



Please ask for Brian Offiler  
Direct Line: 01246 345229  
Fax: 01246 345252  
Email: [democratic.services@chesterfield.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@chesterfield.gov.uk)

**NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TO BE MADE**  
21 June 2017

The following Executive Decisions are due to be made by the DEPUTY LEADER  
on WEDNESDAY, 21 JUNE 2017.

Part 1(Public Information)

1. Approval of Amended Corporate Concessions Policy (J030) (Pages 3 - 22)

Reports relating to the decision(s) to be taken are attached to this notice, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. A meeting will not necessarily take place when the decision is made. Please contact Democratic Services for more information.

This page is intentionally left blank

## **For publication**

### **Approval of amended corporate concessions policy (JO30)**

---

Meeting:	Deputy Leader
Date:	21 June, 2017
Cabinet portfolio:	Deputy Leader
Report by:	Policy and Communications Manager

---

#### **1.0 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To approve a minor amendment to the council's concessions policy.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the revised corporate concessions policy is approved and implemented.

#### **3.0 Background**

- 3.1 At the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016 Cabinet meeting, Councillor J Barr, Scrutiny Project Group Leader presented a report and recommendations of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum on how Chesterfield Borough Council offered concessions on fees and charges made on chargeable services. The review had examined the consistency, fairness and objectives in the provision and application of concessions across council services. The full report is available [here](#).

- 3.2 Cabinet approved in principle all of the recommendations of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum report on Concessions on Fees and Charges, but that before the implementation of any resolution that could have a financial implication to the Council, further investigation on the impact is carried out by officers and brought to Cabinet for consideration.
- 3.3 A member and officer working group was established to investigate this issue further and to develop a corporate policy on concessions.
- 3.4 The new concessions policy was agreed by Cabinet on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016 for implementation from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017. The Deputy Leader was also given delegated authority to approve minor policy amendments in between the formal review periods (every two years).

#### **4.0 Proposed change to the concessions policy**

- 4.1 Generally the new concessions policy has been working well across all relevant service areas. However a best practice equality and diversity consideration has emerged regarding concessions for performances and events.
- 4.2 Following discussions with customers of Chesterfield theatres and consideration of best practice from other service providers we are recommending the introduction of a new concessions category for essential companions.
- 4.3 The essential companion concession aims to enable all patrons to equally participate with dignity and respect at our events and performances. It also enhances the safety and enjoyment of customers who require a companion to assist them in accessing events and facilities.
- 4.4 The concession is not open to, or intended for, those who simply require a companion to assist with transportation to and from the venue, or to keep them company. The scheme is not offered to anyone who can cope independently in a public venue.

4.5 The Essential Companion's primary role is to assist the customer with mobility or guidance, to enable them to use and enjoy the services at the venues. The essential companion is expected to attend to the needs of the customer at all times whilst on the premises.

4.6 The revised concessions policy is attached at appendix A.

## **5.0 Financial considerations**

5.1 This small change to the policy only applies to a very small number of customers and will not impact significantly on income or costs.

## **6.0 Risk management**

6.1 The main risks associated with the proposed change are shown in the table below:

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
Loss of custom from customers requiring essential companions.	Low	High	Proposed change to the policy would mitigate this risk.	Low	Low
Increased numbers of people claiming concessions impacting on income generation.	Low	Low	The proposed change applies to a very small number of customers so will have very limited impact on impact generation.  This is be monitored by the service manager.  The policy change could increase the number of people accessing events which could have a	Low	Low

			positive impact on income generation.		
Reputation damage and potential legal challenge. Concerns have been raised by some of our customers regarding accessibility if essential companion concessions are not considered.	Medium	Medium	The proposed changes to the policy will give venues staff the flexibility to provide concessions for essential companions.	Low	Low

## **7.0 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was produced for the original concessions policy. This has been updated to reflect the proposed policy change and is available at appendix B.

## **8.0 Recommendations**

- 8.1 That the revised corporate concessions policy is approved and implemented.

## **9.0 Reasons for recommendations**

- 9.1 To ensure a consistent approach to concessions within discretionary services while retaining the flexibility needed to achieve the Council's social and legal obligations, as well as its commercial needs.
- 9.2 To improve accessibility to our events and performances.

