



Equality impact of 2023/24 draft budget proposals: summary

November 2022

Contents

Overview	2
List of draft budget proposals and summary of equality impact	3
Annex 1: Equality Impact Assessments	9
Proposal: To increase Council Tax by the referendum limit (£5 per Band D property)	10
Proposal: Savings from a reduction in VCS funding (Stripey Stork)	16
Proposal: Savings from a reduction in VCS funding (Citizens Advice Reigate & Banstead)	21
Proposal: Savings from a reduction in VCS funding (services provided by Age Concern Banstead, Age Concern Merstham, Redhill & Reigate, and MHA East Surrey Communities)	26
Proposal: Changes to room hire charges in community centres	34
Proposal: Increase in car park charges	44
Proposal: Increase in fees for issuing of Summons and obtaining Liability Orders for Council Tax and Business Rates.....	51

Overview

This document provides an assessment of the equality implications of the Council's draft budget proposals for 2023/24.

For those proposals where it has been identified that there may be an impact on those with protected characteristics, a draft Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared. These assessments are provided at Annex 1. They will be finalised following the draft budget consultation, updated as required and provided to assist members in taking a decision on the final budget proposals in early 2023.

List of draft budget proposals and summary of equality impact

Council Tax

Service or function	Description	Initial impact assessment
Revenues, Benefits & Fraud / Finance	To increase Council Tax by the referendum limit (which the Government has confirmed to be up to a 3% increase which equates to £7.25 per year for a Band D property)	May impact on those with protected characteristics, a full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken.

Services: Pay

Service or function	Description	Initial impact assessment
Customer Contact	Saving from deletion of a vacant post	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Communications	Saving from deletion of a vacant post	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Finance	Saving from team restructure	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Human Resources	Forecast savings from planned review of team (FTE saving details TBC)	None identified at this stage, proposals will need to be assessed once more information is available.
Legal	Saving from deletion of a vacant post	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
IT	Saving from deletion of a vacant post	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided

Planning	Saving following salary budget review	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Economic prosperity	Growth as a result salary budget review	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Place Delivery	Capitalisation of salary costs	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Neighbourhood Operations	Growth as a result of deletion of historic capitalised salary budget	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Revenues, Benefits & Fraud	Saving following salary budget review	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Community Partnerships	Saving following salary budget review	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Emergency Planning	Growth as a result of confirmation of funding for Emergency Planning resource in the base budget	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided

Services: Non-Pay

Service or function	Description	Initial impact assessment
Communications	Growth to cover additional data protection expenses	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
IT	Growth to cover software licence fee increases	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Property	Rental grant subsidy budget alignment	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided

Property	Savings from reduction in printing / postage costs	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Electoral Services	Alignment of budgets with the forecast baseline cost of administering a borough Council election	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Democratic Services	Implementation of Independent Remuneration Panel recommendations 2023/24	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Corporate Policy	Sustainability budget saving	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Building Control	Reduction in this Council's Partnership contribution in line with the business plan	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Planning & Development	Income increase – planning performance agreements	None, optional service for developers
Neighbourhood Operations	Small works assistance scheme – transfer from capital programme to revenue budget	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Neighbourhood Operations	Licensing budget – alignment with forecast income	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Neighbourhood Operations	Budget saving from SCC's decision to cease the highways grass cutting contract	None identified – SCC will continue to maintain verges to statutory standards
Neighbourhood Operations	Off street parking – budget alignment with forecast income receipts	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided

Neighbourhood Operations	Garden waste – budget alignment with forecast income receipts	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Place Delivery	Various non-pay budget savings	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Economic Prosperity	Grants to local businesses – to be funded in future through a call on revenue reserves	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Community Partnerships	Voluntary and Community Sector funding review	May impact on those with protected characteristics, a full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken
Community Partnerships	Various non-pay budget savings	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Leisure & Intervention	Increased Harlequin income target	None identified at this stage, individual proposals will need to be assessed.
Leisure & Intervention	Deletion of historic budget for contribution to a Surrey-wide initiative that is no longer required	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Leisure & Intervention	Income increase – location filming at Council premises	None identified at this stage, individual proposals will need to be assessed.
Leisure & Intervention	Income increase – contracted increase in the management fee received from the Leisure Management Provider	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Housing	Contribution from Homelessness Prevention grant funding	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided

Revenues, Benefits & Fraud	Reduction in the service's legal cost budgets	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Revenues, Benefits & Fraud	Software licence fee increase	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided

Changes to fees and charges

Service	Description	Initial impact assessment
Planning & Development	Fee increase – pre-application fees	None, optional service for those considering development
Planning & Development	New charge – street naming and numbering	None, service primarily used by developers, optional service for residents
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – taxi and private hire licences (vehicle, operator and driver), includes some new (optional) charges	None, changes proposed to ensure cost recovery and to address inflationary costs
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase - Mobile home site licences	None, charges apply to owners and operators of sites which are generally run as commercial businesses
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – allotments	None, charge increase limited to lower than inflation and represents marginal increase overall.
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – cemeteries	None, changes proposed to ensure cost recovery and to address inflationary costs
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – outdoor events	None, changes proposed to ensure cost recovery and to address inflationary costs

Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – sports pitch fees	None, changes proposed to ensure cost recovery and to address inflationary costs
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase - banner advertising	None, optional service for organisations
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – car parking charges and permits	May impact on those with protected characteristic, a full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken
Neighbourhood Operations	New charge – Town Hall pay and display on weekdays	None, car park is not currently available on weekdays
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – bulky waste collections	None, optional service
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – garden waste	None, optional service
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – waste containers and sacks	None, lower than inflation increase to cover rising costs
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – trade waste	None, optional service for commercial businesses
Community Partnerships	Fee changes – Community Centres room hire	May impact on those with protected characteristics, a full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken
Revenues, Benefits & Fraud	Fee increase – summons and liability orders	May impact on those with protected characteristic, a full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken



Annex 1: Equality Impact Assessments

Proposal: To increase Council Tax by the referendum limit (up to a 3% increase which equates to £7.25 per year per Band D property)

Introduction

This document summarises – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s draft Equality Impact Assessment for the proposal to increase Council Tax by the referendum limit (up to a 3% increase which equates to £7.25 per year per Band D property) for 2023/24, including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

The proposal was assessed by the Revenues, Benefits & Fraud Service in November 2022.

Summary of the proposal

To increase the Reigate & Banstead Borough Council element of Council Tax by the Government-set referendum limit from 1 April 2023. This is anticipated to be £5 for the average Band D property.

