

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Title of policy/proposal and EIA number

Proposed changes to fees and charges

Date of assessment

14.10.20. Updated 22.12.20 and 08.02.21

Overview

This EIA considers the impact of proposed changes to fees and charges on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010). Where any adverse impact is identified, mitigating actions will be considered.

Following on from the public consultation and consideration of other feedback, the proposals to remove the pest control subsidy and charges for disabled parking has been removed from the budget.

1. What is being introduced/amended and why? What are the anticipated outcomes?

The proposed changes to certain fees and charges are to improve efficiency and help meet the council's budget gap. Specific proposals include:

- Introduction of car parking charges at Eastrop car parks to support the maintenance and improvement of the park.
- Removal of the discretionary concession of free parking for disabled badge holders in council owned car parks. Disabled parking spaces will continue to be in place, but car parking charges will apply. This will hopefully remove the incentive for the abuse of disabled badges by those not entitled to use them and improve availability of disabled parking spaces.
- Removal of concession for free residents parking permit for over 75s to comply with HCC's policy for parking in residential streets.
- Introduction of car parking charges in rural car parks to assist with maintenance costs.
- Alignment of household, bulky and garden waste fees/charges with Hart District Council (green recycling bins/glass boxes to remain at no charge).
- Residents' Parking Permits charge to increase to £40 (in line with HCC's policy for parking in residential areas).
- Allotment charges – change concessionary rate to the state pension age.
- Removal of subsidy for free rats and mice treatments for means tested benefits claimants.
- Introduction of a phased increase of 20% per annum for bowls fees/charges to meet the cost recovery principles for outdoor sport facilities.
- Introduce a new charge for the use of the Stratton Park Tennis Courts.

2. Who is intended to benefit from the policy/proposal etc.?

The proposals would go towards covering the gap in the council's budget, ensuring that essential services are maintained and continue to benefit a range of people in the borough.

3. Using the table on the next page, identify who is affected by the policy/proposal etc. and explain if it has a differentially* positive/negative or neutral impact on this/these group/s (read the notes below before you start)

** A 'differential impact' is when a policy/proposal etc. has a different impact on certain groups compared to others (positive = promotes equality or negative = disadvantages/ could discriminate). A 'neutral' impact is when something is generally positive or negative for everyone.*

Consider how the policy/proposal demonstrates due regard to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)**:

- a. Eliminating discrimination/harassment - furthering equal opportunities, removing/minimising disadvantage, could it disadvantage certain group/s?
- b. Advancing equality of opportunity - meeting needs of specific groups, encouraging participation, could it specifically support certain group/s?

c. Promoting good relations between different groups - promoting understanding or integration between groups, could the proposal build better relationships between communities?

***For marriage and civil partnership, legislation requires you only need to demonstrate how you would eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.*

IMPORTANT: Give brief reasons and **evidence** for your decision. Consider borough equality and diversity profile information, service monitoring data, census statistics, other organisations EIAs, customer consultation, etc. For any negative impact identified, describe actions already taken to address it.

Any planned actions to enhance a policy/proposal or address issues must be identified in section 5.

Consider and explain the impact/s of the proposal on the groups listed – use evidence to support this

Characteristic	Group	Positive – meets the aims of the PSED by...	Adverse – could disadvantage by... / are there any mitigating actions?	Neutral – generally positive or potentially adverse impact for all
Age Alter age ranges if appropriate	Under 16			<p>The following proposals would have a neutral impact on the majority of the listed groups. The only exception would be for people on a low income:</p> <p>Introduction of car parking charges at Eastrop car parks to support the maintenance and improvement of the park.</p> <p>These fees could discourage leisure activity, such as dog walking or running in the park, which could have a negative health impact. This could be mitigated with careful setting of the tariff.</p> <p>Alignment of household, bulky and garden waste fees/charges with Hart District Council.</p>
	16 to 64			
	Over 65		<p>The removal of concession for free residents parking permit for over 75s (to comply with HCC's policy for parking in residential streets) would have an adverse impact on older permit holders, particularly if they are on a low income.</p> <p>The change to bowls charges and the concessionary rate for allotment charges to the state pension age could have an adverse impact on some older people on a low income. However, both are optional and a one-off annual payments.</p>	
Sex	Women			Residents' Parking Permits to be in line with HCC's policy for parking in residential areas.
	Men			
Race	White British			Currently residential permits are some of the lowest in the county. The requirement is to raise them to the level set by the county council of £50 per year as a cost recovery amount. A staged increase is proposed, over three years, to bring fees from £18.50 to £50.
	Other minority ethnic groups (please specify)			
Disability & Health	Physical / sensory impairment		<p>The removal of the concession of free parking for disabled badge holders would have an adverse impact on disabled people, particularly those on a low income. It could also displace parking in 'safe' car parks with more people parking on the road side on double yellow lines with associated traffic hazards.</p>	<p>Introduction of a phased increase of 20% per annum for bowls fees / charges.</p>
	Long-term health problem			
	Mental illness			
	Learning disability			
Sexuality	Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual			Introduction of a new charge for the use