### **Decision information**

<b>Key decision number</b>	<b>Non-key decision</b>
----------------------------	-------------------------

<b>Wards affected</b>	<b>ALL</b>
-----------------------	------------

### **Document information**

<b>Report author</b>	<b>Contact number/email</b>
<b>Donna Reddish – Policy and Communications Manager</b>	<a href="mailto:Donna.reddish@chesterfield.gov.uk"><u>Donna.reddish@chesterfield.gov.uk</u></a>
<b>Appendices to the report</b>	
Appendix A	Revised Concessions Policy
Appendix B	Equality impact assessment

This page is intentionally left blank



# Concessions Policy

## **Policy statement**

Chesterfield Borough Council is committed to ensuring a consistent approach to how we charge for discretionary services while retaining the flexibility needed to achieve the Council's social and legal obligations, as well as its commercial needs. All concessions offered will support the

strategic aims and objectives of the Council in accordance with the approved Council Plan and Medium Term Financial plan.

## **1. Policy context**

- 1.1 Legislation allows the Council to choose to provide certain services to the public in the interest of the council's area and its citizens. We refer to these services as discretionary services. The Council may choose to charge for these services and choose to provide a concession on that charge. The definition of concession in this policy means any reduction in price from the full service charge that has been agreed for social reasons.
- 1.2 This concessions policy sits alongside any agreed corporate Charging Policy that the Council adopts, and has regard to the principles of the Audit Commission's publication 'positively charged'.
- 1.3 The policy expects that decisions to vary the rate of concessions for discretionary services will be made in support of the council's priorities and strategic objectives. Objectives may include the need to influence public behaviour, address inequalities of access to services due to financial or other disadvantage, as well as to manage demand and competition to sustain and improve service offer.
- 1.4 In meeting the Council's priorities, this concessions policy therefore provides for both social and commercial considerations in the setting of concession rates. Whilst providing fair access to services for disadvantaged people, the policy aims to encourage a commercial approach to the use and application of concessions to help secure longer term service sustainability, improvement and choice where possible.
- 1.5 The policy promotes the funding of concessions from service user charges and away from the general tax payer - where that is possible to achieve without detrimental impact on the service. In line with the council's corporate Charging Policy a commercial approach will help support the council in its need to become self-sufficient by the year 2020.

## **2. Policy principles**

- The cost and loss of income by providing concessions should be offset by income generated by services paid for at the full rate and surplus from higher demand services.  
This principle is underpinned by the priority to maximise income to sustain and improve services where possible.
- All discretionary services have the freedom to vary the rate of concession offered in order to manage service delivery and demand, competition and improvement opportunities. The unit cost should form part of this consideration.

- Services should only grant concessions to customers after entitlement of eligibility has been confirmed.
- Information about concessions will be provided to service user on request.

### **3. Policy scope and exclusions**

- 3.1 Chesterfield Borough Council offers a variety of discretionary services where concessions are available; these are detailed in section 6. The concession rate and type varies for different services depending on the outcome aimed for within the service e.g. to encourage participation, to address inequalities of access, to manage demand etc.
- 3.2 In setting concessions, this policy accepts that there will be a need to vary concession rates to help manage service delivery and demand, to cover discretionary service costs and for commercial reasons. Services will have the freedom to vary concessions in accordance with the requirements of this policy.
- 3.3 Discounts and other offers made for commercial reasons only (such as corporate memberships, promotional discounts, frequent user discounts and/or other group discounts, or to promote bulk purchase and early or pre-payments) are excluded from this policy. Such commercially driven concessions (discounts) will be guided by the council's corporate charging policy.
- 3.4 No concessions falling within this policy will apply to the customers of any organisations hiring use of the council's services or venues, for example to hold organised events, productions or classes, unless by prior negotiation and agreement with the service to ensure all costs to the council are covered.

