their property to meet their needs. Provision for up to 50% discount on planning fees for advice on proposed facilities that are solely for adaptations for people with disabilities.	Provision for up to 50% discount on planning fees for advice on proposed facilities that are solely for adaptations for the disabled remain unchanged.	On-going. Development Management.
Venue Hire	<p>All of the sites are accessible sites and allow for people with various disabilities to join groups that can support their health and well-being.</p> <p>Increasing the fees above market rates is likely to result in regular community activities being cancelled.</p> <p>These type of activities are local AA group, befriending society, art classes, dance classes, bingo, church groups etc</p>	<p>A review of market factors and maintaining the fees and charges within these and where possible operating a full cost recovery model will help to support usage at the venues and enable individuals to access support and activities that benefit their health and well-being</p> <p>Increasing fees and charges by 15% over two years rather than 20% allows community groups stability in their running costs and the keep charges for their clients at a reasonable levels,</p> <p>Stable costs for attending activities will mitigate the risk of individuals not accessing activates that support their health and well-being, especially for those who are on low income or vulnerable.</p>	Completed Soft FM
Maritime	<p>Plymouth City Council are aware that there will be limited impact on disabled people with the implementation Plymouth City Council are aware that there will be limited impact on older people with the implementation of the annual fee increases.</p> <p>This policy and assessment will be regularly reviewed to ensure the impact is understood and mitigated ongoing, this will be achieved through</p>	Ensure all fee payers are made aware of increase in advance of go live date to allow customers to seek an alternative private provider	Ongoing Maritime services

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at Disability Involvement Group meetings (PADAN) Engagement with customers through the Have Your Say function, Twitter, emails, phone calls, etc. 		
Bulky waste	There is the potential for the bulky waste collection services increase in fees and charges to affect people with disability, particularly those who are on a lower income and are unable to deliver bulky waste to recycling centres themselves.	There are no official assistance or concessions schemes currently in place or planned. However, we do apply discretion on an individual basis in terms of placement of items in the case of householder's that have reduced mobility.	N/A

GENDER REASSIGNMENT

Overarching insight/ data e.g census data

- 0.5 per cent of residents in Plymouth have a gender identity that is different from their sex registered at birth.
- 0.1 per cent of residents identify as a trans man, 0.1 per cent identify as non-binary,
- 0.1 per cent identify as a trans women (2021 Census).

Proposed fee/charge increase and evidence	Adverse Impacts	Mitigations	Timescale and Responsible Department
None anticipated	n/a	n/a	n/a

MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

Overarching insight/ data e.g census data

- 40.1 per cent of residents have never married and never registered a civil partnership.
- 10 per cent are divorced, 6 percent are widowed, with 2.5 per cent are separated but still married.
- 0.49 per cent of residents are, or were, married or in a civil partnerships of the same sex.
- 0.06 per cent of residents are in a civil partnerships with the opposite sex (2021 Census).

Proposed fee/charge increase and evidence	Adverse Impacts	Mitigations	Timescale and Responsible Department
Venue Hire	<p>Increasing the fees above market rates is likely to result in regular community activities being cancelled or wedding/civil partnership ceremonies not being affordable.</p> <p>This could result in couples not being able to have the ceremony they would like or individuals who live alone not being able to access groups that can support their health and well-being</p> <p>These type of activities are befriending society, art classes, dance classes, bingo, etc.</p>	<p>A review of market factors and maintaining the fees and charges within these and where possible operating a full cost recovery model will help to support usage at the venues and enable individuals to access support and activities that benefit their health and well-being</p> <p>Increasing fees and charges by 15% over two years rather than 20% allows community groups stability in their running costs and the keep charges for their clients at a reasonable levels,</p> <p>Stable costs for attending activities will mitigate the risk of individuals not accessing activates that support their health and well-being, especially for those who are on low income or vulnerable.</p>	<p>Completed Soft FM</p>
PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY			
<p>Overarching insight/ data e.g census data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total fertility rate (TFR) for England was 1.62 children per woman in 2021. • The total fertility rate (TFR) for Plymouth in 2021 was 1.5. 			
Proposed fee/charge increase and evidence	Adverse Impacts	Mitigations	Timescale and Responsible Department
Venue Hire	<p>Increasing the fees above market rates is likely to result in regular community activities being cancelled.</p> <p>This could result in individuals who are experiencing difficulties with their fertility, those who are pregnant or have young babies getting the support they may need, for practical skills or with their well-being</p>	<p>A review of market factors and maintaining the fees and charges within these and where possible operating a full cost recovery model will help to support usage at the venues and enable individuals to access support and activities that benefit their health and well-being</p> <p>Increasing fees and charges by 15% over two years rather than 20% allows community groups stability in</p>	<p>Completed Soft FM</p>

	<p>i.e. parent and baby groups, fitness classes. etc</p>	<p>their running costs and the keep charges for their clients at a reasonable levels, Stable costs for attending activities will mitigate the risk of individuals not accessing activities that support their health and well-being, especially for those who are on low income or vulnerable.</p>	
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RACE

Overarching insight/ data e.g census data

- In 2021, 94.9 per cent of Plymouth’s population identified their ethnicity as White, 2.3 per cent as Asian and 1.1 per cent as Black (2021 Census)
- People with a mixed ethnic background comprised 1.8 per cent of the population.
- 1 per cent of the population use a different term to describe their ethnicity (2021 Census)
- 92.7 per cent of residents speak English as their main language.
- 2021 Census data shows that after English, Polish, Romanian, Chinese, Portuguese, and Arabic are the most spoken languages in Plymouth (2021 Census).