Council Tax is reviewed annually as part of the Service & Financial Planning exercise. The increase for the financial year 2023/24 is being proposed due to the financial challenges being faced by the Council due to the withdrawal of government revenue support grant and the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on Council income streams and inflationary increases on costs. Further explanation of the funding pressures faced by the Council is included in the draft budget report provided to the Executive in November 2022.

Assessment of Relevance

The Stage 1 Relevance Assessment has concluded the following:

- The proposal will not introduce a change which will affect how services or functions are delivered
- The proposals will affect people – for example service users, employees or the wider community

The group of people which will be affected by the proposal has been identified as all residents.

This proposal affects all persons who are liable to pay Council Tax in respect of their home (residential address), including those properties which are currently empty. The list of liable parties is maintained in the Council Tax system. The Borough Equality Profile on the Council website provides information about the protected characteristics of all residents within the borough.

The proposal will affect any resident who pays Council tax, including any residents with one or more of the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act.

The following Equality Duty aims have been identified as being relevant for this assessment:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.

Overall, the relevance assessment has concluded that this proposal has a relevance to equality of Moderate. The outcome of the relevance assessment is therefore that a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Equality Impact Assessment

It has been identified that:

- The proposal in question does not intentionally target one or more protected characteristic groups.
- The proposal does not intentionally exclude one or more protected characteristic groups.
- The proposal does not have the potential to reduce inequality or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups (although note that support is available for some residents in respect of Council Tax payments).

Information about the protected characteristics of the intended audience and/or people who might be affected

In summary, the following information is available about the protected characteristic groups of the intended audience and / or people who might be affected by the proposal

Age

General information about the age profile of borough residents who are owner occupiers is available from the Census and ONS mid year estimates and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report, which is available on the Council's website at www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/equality.

Disability

General information about the disability characteristics is available from the Census and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Gender reassignment

General information about the representation of trans-people in the population generally is available from national and regional annual population survey data from the ONS, however is not currently available at a borough level. National and regional data is reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Marriage and civil partnership

General information about borough residents' partnership arrangements is available from the Census and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Pregnancy and maternity

General information about live births and lone parents in the borough is available from the Census and other ONS data sources and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Race or ethnicity

General information about the ethnicity of the borough's residents is available from the Census and the ONS Annual Population Survey and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

General information about the religion and/or beliefs of borough residents is available from the Census and the ONS Annual Population Survey and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Sex

General information about the gender profile of borough residents is available from the Census and ONS mid year estimates and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Sexual orientation

General information about the representation of trans-people in the population generally is available from national and regional annual population survey data from the ONS, however is not currently available at a borough level. National and regional data is reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Other vulnerabilities

Information about the geographic spread of deprivation across the borough is available from the Index of Multiple Deprivation, which is reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report. Specific information about those receiving Council Tax support is also held by the Council.

Consultation

In preparing the proposal, consultation is planned to take place via the annual draft budget public consultation exercise undertaken by the Council.

Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts

The proposed Council Tax increase will affect all residents who have a liability for Council Tax. For those residents on low income, the Local Council Tax Support scheme is in place to provide support in the form of reductions in the liable amount, and further reductions can also be applied under discretionary powers contained in Section 13(1)(C) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. Children and persons under the age of 18 are not legally liable for Council Tax and therefore not affected by this proposal

Assessment of potential impact

This section summarises our assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on protected characteristic groups.

Age

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to age, and no positive impact in relation to age. Elderly residents facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Disability

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to disability, and no positive impact in relation to disability. Disabled residents facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Gender reassignment

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to gender reassignment, and no positive impact in relation to gender reassignment. Trans residents facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Marriage and civil partnership

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership, and no positive impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership. Regardless of their partnership status, residents facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Pregnancy and maternity

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity, and no positive impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity. Pregnant women and mothers facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Race or ethnicity

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to race or ethnicity, and no positive impact in relation to race or ethnicity. Residents from ethnic minority groups facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to religion or belief, and no positive impact in relation to religion or belief. Residents with religious beliefs or none facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Sexual orientation

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to sexual orientation, and no positive impact in relation to sexual orientation. Residents of any sexual orientation facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Other vulnerabilities

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to other vulnerabilities, and no positive impact in relation to other vulnerabilities. Vulnerable residents facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Monitoring and review

The Local Council Tax Support scheme is in place to support all residents who are on a low income and experiencing financial hardship. Residents that already receive support through this scheme will see their support increased in line with the increase. Additionally, reductions of Council Tax liability can also be made at the discretion of the Council under relevant legislation.

The Council will monitor numbers of residents in receipt of Council Tax support to ensure their continued effectiveness. Council tax rates are reviewed annually.

Proposal: Savings from a reduction in VCS funding (Stripey Stork)

Introduction

This document summarises – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s draft Equality Impact Assessment for the reduction in funding to Stripey Stork, including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment. The proposal has been assessed by the Community Partnerships Team in November 2022.

Summary of the proposal

The proposal is to reduce the Council’s annual £3000 grant funding for Stripey Stork to £1000 from 2023/24. Stripey Stork is a ‘baby bank’ providing clothing, baby essentials and equipment such as pushchairs, cots, school bags etc to families in financial difficulty. They can provide clothing and essential items for children 0-18 and some maternity clothing.

The Community Partnerships Team has been tasked with reviewing voluntary sector grants and identifying savings as part of the Council Financial Sustainability Programme. The reduction in annual grant that Stripey Stork receive has been identified as one of the savings proposals.

Assessment of Relevance

The Stage 1 Relevance Assessment has concluded the following:

- The proposal will not introduce a change which will affect how Council services or functions are delivered but may impact the delivery of third party VCS services, which may in turn affect people who rely on those third party services.

The groups of people which might be affected by the proposal have been identified as – directly - Stripey Stork as an organisation, which will receive less funding from the Council.

Stripey Stork has indicated that it will need to fundraise further to fill the gap of this reduction. The organisation has indicated that the VCS funding landscape is currently reduced and competitive. In addition, donations are down as a reflection of the wider cost of living crisis. This may mean that filling this funding gap is a challenge. If they were unable to fill this gap this could mean they can only respond to fewer referrals and/or have reduced stock to supply to families. Several Council teams (Housing, Family Support, Community Development)

refer residents to Stripey Stork so a reduction in funding could have an impact on these referrals

The following evidence, information and/or engagement has been used to assess the proposal for its relevance to equality:

- Information provided to the Council by organisations about the people that use their services.