### **4. Responsibilities and policy review**

- 4.1 Service Managers will report to Cabinet at least annually on their proposed concessions as part of the council's budget setting process and the setting of fees and charges for services. This should include the reasons for the concession and their expected outcomes i.e. how they will contribute to the Council's priorities. The report should also include an impact assessment of any previous concessions offered in order to inform decision making. The policy expects Service Managers to be able to evidence their pricing approach through undertaking benchmarking with other comparable facilities and services, through service usage statistics, and service user surveys, as appropriate.
- 4.2 Responsibility for reviewing this Policy will be that of the Policy and Communications Manager in consultation with the responsible Cabinet Member(s) and Chief Financial Officer. In light of constantly changing financial pressures and other circumstances this policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis as necessary, but at least every two years.

## 5.0 Concessions eligibility criteria

5.1 Services may offer a range of concessions to service users based on low income, age and other key categories. The table below shows the category and evidence requirements for obtaining concessions.

Concession category	Evidence required
<b>Income based:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income Support</li> <li>Income Based Job Seekers Allowance</li> <li>Council Tax Benefit</li> <li>Housing Benefit</li> <li>Universal Credit (with no earned income)</li> <li>Universal Credit (with housing element )</li> <li>Employment Support Allowance</li> <li>Severe Disablement Allowance</li> <li>Universal Credit (no work capability element)</li> <li>Full time students</li> </ul>	<p>Award letter within the last 12 months from the Department of Work and Pensions.</p> <p>An entitlement notice from Local Authority/ Council within the last 12 months highlighting a reduced charge owing to any of the benefit entitlements / criteria.</p> <p>A valid full time student ID card.</p>
<b>Age:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People at or over the national state retirement age and in receipt of state pension</li> <li>Children and young people under the age of 16</li> <li>Care leavers under the age of 25.</li> </ul>	<p>Photographic ID, Pension book/ award letter within the last 12 months from the Department of Work and Pensions.</p> <p>Photographic ID.</p> <p>Letter / Entitlement Notice from the relevant Local Authority.</p>
<b>Other:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active armed forces members</li> <li>A carer in receipt of carers' allowance, carers credit or carers premium (when accompanying the person registered to care for).</li> <li>Essential companion - this concession exists to enable all patrons to equally participate, with dignity and respect at events and performances. The purpose of the concession is to ensure the safety and enjoyment of those customers who require a companion to assist them in accessing the facilities for events and performances.</li> </ul>	<p>Photographic armed forces ID card.</p> <p>Award letter within the last 12 months from the Department of Work and Pensions.</p> <p>Discussion with booking staff. The concession is not open to, or intended for, those who simply require a companion to assist with transportation to and from the venues, or to keep them company. The scheme is not offered to anyone who can cope independently in a public venue. The Essential Companion's primary role is to assist the customer with mobility or guidance, to enable them to safely attend</p>

	and enjoy the event or performance. The Essential Companion is expected to attend to the needs of the customer at all times whilst on the premises.
--	---

## 6.0 Services where concessions are available

Service	Concession					
	Income based	State retirement age	Under 16	Care leavers under 25	Armed Forces	Carers
Queen's Park Sports Centre	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Healthy Living Centre	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Productions and events at sports centres.	Subject to negotiations made with promoters – please contact the sports centres for information on particular events.  Essential companion concession may also apply.					
Productions and events at the Winding Wheel and Pomegranate Theatre.	Subject to negotiations made with promoters – please contact the venues booking office for information on particular events.  Essential companion concession may also apply.					
Museum service chargeable events e.g. ghost walks	Subject to negotiations made with promoters – please contact the museum for information on particular events.  Essential companion concession may also apply.					
Hire of Pomegranate Theatre, Winding Wheel, Assembly Rooms and Hasland Village Hall.	Concessionary hiring rates for community and voluntary sector organisations.					
Community Room hire	Concessionary hiring rates for community and voluntary sector organisations.					



Pest Control	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Bulky waste collection	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Cemeteries and cremation	×	×	✓ (under 17)	×	×	×

## **Chesterfield Borough Council**

### **Equality Impact Assessment - Full Assessment Form**

Service Area: Policy and Communications

Section: Policy and Overview and Scrutiny

Lead Officer: Donna Reddish / Anita Cunningham

Title of the policy, project, service, function or strategy the preliminary EIA is being produced for: Corporate Concessions Policy

Is the policy, project, service, function or strategy:

Existing ☐

Changed ☐

New/Proposed ☒ Updated at 02.06.17

#### **STEP 1 – MAKE SURE YOU HAVE CLEAR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

What is the aim of the policy, project, service, function or strategy?