Religion & Belief	Faith groups			of the Stratton Park Tennis Courts.
	Atheist/Agnostic/ other belief			
Gender reassignment	Transgender people			
Marriage/Civil Partnership	People in a civil partnership/married			
Pregnancy or Maternity	Pregnant/on maternity leave			
Other	Living in rural area	The car park at Bell Street in Whitchurch is in poor condition with large parts suffering from flooding. Charging would allow a capital investment in drainage, resurfacing and landscaping. This would increase the car park's capacity and improve the user experience.	There are currently no car parking charges outside of Basingstoke. Many rural car parks are used as long term vehicle storage by local residents. The removal of free parking in some car parks will impact on those residents who live close by and have no parking associated with their property.	
	Poor literacy/Numeracy			
	Low income/benefits /unemployed		The removal of the pest control subsidy for means tested benefits claimants would be negative for people in receipt of these types of benefits. This impact would be disproportionately greater than in other socio-economic groups.	
	Caring responsibilities		The removal of the concession of free parking for disabled badge holders would have an adverse impact on the carers of disabled people, particularly those on a low income. It could displace parking in 'safe' car parks with more people parking on the road side on double yellow lines with associated traffic hazards.	

4. Summarise details of any research or consultation carried out to evidence your comments in the table.

Research has been carried out to review the charges that are made by other local authorities and organisations. Information on the current levels of usage of these services has also been considered to inform the proposals. The proposed changes will be consulted on in a public consultation that will run from early November 2020 until early January 2021. With regards to the rural car parks, more detailed surveys will be undertaken to identify the necessary works and evaluate an appropriate tariff structure for the charges to include a split between pay and display and permit holders. This work will inform the charges to be introduced from 1 April 2022.

Summary of public consultation results that have equalities implications

- Several concerns that disabled parking charges would directly disadvantage disabled people and have a cumulative negative impact of the change as many people already have additional challenges and outgoings.
- Increase in parking charges negative for independent retailers, rural areas and families / health walking group (Eastrop). Will lead to antisocial parking. Need more buses.
- Charges to be means-tested rather than based on age.
- Concerns about the increase in fees for bowling clubs and negative impact on older people. Not averse to paying more but would like more clarity in the timescales and smaller, more frequent revision of charges.

Other comments included:

- Residents parking permits are not an optional service and should not be covered in the same section as the main car parking charges. Visitors permit is expensive, should be sold as parking vouchers, rather than a general charge.
- Waste removal charges – numerous comments suggesting that bin collections reduce to fortnightly to save costs and increase recycling.
- Insufficient information to comment on the changes to waste and recycling, tennis court use charges.
- Make allowances for car parking to access open spaces e.g. have a free of charge period so as not to impact genuine park users (especially during Covid).

5. List any actions resulting from this assessment – either to enhance a policy/proposal or to mitigate/address any negative impact identified *(these should be included in, and monitored as part of, your Business Unit Plan).*

Action	Officer Responsible	Target date
Assessment to be revisited after the public consultation to take into account any issues that have not been identified in this review.	Policy Officer	Jan 2021
Work to be carried out to consider whether the tariff in Eastrop Park could be set to favour short stay users to allow activities such as dog walking, running or short walks.	Regulatory Services Manager	From April 2021
If approved, the changes should be communicated through a range of communication channels.	Finance Team	April 2021

6. Summary of findings for reporting purposes *(briefly say what was assessed, what the findings were and note any actions).*

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out to consider the proposed changes to fees and charges on the protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010). Key findings from this assessment include:

- the removal of concession for free residents parking permit for over 75s (to comply with HCC's policy for parking in residential streets) would have an adverse impact on older permit holders, particularly if they are on a low income;
- the change to the concessionary rate for allotment charges to the state pension age could have an adverse impact on some older people on a low income, however, it is an optional service and a one-off annual payment;
- the removal of the discretionary concession of free parking for disabled badge holders would have an adverse impact on disabled people, particularly those on a low income, it could also affect carers and displace parking in 'safe' car parks with more people parking on the road side on double yellow lines with associated traffic hazards;
- the introduction of car parking charges in rural car park would have an adverse impact on people living in rural areas. However, charging would allow improvements to these car parks and, in some instances, increase capacity and improve the user experience;
- the removal of the pest control subsidy for means tested benefits claimants would be negative for people in receipt of these types of benefits.