The protected characteristic groups that could be affected by the proposal are:

- Pregnancy and maternity
- People with other vulnerabilities

The following Equality Duty aims have been identified as being relevant:

- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Overall, the relevance assessment has concluded that this proposal has a relevance to equality of Moderate. The outcome of the relevance assessment is therefore that a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Equality Impact Assessment

The proposal in question does not directly target one or more protected characteristic groups, however families and children experiencing deprivation and pregnant women on low incomes access the support from Stripey Stork. A reduction in their funding may have an impact on the number of people they are able to support and reduction to their offer, unless the funding gap can be filled.

The proposal does not intentionally exclude one or more protected characteristic groups. It has been identified that the proposal does not have the potential to reduce inequality or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups.

Information about the protected characteristics of the intended audience and/or people who might be affected

In summary, the following information is available about the protected characteristic groups of the intended audience and / or people who might be affected by the proposal.

The services Stripey Stork provide are demand led. That demand has increased over recent years and if they are unable to fill the funding gap caused by this proposal it could have an impact on keeping up with demand. We are aware that funding streams for VCS has reduced and competition has increased so there is a possibility that other funding streams will be harder to come by for this organisation. All referrals to Stripey Stork will be for children and families in need and they will be on low incomes and likely to be living in areas of deprivation. We cannot say the numbers of service users that would have protected characteristics, but we anticipate a significant proportion would be likely to fall into a protected group.

Pregnancy and maternity

General information about live births and lone parents in the borough is available from the Census and other ONS data sources and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Other vulnerabilities

In 2021/22 Stripey Stork received 3498 referrals and provided goods worth a total of £240,200 to families on a low income. The funding provided by the Council represents 0.3% of their gross income (based on 2021 accounts).

Consultation

A meeting was held with all voluntary sector commissioned services in July 2022 to let them know about the context of a funding review and to ask for their input into the process. Stripey Stork along with the other commissioned organisations were asked to complete a funding review survey to better understand how they might manage a funding reduction. Stripey Stork told us that the immediate impact of this funding reduction would be the pressure to fill the gap with additional fundraising. It would not cause any services to reduce or end but would increase the pressure on fundraising. There will be a public consultation on this proposal as part of the budget consultation for 2023/24.

Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts

A £2000 reduction in funding to Stripey Stork will increase the need to secure other external funding or fundraising to maintain their current response level. This task has become more difficult due to the wider pressures on funding for the voluntary sector nationally in part due to the cost-of-living pressures. In 2023/24 the Council will seek to develop plans to launch other funding schemes to support the local VCS such as a local lottery model. This could potentially offer another source of future funding. The Council will continue to offer Stripey

Stork other in-kind support such as access to meeting rooms, low cost printing and storage space for the Santa Stork project.

Assessment of potential impact

This section summarises our assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on protected characteristic groups.

Age

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to age.

Disability

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to disability.

Gender reassignment

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to gender reassignment.

Marriage and civil partnership

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership.

Pregnancy and maternity

The assessment has indicated a potential disproportionate negative impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity.

It is hard to identify the scale of impact this funding reduction could have as it will be dependent on operational decisions and the success of alternative fundraising. The funding provided by the Council is a small percentage of their overall income so it would be hoped this funding gap could be filled.

In terms of action to address any potential negative impact the Council will continue to offer other support to Stripey Stork including property during Santa Stork and Discretionary Rate Relief.

Race or ethnicity

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to race or ethnicity.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to religion or belief.

Sex

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to sex.

Sexual orientation

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to sexual orientation.

Other vulnerabilities

The assessment has indicated a potential disproportionate negative impact in relation to other vulnerabilities, specifically those on lower incomes.

It is hard to identify the scale of impact this funding reduction could have as it will be dependent on operational decisions and the success of alternative fundraising. The funding provided by the Council is a small percentage of their overall income so it would be hoped this funding gap could be filled.

In terms of action to address any potential negative impact the Council will continue to offer other support to Stripey Stork including property during Santa Stork and Discretionary Rate Relief.

Monitoring and review

The Community Partnerships Team will go back to Stripey Stork next year to understand if the funding reduction has had negative consequences such as a reduction in number of families supported or the amount of goods they are able to provide.

Stripey Stork to monitor the impact of funding across the year. The Council Partnerships team will explore the possibilities of developing other funding sources such as a community lottery or crowdfunding. This may offer alternative funding that Stripey Stork could apply for.

Proposal: Savings from a reduction in VCS funding (Citizens Advice Reigate & Banstead)

Introduction

This document summarises – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s draft Equality Impact Assessment for reduction in funding to Citizens’ Advice Reigate & Banstead, including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

The proposal has been assessed by the Community Partnerships Team in November 2022.

Summary of the proposal

To reduce the annual £111,000 grant for Citizens Advice Reigate & Banstead (CARB) by 15% to £94,500 from 2023/24. CARB provide information, advice and guidance free of charge to residents of the borough. This is delivered, online, over the phone, face to face and via outreach work. CARB provide advice on a huge variety of legal and financial concerns and provide advice on benefits, employment and debt.

The Community Partnerships Team has been tasked with reviewing voluntary sector grants and identifying savings as part of the Council Financial Sustainability Programme. The annual grant that Citizens Advice Reigate & Banstead has been identified for a 15% reduction.

Assessment of Relevance

The Stage 1 Relevance Assessment has concluded the following:

- The proposal will not introduce a change which will affect how Council services or functions are delivered but may impact the delivery of third party VCS services, which may in turn affect people who rely on those third party services.

The groups of people which might be affected by the proposal have been identified as – directly – CARB as an organisation, which will receive less funding from the Council.

CARB offers advice and guidance to all residents of the borough, free of charge. Their services are most commonly accessed by residents in financial hardship or isolated from other services due to ill health or disability. CARB service users will be likely to fall into multiple protected characteristic groups. CARB have told us that this funding reduction will lead to a reduced staff and volunteer offer across the week and a reduced offer will impact access to this service. In the past year CARB responded to 17,480 issues and demand has increased year on year across the past 3 years. Partner agencies and Council departments may also be impacted by the funding reduction as other services will frequently refer residents to CARB.

The following evidence, information and/or engagement has been used to assess the proposal for its relevance to equality:

- Information provided to the Council by organisations about the people that use their services.

The protected characteristic groups that could be affected by the proposal are vulnerable residents who may need services from CARB.

