

Equality Impact Assessment – Screening

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment is to ensure the Council:

- does not discriminate in the way it provides services and employment
- fulfils its duties as set out by the Equality Act 2010
- where possible, it does all it can to promote equality and good relations between different groups

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| Name of service/policy/project being assessed | Reintroduction of car parking charges | Is this a new or existing service/policy/project? | Existing |
| Directorate | Community Well-being & Environment | | |
| Officers responsible for: a) Service/policy/project b) Completing EIA | Ian Miller | | |
| Date | 20 May 2020 | | |
| What is the purpose and expected outcomes/ | <p>Safe reintroduction of car parking charges following suspension as a result of COVID-19.</p> <p>The Council has an agreed schedule of car parking charges that came into force in early April 2020, following decision by the Cabinet in December 2019 and consultation on the car parks order. All charges were suspended on 27 March 2020 because of the COVID-19 outbreak – at that time there were very few users of Council car parks because of legal restrictions on movement. It also facilitated operation of a scheme to allow on duty NHS and social care staff to use car parks for free if displaying a pass provided by their employer: that scheme will continue to apply notwithstanding reintroduction of charges for other users.</p> <p>With restrictions on movement being lifted gradually with effect from 13 May 2020, arrangements for reintroducing charges have been considered. It is not only local residents who use Council car parks: particularly in Bewdley and Stourport, a significant proportion of users are visitors from outside the area and they impose costs on the Council including collection and removal of litter. Car parking income is an important part of the Council’s ability to have a balanced budget as part of its medium term financial strategy, because it meets the costs of running the car parks and related services likely to be used by those parking in car parks.</p> <p>Charging and enforcement will commence again from 1 June 2020. In order to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 from</p> | | |

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| | <p>people touching potentially infected surfaces or from the cash collection company having to handle potentially infected coins, and also to avoid queues forming at payment machines, the option of paying by cash is not being reintroduced at this time. Payment is possible by a wide range of alternative means including a mobile phone app, paying over a mobile phone and paying on line in advance. Season tickets are also available and likely to represent good value for money for frequent users.</p> <p>The charges for parking are the same whichever method is used to pay. However data or network access charges may have to be paid to download or use the app or to pay by phone, depending on the user's phone tariff.</p> <p>Other options considered and discounted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not reintroducing car parking charges. Discounted because of the importance of car park charge income to the Council's financial position. The Council cannot afford to continue without charges, particularly now that movement and other restrictions are being eased; - Reintroducing charges only in Stourport and Bewdley, to reflect the greater impact of visitors from outside the district at those locations. Discounted as this would create unfairness within the charging regime for residents across the District; - Allowing use of machines to make cash payments. Discounted for public health reasons and in order to minimise potential spread of COVID-19; - Not enforcing charges. Discounted because of the importance of car park charge income to the Council's financial position. No one would be likely to pay if it was known that there was no enforcement and no possibility of a penalty charge notice being issued; or if appeals against penalty charge notices would succeed by users simply claiming that they normally pay with cash, did not have a mobile phone etc. <p>In order to promote compliance: large clear signage to be installed at entrance to car parks to warn people that payment by cash is not possible and that there is a risk of a penalty charge notice if charges are not paid; also large clear signage within car parks on how to pay by phone, app etc and the scale of charges.</p> |
| <p>Will there be any effect on other Council procedures or strategies e.g. Corporate Plan or the council's workforce?</p> | <p>Car parking income is an important part of the Council's ability to have a balanced budget as part of its medium term financial strategy.</p> |
| <p>Are there any statutory</p> | <p>Legislation governing car parking charges: Part IV, Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The Act does not require that councils provide a payment by cash option.</p> |

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| requirements or implications? | <p>Legislation and guidance relevant to COVID-19 outbreak such as SI 2020/350 (as amended) and https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safer-public-places-urban-centres-and-green-spaces-covid-19</p> <p>Implementation of charges agreed by the Cabinet and confirmed in the Wyre Forest District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2020 following consultation.</p> |
| Are there any other organisations/bodies involved? | Yes – company that collects cash from car parking machines; JustPark for pay by phone, pay by app and on line options |
| Who are the main customer groups/stakeholders affected? | Users of Council car parks. Indirectly: businesses and organisations located in town centres. |
| What information/statistics/ evidence are you using? | <p>Data on age profile of Wyre Forest residents. Online data about ownership of mobile phones, access to the internet, blue badge holders, car ownership, holders of driving licences including</p> <p>https://www.statista.com/statistics/289167/mobile-phone-penetration-in-the-uk/</p> <p>https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividuals/2019</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/blue-badge-scheme-statistics-data-tables-dis</p> <p>https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/expenditure/datasets/percentageofhouseholdswithcarsbyincomegroupandhouseholdcompositionuktablea47</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts02-driving-licence-holders</p> |

What impact does the service/policy/project have on the nine protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2012 – for definitions, please see overleaf.