The main aim of the Concessions Policy is to ensure one corporate approach to the determination and application of service charge concessions, for its discretionary services. This will provide consistency and clarity of approach across the relevant council services. The policy provides a framework to ensure concessions on service charges support the strategic aims and objectives of the council.

Who is the policy, project, service, function or strategy going to benefit and how?

Aligned with the council's strategic aims and objectives as included in the Council Plan and medium term financial plans, the policy will benefit the users of council services. In the main this includes people who live, work and/or study in Chesterfield, but also includes visitors to the area. Concessions apply to a variety of people based on income disadvantage, age and other key groups.

People that meet specific eligibility criteria to receive a concession will benefit from the reduced rate of charge which will help make services more affordable and therefore more accessible to them providing more equal opportunity for social involvement.

What outcomes do you want to achieve?

Regarding outcomes from the introduction of the policy, more clarity and consistency across the council is needed in the application of concessions. Achieving this includes identifying and using one set of eligibility criteria, most of which are based on the current, national benefits system and eligibility, taking account of benefits changes such as the migration of many benefits to the new Universal Credit benefits system.

Regarding policy outcomes for those people meeting the disadvantaged criteria specified in the policy concessions will provide an inducement to use the services in the interests of their general wellbeing by creating greater equality of access, social inclusion, physical and mental health improvement, and education and learning. This will directly assist the council in meeting a number of its social responsibilities, and strategic aims and objectives.

What barriers exist for both the Council and the groups/people with protected characteristics to enable these outcomes to be achieved ?

The policy will adversely affect discretionary service users who are aged over 60 as they will lose automatic access to a concession based on this criteria. The policy is moving towards a national state pension age criteria.

In place of automatic eligibility for those aged 60 or over, eligibility has been amended to apply solely to those people receiving state pension. Those people affected by this change may still meet eligibility criteria for other concessions detailed within the policy, for example they may apply for an income concession.

There are financial barriers to the council due to ongoing control and reductions by government of local government funding, alongside the requirement for the council to become self funded by 2020. The council needs to more carefully target its resources to areas of most need and review and adjust its policies accordingly.

## **STEP 2 – COLLECTING YOUR INFORMATION**

What existing data sources do you have to assess the impact of the policy, project, service, function or strategy?



Research information has been undertaken to help inform the development of this policy for its maximum success. This research includes data collected from the Scrutiny Project Group's work which looked into matters associated with the determination and application of concessions on service charges. Further research of the CIPFA (former Audit Commission) nearest neighbours has been undertaken to compare policy approach.

The subsequent report and recommendations of the council's Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum's report to Cabinet with associated EIA provide further research information gathered. This includes statistics from the national IMD index which ranks Chesterfield as 85<sup>th</sup> most deprived out of 326 authorities, and 25<sup>th</sup> most deprived for health and disability specifically, whilst also having significant employment and income challenges.

The policy will require data to be collected to enable evaluation of the impact and review of the policy. The policy requires Service Managers to have suitable methods in place to collect this data. This information will then be used to inform both decisions to vary concession rates, and to the ongoing review of the policy.

### STEP 3 – FURTHER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Please list any additional engagement activities undertaken to complete this EIA e.g. met with the Equalities Advisory Group, local BME groups, Employee representatives etc. Could you also please summarise the main findings.

Date	Engagement Activity	Main findings
Meetings held 16.5.16 28.6.16 14.9.16	Policy Working Group	This Policy Working Group was established to consider the concessions policy and associated EIA. The Working Group comprises both elected councillors and employee representatives (i.e. Service Managers). Findings identify that there are different equalities needs affecting different council services. This supports the need for a corporate policy which provides a framework within which services can make flexible and responsive decisions, to ensure all services meet the council's equalities obligations. However for all services to take one single approach to application of concessions eligibility and their rates could have very detrimental effect on service delivery / cost of service delivery. Findings also include some difficulties in evidencing eligibility and the need to reprioritise eligibility for senior citizens.
	Research	CIPFA (former Audit Commission) nearest neighbours family group. Findings indicate that most of these local authorities have moved away from automatic eligibility for all people aged 60+, and have aligned their senior citizen concessions

