

# Chesterfield Borough Council

## Equality Impact Assessment - Full Assessment Form

Section: Scrutiny  
Lead Officer: Anita Cunningham/Martin Elliott

Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum report on Concessions and Fees and Charges

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

Existing   
Changed X  
New/Proposed

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

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

This review looks at how Chesterfield Borough Council offers concessions on the fees and charges it makes on chargeable services. The review aims to look at the consistency, fairness, and objectives in the provision and application of concessions across these services. It will help the council deliver sustainable services across these facilities.

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

The review of concessions and the recommendations of the project group will benefit residents (and visitors to leisure and cultural venues) of Chesterfield who access services who offer concessions on fees and charges. The updating of concessionary categories across services to include entitlement to universal credit will help equality of access to concessions as more residents are transferred to the new benefit. The simplifying of the advertised list of concessionary categories could also help to assist more residents who are entitled to concessions become aware that they are entitled and therefore improve these residents access to services.

What outcomes do you want to achieve?

To produce recommendations and guidance that will contribute to the development of a clear corporate policy on setting concessions that ensures equality of access to services but which also does not harm the financial position of the Council.

To ensure that services use a consistent approach to setting concessions on fees and charges.

To ensure equality of access to Council services to all residents and visitors.

For the policy on concessions and fees and charges to be informed by, and to reflect the changes to benefits happening with the introduction of Universal Credit in Chesterfield.

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

The proposed changes to concessions will adversely affect residents and visitors to the theatres who are aged over 60 as they will lose access to concessionary rates based on age. Those aged over 60 who are financially disadvantaged would still receive a concession based on one of the other concessionary categories.

## STEP 2 – COLLECTING YOUR INFORMATION

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

Data was collected and analysed from Chesterfield's "family group" of councils (North East Derbyshire, Bassetlaw, Mansfield and Gloucester).

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015 shows that Chesterfield Borough is the 85<sup>th</sup> most deprived out of 326 authorities for overall deprivation. Chesterfield Borough is ranked 25<sup>th</sup> most deprived for health and disability and has significant employment and income challenges. This is particularly of concern for the working age population including those with children. Income deprivation affecting older people has reduced within Chesterfield Borough.

The impact of the policy will be monitored by the individual service areas (Theatres, Pest Control, Waste Management and Leisure) normal processes used to monitor uptake of their services.

## 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
August 2015	Consultation with Community Assembly members.	20 responses received. Summary of findings attached.
1 September, 2015	Meeting with Cabinet Member for Governance	<p>Offering concessions based on purely on being aged 60 and over is contrary to equalities policy.</p> <p>Concessions offered, should be offered across services at a similar level and eligibility should be based on income.</p> <p>With regard to offering concessions to people on disability benefits there was a complicated picture. Many disability benefits are not counted as income when</p>

		<p>assessing other benefits like council tax and housing benefit so this results in those on disability benefits being on a relatively high income. There will be people in work and not in receipt of any benefits used to assess eligibility for concessionary rates on a lower income. Is it equality that they should get a concession when someone on less income does not?</p>
20 August, 2015	Meeting with Sports and Leisure Manager	<p>CBC chooses to offer concessions and apply social pricing. Removing these would be a risk and could adversely affect health and wellbeing of residents, increase crime, anti-social behaviour etc.</p> <p>The calculation on what concession to make is based on a policy made 10+ years ago. A Derbyshire wide scheme was set up to address health problems and to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.</p> <p>Noted that the policy on concessions needs to be clear and understandable to service users.</p>
August, 2015	Project group	<p>Current concessions lists are too complex and hard to understand.</p>

## **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.	<p>Under the proposals, all ages will be brought into line.</p> <p>The simplifying of the advertised list of concessionary categories will help improve access to services, as they will be clearer and easier to understand by all.</p>	Some over 60's will lose access to concessionary rates, however under the new proposals, they will not be treated any more or less favourably than any other group.	Services need to need to ensure the service users who accessed a concessionary rate on the basis of age are advised of the change and that they are informed of the other concessionary categories which may be applicable to them.
Disabled people – physical, mental and sensory including learning disabled people and people living with HIV/Aids and cancer.	<p>The simplifying of the advertised list of concessionary categories will help improve access to services, as they will be clearer and easier to understand by all.</p> <p>People in receipt of Universal Credit, with no earned income, and Universal Credit with a housing element included will now qualify for concessions.</p>	None identified.	<p>Sport and Leisure will review the published list of categories giving entitlement to concessionary rates so that the list is shorter, clearer and easier to understand by service users.</p> <p>Concessionary categories for all services will be updated to include the categories of Universal Credit, with no earned income, and Universal Credit with a housing element included.</p>

<b>Group or Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>Positive impacts</b>	<b>Negative impacts</b>	<b>Action</b>
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.	IMD 2015 data clearly shows the need for our services to be accessible to people experiencing deprivation or health inequalities. People in receipt of benefits including universal credit will still be entitled to receive concessions in order to access our services.		Concessionary categories for all services will be updated to include the categories of Universal Credit, with no earned income, and Universal Credit with a housing element included.