The following Equality Duty aims have been identified as being relevant:

- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Overall, the relevance assessment has concluded that this proposal has a relevance to equality of Moderate. The outcome of the relevance assessment is therefore that a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Equality Impact Assessment

The proposal in question does not directly target one or more protected characteristic groups, however proposal will reduce the funding of CARB. CARB have told us that this reduction in funding will lead to reduced staff/adviser hours and thus a reduced service unless they are able to fill the funding gap. This potential reduction in service will indirectly impact residents with protected characteristics that are in need of advice and guidance if there is a reduced/limited service.

The proposal does not intentionally exclude one or more protected characteristic groups. It has been identified that the proposal does not have the potential to reduce inequality or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups.

Information about the protected characteristics of the intended audience and/or people who might be affected

In summary, the following information is available about the protected characteristic groups of the intended audience and / or people who might be affected by the proposal.

It is difficult to fully assess the impact of this funding reduction. CARB may be able to access additional funding, but we know that other funding sources for VCS have reduced or will be targeted to new projects rather than core costs. CARB have told us that this funding reduction would lead to a service reduction as they would need to reduce staff and volunteer time. At this stage we are unable to be specific amount the number of residents with protected characteristics that could be impacted but we know that the service is likely to be used by residents with a variety of needs.

In 2021/22 CARB supported 4456 residents with 17,480 issues. The most common needs are benefits advice, universal credit support, debt and employment advice and guidance. CARB have told us a reduction in funding will reduce the number of issues they are able to respond to as it will reduce paid adviser time and volunteer hours. In the past year the Council provided 25% of CARB's overall income but this will vary this year as other funding streams are coming to an end. We do not have data to inform how many residents with different protected characteristics access CARB but it is likely that residents with a variety of protected characteristics will use CARB.

Consultation

There was a meeting with all VCS Commissioned Services in July to tell them about the funding review and seek their input into the impact of a funding reduction. All commissioned organisations including CARB were asked to complete a survey to tell us about the likely impact of funding reductions. In October a meeting was held with CARB to tell them about initial proposals for a funding reduction and the next steps. There will be a public consultation on this funding reduction proposal as part of the budget for 2023/24. CARB have told us that a reduction in funding will lead to reduced adviser and volunteer hours unless they are able to access additional funding to use for core costs.

Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts

The Council will be exploring other opportunities to create funding for the local voluntary sector such as developing a local lottery. This may be able to offer some future funding to CARB if it is established. The Council will continue to offer in-kind support to VCS organisations such as meeting room hire and low cost printing.

The Council can also ensure that support and advice services (including CARB) are widely advertised so that residents still have services they can contact free of charge for advice across the week.

Assessment of potential impact

This section summarises our assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on protected characteristic groups.

Age

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to age.

Disability

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to disability.

Gender reassignment

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to gender reassignment.

Marriage and civil partnership

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership.

Pregnancy and maternity

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity.

Race or ethnicity

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to race or ethnicity.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to religion or belief.

Sex

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to sex.

Sexual orientation

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to sexual orientation.

Other vulnerabilities

The assessment has indicated a potential disproportionate negative impact in relation to other vulnerabilities.

CARB has indicated that they will have to reduce paid adviser time by 3 days and this will mean that 12 volunteers will be unable to offer advice on those days. It may also result in a reduction in opening hours at the Redhill CARB office. All residents are able to access universal advice and guidance via CARB but they specifically support vulnerable residents with low income that may not have access to other sources of support.

The Council will continue to work with CARB and support the local advice service offer via networking groups that can identify common issues and seek collaboration on key areas of development

Monitoring and review

The impact of the proposal and progress towards the delivery of identified actions will be monitored as follows.

The impact will be monitored via quarterly meetings with CARB and review of their monitoring scorecard. Grant monitoring tracks the number of clients and issues as well as types of need so we will be able to see if client and issue numbers reduce as a result of this funding reduction. CARB also share staff and volunteer hours so we can see how these are impacted by the proposed funding reduction.

Monitoring information will help us identify issues, needs and gaps. The Council Partnerships team will research options for creating other funding sources such as a community lottery or crowdfunding. These models may be able to provide additional funding for CARB in the future if our review identifies a negative impact.

Proposal: Savings from a reduction in VCS funding (services provided by Age Concern Banstead, Age Concern Merstham, Redhill & Reigate, and MHA East Surrey Communities)

Introduction

This document summarises – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s draft Equality Impact Assessment for the reduction in funding for older people’s services (Age Concern Banstead, Age Concern Merstham, Redhill & Reigate, and MHA East Surrey Communities), including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

The proposal has been assessed by the Community Partnerships Team in November 2022.

Summary of the proposal

The proposal is to reduce the amount of funding paid to the commissioned older people’s service providers (Age Concern Banstead, Age Concern Merstham, Redhill & Reigate, and MHA East Surrey Communities) by £10,000 in total. Proposed reductions per organisation are as follows:

- Age Concern Banstead: Reduction from £10,000 to £7,500 – a reduction in £2,500 or 25%
- Age Concern Merstham, Redhill & Reigate: Reduction from £15,000 to £11,250 – a reduction in £3,700 or 25%
- MHA East Surrey Communities: Reduction from £15,000 to £11,250 – a reduction in £3,700 or 25%

The three organisations provide services, accessible to all people over the age of 55 years, to help reduce loneliness and isolation as well as volunteering opportunities to support residents to remain active and engaged with the local community.

The Community Partnerships Team has been tasked with reviewing voluntary sector grants and identifying savings as part of the Council Financial Sustainability Programme. The reduction in annual grant that the three older people’s service providers receive has been identified as one of the savings proposals

Assessment of Relevance

The Stage 1 Relevance Assessment has concluded the following:

- The proposal will not introduce a change which will affect how Council services or functions are delivered but may impact the delivery of third party VCS services, which may in turn affect people who rely on those third party services.

The groups of people which might be affected by the proposal have been identified as – directly – the three organisations, which will receive less funding from the Council.

Indirectly, the proposal may therefore impact older residents who use the organisations to access support and friendship, helping maintain independence, improve well-being and reduce isolation and loneliness. In 2021/22 the organisations delivered 2684 befriending sessions, there were 4293 attendances at group sessions and 5463 journeys were provided. There were 9321 volunteer hours given to the older people's services. In year membership increased by 288 people, YTD Sept'22 there have been 153 new members access services. The average age of the members is 75+, the majority of whom are frail and with limited alternative support.