		eligibility to people receiving state pension. Concession rates vary across different local authorities and different services, ranging from no concession to 50% concession, or even free service in some cases. Regarding the migration of means tested benefits to Universal Credit, little evidence was found to indicate the approach other councils are taking.
20.09.16	Financial Planning Group	Discussion regarding principles and financial considerations emerging from the policy and draft EIA. The importance of impact assessment and prioritisation in line with the Council Plan and medium term financial plan were emphasised.
01.04.17	Learning from 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter policy implementation including customer interaction.	Minor change recommended to the policy to improve accessibility to events and performance for disabled people – introduction of essential companion category.

#### **STEP 4 – WHAT’S THE IMPACT?**

Is there an impact (positive or negative) on some groups/people with protected characteristics in the community? (think about race, disability, age, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation and other socially excluded communities or groups). You may also need to think about sub groups within each equalities group or protected characteristics e.g. older women, younger men, disabled women etc.

Please describe the potential impacts both positive and negative and any action we are able to take to reduce negative impacts or enhance the positive impacts.

<b>Group or Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>Positive impacts</b>	<b>Negative impacts</b>	<b>Action</b>
Age – including older people and younger people.	The Policy offers an inducement to encourage access to and inclusion of older and younger people in discretionary council services.	The older age eligibility criteria has been increased to state pension age. This means some people aged 60 or over, who are not receiving state pension, will lose access to a concession offered solely on this criteria.	<p>Service users should be informed of the change.</p> <p>Service users should also be informed of the other concessionary categories, or other discounts, which they may be eligible for.</p> <p>Promote the policy to all the council's discretionary services making a charge.</p>
Disabled people – physical, mental and sensory including learning disabled people and people living with HIV/Aids and cancer.	The Policy offers an inducement to encourage access to and inclusion of disabled people in discretionary council services. Eligibility criteria specifically includes concessions for Carers accompanying disabled people.	No impacts identified.	<p>Promote the policy to all the council's discretionary services making a charge.</p> <p>Introduction of the essential companion category to improve access to events and performances.</p>
Gender – men, women and transgender.	No impacts identified.		
Marital status including civil partnership.	No impacts identified.		

Pregnant women and people on maternity/paternity. Also consider breastfeeding mothers.	No impacts identified.		
Sexual Orientation – Heterosexual, Lesbian, gay men and bi-sexual people.	No impacts identified.		
Ethnic Groups	No impacts identified.		
Religions and Beliefs including those with no religion and/or beliefs.	No impacts identified.		
Other groups e.g. those experiencing deprivation and/or health inequalities.	The Policy offers an inducement to encourage the inclusion of financially disadvantaged and disabled groups in discretionary council services offered.	No impacts identified.	Promote the policy to all the council's discretionary services making a charge.

From the information gathered above does the policy, project, service, function or strategy directly or indirectly discriminate against any particular group or protected characteristic?

Yes ☒  
No ☐

If yes what action can be taken to stop the discrimination?

## STEP 5 – RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISION MAKING

How has the EIA helped to shape the policy, project, service, function or strategy or affected the recommendation or decision?

An EIA formed part of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum's Scrutiny Project Group's work and report considered by Cabinet on 7.1.16. The recommendations in that report were supported in principal by Cabinet subject to some further review work leading to the appointment of this working group to develop a corporate Concessions Policy. Equalities issues were considered throughout the scrutiny investigation and have continued to be considered by the Concessions Policy Working Group throughout the development of this policy. Given that council services are delivered in the public interest, the EIA has helped to focus the development of the policy on the public interest, particularly those more disadvantaged and or vulnerable in society who have greater need. In this way the EIA helps place the councils social and legal responsibilities in relation to equalities, at the centre of the policy.

How are you going to monitor the policy, project, service, function or strategy, how often and who will be responsible?

The council's Policy and Communications Manager will be responsible for ongoing monitoring and review of the policy in accordance with the Council's scheme of delegation. The full review of the policy will take place at least every 2 years.

This page is intentionally left blank