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?

If the recommendation to end concessions to those aged 60 and over on the basis of age is approved then people over 60 will lose access to concessionary rates on that basis, however the removal of concessions based purely on age will be comparatively fairer to other age groups who do not qualify for concessions. The new proposal will bring all ages under the same umbrella of entitlement, and will not discriminate any particular age group.

People aged over 60 though who are financially disadvantaged will still be able to access concessionary rates via one of the other concessionary categories, including those the new Universal Credit. To ensure that this group does not lose access to concessionary rates at Leisure Centres and Theatres, these service users will be advised of the change and will be informed of the other concessionary categories which may be applicable to them.

The simplifying of the advertised list of concessionary categories at the leisure centres will help improve access to services, as they will be clearer and easier to understand by all.

## 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?**

The EIA was completed after the scrutiny review had taken place, however throughout the process of the review the project group were mindful of equalities considerations and consulted with the Cabinet Member for Governance with respect to equalities to inform their considerations. The project group also referred to the council's Equality Diversity and Social Inclusion Policy when considering their recommendations.

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



The monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations will be undertaken by the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum; this monitoring will include monitoring the impact of the recommendations. The impact of the policy will be monitored by the individual service areas (Theatres, Pest Control, Waste Management and Leisure) normal processes used to monitor uptake of their services.

## **STEP 6 – KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND PUBLICATION**

Please note the draft EIA should be reviewed by the appropriate Head of Service/Service Manager and the Policy Service before WBR, Cabinet Member, Cabinet, Council reports are produced.

### Reviewed by Head of Service/Service Manager

Name:

Date:

### Reviewed by Policy Service

Name: Richard Gadsby

Date: 06/01/16

Final version of the EIA sent to the Policy Service

Decision information sent to the Policy Service

## **Summary of the Community Assembly responses**

### **Question 1**

**Were you previously aware that Chesterfield Borough Council offers concessionary rates on the following services?**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Bulky Waste</b>	40%	60%
<b>Leisure</b>	55%	45%
<b>Pest Control</b>	40%	60%
<b>Theatres</b>	65%	35%

### **Question 2**

**Which services do you think Chesterfield Borough Council should offer concessions on?**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Bulky Waste</b>	85%	15%
<b>Leisure</b>	70%	30%
<b>Pest Control</b>	80%	20%
<b>Theatres</b>	70%	30%

## **Summary of Comments to the questions:**

**If you think that concessions should be offered, on what basis should they be offered?**

and

**If you think concessions should not be offered on services why is this?**

- Concessions should be given on the basis of need by the applicant.
- Concessions should not be based on age solely but on disability and income, there are lots of well off pensioners.
- I think bulky waste and pest control should be paid for in full regardless of income or age.
- Concessions should be given on the basis of need by the customer.

- Low income only. Although me and my wife are OAP's we and many other elderly people can afford to pay the full price.
- There is at this time limited finance available, and we think that concessions should only be made available on necessities and then only to those who genuinely cannot afford them.
- Concessions should only be offered to children and students in full time education on leisure services and theatres. Except for children and students all other people have an income from wages allowances, pensions.
- Bulky waste collection should be reduced for the disabled, also for older people.
- Concessions for those on low income. Seems to be an assumption that elderly are financially disadvantaged, this is not necessarily so.
- Concern that removing concessions for bulky waste and pest control will lead to infestations and fly tipping.
- Support for concessions for disabled for bulky waste and pest control.
- We must keep the Winding Wheel and Pomegranate open at all costs
- Theatres are for pleasure and not an essential service.
- I think bulky waste and pest control should be paid for in full regardless of age.
- Support for concessions over 60, under 18 and on low income <£15,000.
- Theatres, its only entertainment. But support for concession based on being 60+.

- Concessions should only be offered to children and students in FTE on leisure and theatres.
- I don't generally agree with concessions for the elderly. A large number of over 65s are better off than younger people. It does include, though, those who are living solely off of state pensions who should definitely receive concessions.
- It should be based on income – and not just for those out of work. I'm not sure how you would evidence that though for people who are working and on low income (a sector which should be given high priority!) I assume that under-18s would receive concessions on Theatre / Leisure services.
- (Concessions) only for over 65's in the case of disability and or low income, some pensioners are financially very well off.
- To stop fly tipping offer concessions to all age groups on bulky waste collections. Also pest control as building infestations could spread if not controlled.
- Low income only.