The following evidence, information and/or engagement has been used to assess the proposal for its relevance to equality:

- Quarterly monitoring meetings are held with each of the three commissioned services. They are each required to produce a scorecard providing data on financial viability, paid & volunteer hours, number of service users for both group and individual activities, new referrals, promotion of their services and contribution to the sector. They also report on their successes, customer insight / needs analysis as well as risks, challenges and concerns. These quarterly reviews provide valuable insight into the provision of service and unmet need in the borough. The three partners each have different operational models. With some services being more in depth whilst others are light touch. Some services are able to recover costs whilst others are delivered free of charge e.g information and advice, befriending, bereavement and dementia support

The protected characteristic groups that could be affected by the proposal are Age and Disability, along with older residents with other vulnerabilities.

The following Equality Duty aims have been identified as being relevant:

- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Overall, the relevance assessment has concluded that this proposal has a relevance to equality of Moderate. The outcome of the relevance assessment is therefore that a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Equality Impact Assessment

The proposal in question does not directly target one or more protected characteristic groups, however proposal will reduce the funding of older persons' services.

The proposal may impact indirectly on people with the protected characteristic of age, disability and vulnerability. A reduction in funding may have an impact on the range of services that the organisations are able to provide, especially those that do not generate income e.g., bereavement support, befriending. The majority of service users are frail elderly residents who require support to maintain social interactions, thereby reducing loneliness and isolation.

The proposal does not intentionally exclude one or more protected characteristic groups. It has been identified that the proposal does not have the potential to reduce inequality or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups.

Information about the protected characteristics of the intended audience and/or people who might be affected

In summary, the following information is available about the protected characteristic groups of the intended audience and / or people who might be affected by the proposal.

The services provided by the three older people's service providers are demand led. That demand has increased over recent years and if they are unable to fill the funding gap caused by this proposal it could have an impact on keeping up with demand. We are aware that funding streams for VCS have reduced, and competition has increased so there is a possibility that other funding streams will be harder to come by for these organisations. Most referrals to these older people's service providers will be for frail elderly people in need and they are likely to be on low incomes and likely to be living with limited support from family and friends.

Age

The RBBC Equality Information: Borough Characteristics 2021 indicates that 18.3% of borough residents are age 65 or over (27,296 residents). Projections suggest that the older population will increase considerably over the next 20 years

It is estimated, based on service user data for the first six months of 22/23, that 1,660 unique service users will engage with the 3 service providers during the year. This is in addition to the 250 volunteers who find a sense of fulfilment and connectivity through volunteering with the services. (In total 7% of the population over 65 years of age are either service users or volunteers).

In 2021/22 the income generated by the three organisations was:

- Age Concern Banstead - £31,362
- Age Concern Merstham, Redhill and Reigate - £133,033
- MHA -£65,170

The proposed reduction in funding is equivalent to:

- Age Concern Banstead – 8% of annual income
- Age Concern Merstham, Redhill and Reigate - 3% of annual income
- MHA – 6% of annual income

Disability

The RBBC Equality Information: Borough Characteristics 2021 provides general information about the disability characteristics of the borough's population.

Monitoring of service users by the three organisations suggests that a significant number of service users have long term health conditions associated with old age, including mobility, frailty and hearing and sight loss.

Other vulnerabilities

The RBBC Equality Information: Borough Characteristics 2021 provides general information about the distribution of deprivation across the borough.

Monitoring of service users by the three organisations suggests that a significant number of services users live alone and do not have local family support available to them. A reduction in service provision may increase their isolation and vulnerability.

Consultation

The three older people's service providers were made aware of the potential cut to their budgets and were asked to say what the impact of this may be on service delivery.

- Age Concern Banstead report that a 25% cut in Council funding would result in reduced hours of the visiting staff, which is a service which cannot self-fund (some

services are chargeable but never recovers full costs (e.g., lunch clubs) and some are non-chargeable (e.g., information /advice). The cuts would impact on activities such as lunch clubs, befriending, benefit support, bereavement support and dementia support. More time would need to be given to fundraising activities and bid writing as opposed to service delivery and partnership working

- Age Concern Merstham, Redhill and Reigate has indicated that any reduction in RBBC funding would need to be sought from other external funding bids, as the option to increase charges for their services would exclude people who are already severely struggling financially.
- MHA Communities has indicated that a 25% cut would mean they would have to stop their weekly lunch club at Horley Community Centre and reduce the hours for their Horley focussed Community Coordinator which would impact on other Horley activities (twice monthly pub lunches in Horley and matching members with volunteers for active face to face companionship). MHA Communities is advocating for a tapered cut if a cut has to happen. The organisation has also indicated that any cut will reduce the ability to focus on partnership working with other older people's organisations as more focus will need to be on fundraising.

Service users and stakeholder will be able to provide feedback as part of the public consultation on the draft budget.

Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts

The three older people's service providers could seek to close the funding gap from increased fundraising activities or by reducing costs by reducing the services they offer or a combination of both.

The Council can help to publicise and promote other service providers operating within the borough, including the three council owned community centres.

The Council maintains a webpage providing details of support for Older People

https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20074/health_and_wellbeing/1264/support_for_older_people_or_vulnerable_people.

Assessment of potential impact

This section summarises our assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on protected characteristic groups.

Age

The assessment has indicated a potential disproportionate negative impact in relation to age. The proposed funding cuts will impact the organisations capacity to offer services for frail, elderly people who are experiencing loneliness and isolation and do not have alternative resources to meet these needs.

The following action will be taken to address this potential impact:

- The 3 Commissioned services will signpost to other providers working across Surrey.
- The organisations will seek to increase their fundraising.
- The three Council Community Centres will continue to offer and develop free and low-cost activities for older people.
- The older people services steering group will continue to work on identifying and addressing common issues that will support and develop the local offer to older people.
- The Council maintains a webpage with information about services for vulnerable and older people https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20074/health_and_wellbeing/1264/support_for_older_people_or_vulnerable_people/10

Disability

The assessment has indicated a potential disproportionate negative impact in relation to disability. A significant number of service users have long term health conditions associated with old age, including mobility, frailty and hearing and sight loss.

The services provided, by the 3 older people's services providers, are universal. With the exception that, service users must be capable of entering and exiting the building, and where provided transport, with minimal support and are not in need of personal care (they can take themselves to the toilet), there is no assessment of disability when providing services.

The following action will be taken to address this potential impact:

- The 3 Commissioned services will signpost to other providers working across Surrey.
- The organisations will seek to increase their fundraising.
- The three Council Community Centres will continue to offer and develop free and low-cost activities for older people including those with disabilities.
- The older people services steering group will continue to work on identifying and addressing common issues that will support and develop the local offer to older people including those with disabilities.

- The Council maintains a webpage with information about services for vulnerable and older people (including those with disabilities) https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20074/health_and_wellbeing/1264/support_for_older_people_or_vulnerable_people/10

Gender reassignment

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to gender reassignment.