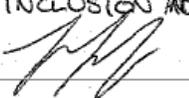
The other proposed changes to fees and charges included in the budget proposals were identified as having a neutral impact on the majority of the protected characteristics and vulnerable groups. The only exception would be for people on a low income.

This assessment was revisited after the public consultation to take into account any issues were not identified in the initial review. The main findings included concerns that disabled parking charges would directly disadvantage disabled people and have a cumulative negative impact as many people already have additional challenges and outgoings, charges at Eastrop car park would be negative for families / other groups and village car park users would be disadvantaged. Charges should be means-tested rather than based on age and there was concern that the increase in fees for bowling clubs would have a negative impact on older people.

If approved, these individual proposals should continue to take into account equalities implications as part of their development.

Equality Working Group recommendation – this assessment has been successfully reviewed with the following outcome:

- No major change** – The assessment of this policy/proposal shows no potential for discrimination. The item will meet the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Therefore it can proceed to inform a Member decision.
- Adjust the policy/strategy or function** – This item will better meet aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty if actions to remove barriers or to better advance equality (identified in Sections 3 and 5) are implemented.
- Continue the policy/proposal** – There is some potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality, but no unlawful discrimination has been identified. Ensure effective equality monitoring is in place to regularly assess the actual impact on different groups.
- Do not proceed** – Stop and rethink. Adverse equality impacts have been identified/may not be justified for a protected characteristic group/s and have not been sufficiently mitigated. Unlawful discrimination could be taking place. Do not adopt or continue with the policy/proposal until further actions and equality assessment has been undertaken.

Job titles of officers completing assessment:	Executive Director of Corporate Services, Regulatory Services Manager, Policy Officer	
Equality Strategy Group sign off necessary? (if no	X Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Job title/signature/s of EIA Validator/s:	P.H. FOR INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY 	HEAD OF HR AND OD 
Validation date:	25.03.21	

Appendix

Title	Proposal	Details
Eastrop Car Parks Fees and Charges	Introduction of car parking charges at Eastrop car parks as a way of generating additional revenue to support the maintenance and future improvement of the Park.	This will be subject to a Traffic Regulation Order process, which will include a public consultation. Feedback from this will inform final decision making on the proposal.
Parking for Disabled Badge Holders Fees and Charges	Removal of concession of free parking for disabled badge holders in council owned car parks.	<p>Under this proposal charging would apply in the following car parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central - 11 blue badge holder parking spaces; • Castons/Southern Road (long stay) - 4 blue badge holder parking spaces • The Malls - 16 blue badge holder parking spaces. <p>The disabled parking spaces in Joices Yard, Jacobs Yard, Castons Yard and Alberts Yard are 'on-street' and would remain free of charge. Free parking for blue badge holders would also continue to be available along Church Street.</p> <p>The additional income is based on approx. £650 of income per annum for each accessible parking space.</p>
Residents' Parking Permits Fees and Charges	Removal of concession for free residents parking permit for over 75s to meet compliance with Hampshire County Council's policy for parking in residential streets (£2,000 pa)	In 19/20 there were 148 Free residents parking permits were issued to residents aged over 75.
Rural Car Parks - Introduction of Charges	Introduction of parking charges in the rural car parks located in Whitchurch, Overton, Kingsclere and Bramley, which will assist in meeting the ongoing maintenance costs of the car parks for which there is currently no allocated budget.	Condition and usage surveys will need to be undertaken to inform these proposals. We may also look at other car parks that the borough owns. This work will be carried out in 2021/22, with a view to implementation in 2022/23. Any plans to introduce charging would be subject to public consultation as part of the Traffic Regulation Order process.
Waste Container, Bulky Household Waste and Garden Fees and Charges	Alignment of the household waste, bulky waste and garden waste fees and charges with Hart District Council (Note: green recycling bins and glass boxes will remain at no charge).	N/A

Residents' Parking Permits Fees and Charges	To increase the charges for residents and visitors parking permits to £40.	This change will affect 1,937 households who pay for a Residents and/or Visitors Parking Permit.
Allotment Fees and Charges	Change concessionary rate to the state pension age. (£2,000 pa)	The concessionary rate reduces the charge for a full size allotment (250m.sq.) from £55 to £27.50 per annum. Increasing the qualifying age will affect approximately 100 of the 1,100 allotment holders.
Pest Control Fees and Charges	Removal of subsidy for free rats and mice treatments for means tested benefits claimants.	Over the past two years, we have carried out an average of 162 free rat treatments/annum for people on a means tested benefits.