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| 1. Age | <p>Neutral</p> <p>Evidence: About 25% of the Wyre Forest population is over the age of 65.</p> <p>Online data suggest 95% of households own at least one mobile phone. Within that, Smartphone adoption reached 78 percent during</p> |
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the first half of 2018, but is lower among older age groups: 70 percent among people aged 55 or older. The proportion of people over the age of 65 who access the internet via Smartphone is reported to be 40% compared to almost 80% for the population as a whole.

93% of households have internet access (2019). 87% of adults use the internet daily, the figure falling to 61% for those over the age of 65. 54% of adults aged over 65 used the internet for shopping in 2019.

Levels of car ownership are lower among single adult retired households than among all households. Significantly fewer people aged over 70 have a driving licence: 67% compared to well over 80% for those aged 40 to 69 (2018 data).

Blue badge holders do not have to pay to park in Council car parks. About, 5,000 blue badges are held by Wyre Forest residents (data are not published below county level: there were 29.5k in Worcestershire, March 2019). Most blue badge holders are likely to be older people.

A significantly discounted season ticket is available for residents of Wyre Forest who are of state pensionable age: £175 a year compared to £400 for a full season ticket. This equates to less than £15/month or fewer than eight two hour stays in Council car parks across a month.

Overall, fewer old people are likely to have to pay charges for car parks than the population as a whole because of (a) lower levels of car ownership among old people (b) lower proportion of older people who hold a driving licence (c) probable higher proportion of older people who have blue badges.

During the pandemic, large numbers of older people who do not have internet access or who may not be confident in using the internet will have been supported by family, friends or neighbours placing food delivery orders on line. It is not unreasonable to assume that - for the small proportion of elderly households who do not have a mobile phone or internet access – family, friends or neighbours might do the same in respect of making payment for parking or purchasing a season ticket.

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| 2. Disability | Neutral Evidence: not aware of any direct impact on people with this characteristic. Blue badge holders do not pay to park in Council car parks if they have a valid badge and display it – they are not affected by reintroduction of charges. There is a wide range of assistance products available to people with disabilities such as large button phones and devices to allow those with sight loss to use computers. |
| 3. Gender Reassignment | No impact Evidence: not aware of any impact on people with this characteristic. |
| 4. Marriage and Civil Partnership | No impact Evidence: not aware of any impact on people with this characteristic. |
| 5. Pregnancy and Maternity | No impact Evidence: not aware of any impact on people with this characteristic. |
| 6. Race | No impact Evidence: not aware of any impact on people with this characteristic. |
| 7. Religion of belief | No impact Evidence: not aware of any impact on people with this characteristic. |
| 8. Sex | No impact Evidence: not aware of any impact on people with this characteristic. |
| 9. Sexual Orientation | No impact Evidence: not aware of any impact on people with this characteristic. |
| Other e.g. deprivation, health inequalities, urban/rural divide, community safety | Neutral. There is no evidence to suggest that people suffering financial deprivation are less likely to have a mobile phone than other sectors of society. Car ownership is closely related to income, with much lower levels of car ownership among households in the bottom 20% of gross |

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| | income; and among households in social rented housing. People suffering financial deprivation are therefore less likely to pay car parking charges than others. |
| Conclusion | Is a full assessment required? NO |
| Signed IR Miller | Date 20 May 2020 |
| Agreed | Date |
| A full EqIA is required if the initial screening has identified the service/policy/project is going to have the potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community or the Council's workforce. | |

Protected characteristics: definitions

Prior to the Equality Act 2010, there were 3 separate public sector equality duties covering race, disability and gender. The Equality Act 2010 replaced these with a new single equality duty covering the following protected characteristics:

Age – where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

Disability – a person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment – the process of transitioning from one gender to another.

Marriage and civil partnership – marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.

Pregnancy and maternity – pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race – it refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief – religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism).

Sex – a man or a woman.

Sexual Orientation – whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.