Marriage and civil partnership

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership.

Pregnancy and maternity

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity.

Race or ethnicity

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to race or ethnicity.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to religion or belief.

Sex

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to sex.

Sexual orientation

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to sexual orientation.

Other vulnerabilities

The assessment has indicated a potential disproportionate negative impact in relation to other vulnerabilities, specifically vulnerable older residents.

A significant number of services users live alone and do not have local family support available to them. A reduction in service provision may increase their isolation and vulnerability. Whilst data exists on the number of older people claiming single person Council tax discount over the age of 65, we do not have the data on the number of people who live alone and access these services.

The following action will be taken to address this potential impact:

- The 3 Commissioned services will signpost to other providers working across Surrey.
- The organisations will seek to increase their fundraising.
- The three Council Community Centres will continue to offer and develop free and low-cost activities for vulnerable older people.
- The older people services steering group will continue to work on identifying and addressing common issues that will support and develop the local offer to vulnerable older people.
- The Council maintains a webpage with information about services for vulnerable and older people https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20074/health_and_wellbeing/1264/support_for_older_people_or_vulnerable_people/10

Monitoring and review

The Partnerships Team will continue to meet with the three older people's service providers to monitor the impact of funding cuts across the year. The Partnerships Team will explore opportunities to create a local lottery fund to support VCS organisations.

Monitoring information will help us identify issues, needs and gaps. If there are concerns about the impact of this change we can work with the older people's service providers and other older people's service providers, via the Older People Services Steering group to propose changes or developments that could be considered as part of future service development. The Council Partnerships team will seek to explore other funding models such as a community lottery or crowdfunding model. This may provide additional funding pathways that could provide funding to these organisations if negative impact to local older people was identified in the review

Proposal: Changes to room hire charges in community centres

Introduction

This document summarises – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s draft Equality Impact Assessment for proposals to change room hire charges at its Community Centres, including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

The proposal has been assessed by the Community Partnerships service in November 2022.

Summary of the proposal

The proposal is to update the charges for room hire at the Council’s three community centres (Horley, Woodhatch and Banstead) in order that there is greater transparency and consistency in the charges (including private and community hire rates), that the charges where possible fully recover associated costs, and that the levels of charges are set with an understanding of the hire costs of competitor facilities.

The community centres returned to the Council in April 2020, having been outsourced to a charity from 2016 – 2020. Fees and charges have not been reviewed since the centres have returned to back to the Council. Historically there has been a lot of local discretion at centre level, which dates back to the charity-run period, and even to the period pre-2016 where whilst the centres were funded by the Council, they were operationally managed by management committees.

The community centres have been through a transformation programme since their insourcing in 2020. As a result of the disruption of the Covid pandemic, a review of fees and charges has not happened until now. The transformation, approved at Executive in July 2021, set out the vision for the centres to be community centres for all rather than centres focussing on an older age group. As the centres evolve to meet this political direction, it is timely to review fees as there is a particular focus on new hirers, as well as ensuring that longer established hirers are paying an appropriate fee for the space that they use.

Assessment of Relevance

The Stage 1 Relevance Assessment has concluded the following:

- The proposal will introduce a change which will affect how services or functions are delivered

- The proposals will directly affect existing and potential hirers of the spaces, which includes private individuals, small businesses (often sole traders such as exercise instructors), and partner organisations.
- The proposal also has the potential to indirectly affect individuals if:
 - through the changes to fees and charges any current hirers choose to cease their use of the community centres. In such circumstances, the activity may relocate to a non-RBBC premises which may be equally accessible to current service users. If the activity does not relocate (or does not relocate to an equally accessible non-RBBC premises) then there may be some impact on individuals.
 - The hirers choose to pass on any increased hire costs to their individual service users

The groups of people which might be affected by the proposal have been identified as:

- Residents
 - Residents on occasion privately hire spaces within our community centres and we are aiming for this to happen more in future.
 - Residents also are users of our centres and the activities within them. Where those activities are run in spaces hired by private or community users, residents would be indirectly impacted by the changes in hire fees if the hirer sought to pass these higher costs on to their service users or if the hirer stopped running the activity at the community centre. The impact would potentially be minimal if the activity relocated to a competitor premises in the locality.
- Local businesses
 - Local businesses such as sole trading exercise instructors, beauticians, etc currently hire spaces in our community centres. The majority of hire charges will be increasing by between 5% and 10%, with charges decreasing in a few instances, and a few instances where increases will be above 10%. In these instances it reflects a heavy discretionary discount having been applied to the advertised hire charge by the previous charitable operator.
- Partners (including voluntary/community/faith sector organisations)
 - Partner organisations including NHS organisations, food banks, older people's organisations and young people's charities currently hire spaces in our community centres. The majority of hire charges will be increasing by between 5% and 10%, with charges decreasing in a few instances, and a few instances where increases will be above 10%. In these instances it reflects a heavy discretionary discount having been applied to the advertised hire charge by the previous charitable operator

Information about current room hirers has been used to assess the proposal for its relevance to equality.

Anyone who currently hires a room may be impacted by the changes, regardless of whether or not they have any protected characteristics. However, evidence indicates that organisations supporting older people and that support disadvantaged residents currently hire rooms.

The following Equality Duty aims have been identified as being relevant:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act

Overall, the relevance assessment has concluded that this proposal has a relevance to equality of Moderate, and therefore a stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Equality Impact Assessment

The proposal in question does not intentionally target one or more protected characteristic groups.

The proposal does not intentionally exclude one or more protected characteristic groups.

It has been identified that the proposal does have the potential to reduce inequality or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups, as the proposal addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for current hirers.

Information about the protected characteristics of the intended audience and/or people who might be affected

In summary, the following information is available about the protected characteristic groups of the intended audience and / or people who might be affected by the proposal. We have limited information about the specific protected characteristics of all those who hire rooms although good information about the groups and businesses that hire rooms regularly. It may be possible to collect further equalities data on an 'opt in' basis.

Age

Information about who currently hires the rooms suggests that partner organisations including NHS organisations, food banks, older people's organisations and young people's charities current hire spaces in our community centres. Currently there is a high proportion of activity

users who are older people, although a growing number of newer family focused activities in particular at Woodhatch Community Centre.

Disability

Information about who currently hires the rooms suggests that partner organisations including NHS organisations, food banks, older people's organisations and young people's charities current hire spaces in our community centres. Currently there is a high proportion of activity users who are older people, who may have some mobility issues or other disabilities.