Proposed fee/charge increase and evidence	Adverse Impact	Mitigations	Timescale and Responsible Department
<p>Venue hire</p>	<p>All classes are available to individuals of any ethnicity, so if classes are able to run this group will not be impacted. There are however language classes that are run on site so non-English speaking individuals may not have the ability to continue with their language development if classes are cancelled due to the increases in charges</p>	<p>A review of market factors and maintaining the fees and charges within these and where possible operating a full cost recovery model will help to support usage at the venues and enable individuals to access support and activities that benefit their health and well-being Increasing fees and charges by 15% over two years rather than 20% allows community groups stability in their running costs and the keep charges for their clients at a reasonable levels, Stable costs for attending activities will mitigate the risk of individuals not accessing activities that support their health and well-being, especially for those who are on low income or vulnerable.</p>	<p>Completed Soft FM</p>

RELIGION OR BELIEF

<p>Overarching insight/ data e.g census data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 48.9 per cent of the Plymouth population stated they had no religion. • 42.5 per cent of the population identified as Christian (2021 Census). • Those who identified as Muslim account for 1.3 per cent of Plymouth’s population while Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish or Sikh combined totalled less than 1 per cent (2021 Census). 			
Proposed fee/charge increase and evidence	Impact	Mitigations	Timescale and Responsible Department
Venue Hire	Fees and Charges increases’ will not specifically impact on those who have a different faith. However there are two church groups that use the venues who may not be able to afford to run their sessions as they do now if charges increase	A review of market factors and maintaining the fees and charges within these and where possible operating a full cost recovery model will help to support usage at the venues and enable individuals to access support and activities that benefit their health and well-being Increasing fees and charges by 15% over two years rather than 20% allows community groups stability in their running costs and the keep charges for their clients at a reasonable levels, Stable costs for attending activities will mitigate the risk of individuals not accessing activates that support their health and well-being, especially for those who are on low income or vulnerable.	Completed Soft FM
SEX			
<p>Overarching insight/ data e.g census data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51 per cent of our population are women and 49 per cent are men (2021 Census). 			
Proposed fee/charge increase and evidence	Adverse Impacts	Mitigations	Timescale and Responsible Department
None anticipated			
SEXUAL ORIENTATION			

Overarching insight/ data e.g census data			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 88.95 per cent of residents aged 16 years and over in Plymouth describe their sexual orientation as straight or heterosexual. • 2.06 per cent describe their sexuality as bisexual. • 1.97 per cent of people describe their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian. • 0.42 per cent of residents describe their sexual orientation using a different term (2021 Census). 			
Proposed fee/charge increase and evidence	Adverse Impact	Mitigation	Timescale and Responsible Department
Marriage and civil partnership	Since it is likely that venues will pass on increased costs to couple's seeking to celebrate marriage or civil partnership it is likely there will be an adverse financial impact.	None proposed since the scale of the financial impact will be relatively small in the context of the overall cost of a wedding.	N/A
HUMAN RIGHTS			
Proposed fee/charge increase and evidence	Implications	Mitigation	Timescale and Responsible Department
Registry	Article 12 protects the right of men and women of marriageable age to marry and to start a family.	The proposed fee increase does not affect the cost of a civil ceremony at the registry.	N/A

SECTION FOUR: OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Equality objectives	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
Celebrate diversity and ensure that Plymouth is a welcoming city.	Plymouth City Council remains committed to celebrating the diversity of the city. The risk of room hirers not running activities at the venues can impact on the ability for people to attend activities that are beneficial for their well-being, introduce them to new groups of people	A review of market factors, maintaining the fees and charges within these levels and where possible operating a full cost recovery model will facilitate the ability for individuals to access support and activates that benefit their health and well-being	Completed

	and encourages the building of friendships and support groups within the community. The events and activates run at all of the venues help to mitigate the risk of the inequalities as mentioned, being a factor across the City		
Pay equality for women, and staff with disabilities in our workforce.	Plymouth City Council is committed to equal opportunities and the fair treatment of its workforce. As an employer, we have a clear policy of paying employees equally for the same or equivalent work regardless of gender or disability. The Council operates a comprehensive job evaluation scheme to ensure that rates of pay are fair and are based wholly on the role being undertaken.	Discounts of up to 50% of planning pre-app fees are available for: Voluntary/ community groups Advice on proposed facilities that are solely for adaptations for the disabled. Applications that involve 100% of dwellings that are 'self or custom build' and are community led initiatives Customers eligible for a range of means tested benefits.	On-going. Development Management.
Supporting our workforce through the implementation of Our People Strategy 2020 – 2024	Our People Strategy 2020 – 2024 sets out our approach towards ensuring that the Council's workforce can adapt and meet the ever changing needs of the Council and our residents.		
Supporting victims of hate crime so they feel confident to report incidents, and working with, and through our partner organisations to achieve positive outcomes.	The Council is committed to reducing and tackling hate crime and ensuring that victims are treated in a trauma informed manner to ensure that they get the outcome which is most appropriate for them. The Council works closely with the Safer Plymouth Partnership, the community safety partnership for the city. Hate crime data is monitored.	We will continue to monitor hate crime data and work with our partners in the police where appropriate.	Community Connections.
Plymouth is a city where people from different backgrounds get along well.	The Council is committed to developing a policy to support its welcoming city priority which will ensure we are promoting cohesion within the city.	We will continue to monitor cohesion levels via our biannual City Survey.	Policy and Intelligence Team.