Gender reassignment

Those that hire the spaces includes a range of residents, activity providers and businesses but no specific information is available about the gender reassignment characteristics of current room hirers.

Marriage and civil partnership

Those that hire the spaces includes a range of residents, activity providers and businesses but no specific information is available about the partnership characteristics of current room hirers.

Pregnancy and maternity

A growing number of newer family focused activities are using our community centres in particular the centre at Woodhatch.

Race or ethnicity

Those that hire the spaces includes a range of residents, activity providers and businesses but no specific information is available about the race or ethnicity characteristics of current room hirers.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

Those that hire the spaces includes a range of residents, activity providers and businesses but no specific information is available about the religion / belief characteristics of current room hirers

Sex

Those that hire the spaces includes a range of residents, activity providers and businesses but no specific information is available about the sex or gender of current room hirers.

Sexual orientation

Those that hire the spaces includes a range of residents, activity providers and businesses but no specific information is available about the sexual orientation of current room hirers.

Other vulnerabilities

Partner organisations including NHS organisations, food banks, older people's organisations and young people's charities currently hire spaces in our community centres. Some of the hirers, in particular food banks, support disadvantaged residents.

Consultation

In preparing the proposal, consultation is planned as part of the public consultation on the draft 2023/24 budget.

Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts

The transformation programme implemented by the Council aims to make our community centres welcoming for all rather than just focusing on the older age group. The proposal addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for current hirers.

Assessment of potential impact

This section summarises our assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on protected characteristic groups.

Age

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to age.

Although partner organisations providing services for older and younger people currently hire spaces, and residents who may be older or younger may also currently hire spaces, no disproportionate impact has been identified.

The majority of hire charges will be increasing by between 5% and 10%, with charges decreasing in a few instances, and a few instances where increases will be above 10% due to a heavy discretionary discount having previously been applied.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity

users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends.

The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Disability

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to disability.

Although partner organisations providing services for older people who may have disabilities currently hire spaces, and residents who may have disabilities may also currently hire spaces, no disproportionate impact has been identified.

The majority of hire charges will be increasing by between 5% and 10%, with charges decreasing in a few instances, and a few instances where increases will be above 10% due to a heavy discretionary discount having previously been applied.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends.

The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Gender reassignment

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to gender reassignment.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may well relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends. The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses

inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Marriage and civil partnership

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to marriage or civil partnership.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may well relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends. The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Pregnancy and maternity

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to pregnancy or maternity.

Although partner organisations providing services for young or growing families currently hire spaces, and residents who have families may also currently hire spaces, no disproportionate impact has been identified.

The majority of hire charges will be increasing by between 5% and 10%, with charges decreasing in a few instances, and a few instances where increases will be above 10% due to a heavy discretionary discount having previously been applied.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends.

The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Race or ethnicity

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to race or ethnicity.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may well relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends. The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to religion or belief.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may well relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends. The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Sex

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may well relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends. The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses

inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Sexual orientation

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to sexual orientation.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may well relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends. The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers

Other vulnerabilities

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to residents with other vulnerabilities.

Although partner organisations providing services for disadvantaged residents currently hire spaces, no disproportionate impact has been identified.

The majority of hire charges will be increasing by between 5% and 10%, with charges decreasing in a few instances, and a few instances where increases will be above 10% due to a heavy discretionary discount having previously been applied.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends.

The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring will be undertaken of the impact of the changes to hire charges on patterns and users of room hire.

Charges will be regularly reviewed to ensure that they comply with the Council's fees and charges policy – as part of this, the results of monitoring (patterns and users of room hire). If this monitoring suggests a disproportionate negative impact on any protected characteristic groups, it would be possible for the Council to consider discretionary reductions.

Proposal: Increase in car park charges

Introduction

This document summarises – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s draft Equality Impact Assessment for changes to car park charges, including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

The proposal has been assessed by the Neighbourhood Services team in October 2022.

Summary of the proposal

The proposal is to increase the fees and charges in the off-street car parks owned and managed by the Council. This relates to the amounts charged for pay and display tickets and the amount charged for season tickets. On average prices are proposed to increase by 10% however due to rounding of figures the exact % increase for different time periods may be slightly higher or lower than this. In real terms, the price increase (as it is a % increase) is greater for longer term stays, therefore the cost increase to residents wishing to use council car parks for short stay trips (eg to run errands) will be small (on average 10p for a stay of up to 1 hour).

Off street parking and season ticket fees and charges have not been increased since 2016, a potential increase in 2019 was delayed by the pandemic, which affected revenue severely as people worked from home for the duration.

Assessment of Relevance

The Stage 1 Relevance Assessment has concluded the following:

- The proposal will not introduce a change which will affect how services or functions are delivered
- The proposals will affect people who normally use council car parks for their parking.

The group(s) of people which might be affected by the proposal includes residents and businesses that may use the Council’s pay and display car parks. Additionally local businesses near the car parks may be affected.

Information is not held about the demographic or equality characteristics of pay and display car park users. However it is possible that those with limited mobility or with childcare responsibilities are more reliant on private car and therefore our car parks. Blue badge

holders are not required to pay for any parking in the RBBC car parks. Those on lower or no incomes may have a reduced ability to pay additional costs.

A detailed breakdown of the real cost of the % increase has been undertaken to determine the cost implication for different stay lengths at different car parks.

The protected characteristic groups that could be affected by the proposal have been identified as older people, those with disabilities, pregnant women or parents/carers with small children, along with residents with other vulnerabilities.

The following Equality Duty aims have been identified as being relevant:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Overall, the relevance assessment has concluded that this proposal has a relevance to equality of Low however a stage 2 equality impact assessment has been undertaken to consider any potential issues or mitigation arising.

The reason for a conclusion of low is:

- Those who hold a blue badge and who would therefore fall within the protected characteristics of age and/or disability are not required to pay for any parking.
- Parking charges have not been increased since 2016 and the proposed increases therefore do not exceed inflationary trends over this period. The real cost increase for short-stay trips (for example to enable residents to carry out errands) is on average 10p for a 1 hour stay. It remains the case that other parking and transport opportunities are also available for those who do not wish to pay this increased charge.

Equality Impact Assessment

The proposal in question does not intentionally target one or more protected characteristic groups.

The proposal does intentionally exclude one or more protected characteristic groups, specifically the changes will not impact those with Blue Badges who are exempt from paying charges in the Council's off street car parks.

It has been identified that the proposal does not have the potential to reduce inequality or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups. Whilst it could be considered that those with Blue Badges (ie with disabilities) could be better off as a result, this is because everyone else will be required to pay slightly more for parking.

Information about the protected characteristics of the intended audience and/or people who might be affected

In summary, the following information is available about the protected characteristic groups of the intended audience and / or people who might be affected by the proposal

Age

ONS mid year estimates suggest that there are 27296 RBBC residents aged 65 or over (18.1% of the total population). More information about ward level distribution is provided in the Borough Equality report available at www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/equality.

Disability

1.6% of the population of the South East hold blue badges, so based on population of RBBC (149243) there are approx 2388 blue badge holders eligible for free parking in RBBC car parks.

Gender reassignment

General information about the representation of trans-people in the population generally is available from national and regional annual population survey data from the ONS, however is not currently available at a borough level. National and regional data is reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Marriage and civil partnership

General information about borough residents' partnership arrangements is available from the Census and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Pregnancy and maternity

General information about live births and lone parents in the borough is available from the Census and other ONS data sources and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Race or ethnicity

General information about the ethnicity of the borough's residents is available from the Census and the ONS Annual Population Survey and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

General information about the religion and/or beliefs of borough residents is available from the Census and the ONS Annual Population Survey and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Sex

General information about the gender profile of borough residents is available from the Census and ONS mid year estimates and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Sexual orientation

General information about the representation of trans-people in the population generally is available from national and regional annual population survey data from the ONS, however is not currently available at a borough level. National and regional data is reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Other vulnerabilities

The Index of Multiple Deprivation - in 2019, Reigate & Banstead borough was ranked 276 out of 317 local authorities (where 1 = the most deprived). There are areas of RBBC where deprivation appears in the top 20% nationally.

Consultation

The process of raising fees and charges for off street parking includes a four week consultation period published in the local press (Surrey Mirror), online and notices placed at the car parks. Comments raised as a result are considered prior to implementation of any rise.

Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts

In preparing the proposal, the following actions have been taken to increase the positive impacts for people with protected characteristics:

A survey of car park users for the various sites could be considered to tease out the information on car park usage by the protected and vulnerable in future.

In preparing the proposal, the following actions have been taken to reduce potential negative impacts on people with protected characteristics:

Any rise in price is carefully considered so that as few people as possible are excluded from the car parks, this does however affect those with the least disposable income, a group not included within protected characteristics.

The Council will continue to enable those with Blue Badges to park for free, meaning that less mobile older people or those with disabilities will be unaffected by the price rises.

More generally, the Council is continuing to work with Surrey County Council to encourage walking and cycling as an alternative means of travel to reduce reliance on the private car, and to promote and support public transport usage. This includes through the provision of new walking/cycling infrastructure in town centres and other support to encourage behaviour change. This will provide more viable alternatives for those on lower incomes to avoid or minimise fuel and/or parking costs

Assessment of potential impact

This section summarises our assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on protected characteristic groups.

Age

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to age. Disproportionate negative impact is avoided by the continuation of fee Blue Badge parking for older residents with mobility issues as well as continued work with SCC to encourage active travel as an alternative to the private car. It remains the case that other parking and transport opportunities are also available for those who do not wish to pay this increased charge

Disability

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to disability. Disproportionate negative impact is avoided by the continuation of fee Blue Badge parking for residents with disabilities.

Gender reassignment

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate impact in relation to gender reassignment.

Marriage and civil partnership

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership.

Pregnancy and maternity

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity. It remains the case that other parking and transport opportunities are available for those who do not wish or are not able to pay the increased charge. In real terms the price increase for essential short (1hr) stays is small (10p on average). Continued work is ongoing with SCC to encourage active travel as an alternative to the private car.

Race or ethnicity

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate impact in relation to race or ethnicity.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate impact in relation to religion or belief.

Sex

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate impact in relation to sex.

Sexual orientation

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate impact in relation to sexual orientation.

Other vulnerabilities

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate impact in relation to other vulnerabilities, specifically those facing financial hardship. It remains the case that other parking and transport opportunities are available for those who do not wish or are not able to pay the increased charge. In real terms the price increase for essential short (1hr) stays is small (10p on average). Continued work is ongoing with SCC to encourage active travel as an alternative to the private car.

Monitoring and review

The parking team will continue to monitor levels of car parking usage / ticket sales to understand the overall impact of the proposals.

Consultation provides the opportunity for all car park users, businesses and residents to comment on the proposed rises. A survey of car park users will allow better understanding of the demographics and protected characteristics of those who use our car parks and further consideration within a new EIA carried out soon after. This will also inform any future proposals with respect of our car parks including impact mitigation measures.

Proposal: Increase in fees for issuing of Summons and obtaining Liability Orders for Council Tax and Business Rates

Introduction

This document summarises – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s draft Equality Impact Assessment for an increase in fees for the issuing of summons and obtaining liability orders for Council Tax and Business rates non-payment, including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

The proposal has been assessed by the Revenues, Benefits & Fraud service in November 2022.

Summary of the proposal

The fees and charges for Summonses and Liability Orders for non-payment of Council Tax and NNDR have not been increased since 2016. The charges are being increased to reflect the increased costs to the Council for producing Summonses and progressing the outstanding debts to Magistrates Court. Costs are proposed to be increased by 9.1%.

Assessment of Relevance

The Stage 1 Relevance Assessment has concluded the following:

- The proposal will not introduce a change which will affect how services or functions are delivered
- The proposals will affect people. Specifically the proposed increase in costs will put a further burden on impacted residents and businesses. However, prior to the summons stage, the Council issues bills, reminders and final notices to those residents who are not paying their council tax or business rates.

The groups of people which might be affected by the proposal are residents and businesses. In 2021/22 Summonses were issued to 2,938 residents and 167 businesses. Due to the closure of the Courts during 2020/21, this number will increase in 2022/23 as the Council looks to take recovery action against non-payers of Council Tax and Business Rates.

This proposal affects all persons who are liable to pay Council Tax and Business Rates in respect of their home (residential address) or business address, including those properties which are currently empty. The list of liable parties is maintained in the Council Tax & Business rates system. The Borough Equality Profile on the Council website provides

information about the protected characteristics of all residents within the borough. For Businesses, this will affect both individuals as well as limited companies.

The proposal could potentially impact individuals in any protected characteristic group.

The following Equality Duty aims have been identified as being relevant:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act

Overall, the relevance assessment has concluded that this proposal has a relevance to equality of Moderate. The outcome of the relevance assessment is therefore that a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Equality Impact Assessment

The proposal in question does not intentionally target one or more protected characteristic groups.

The proposal does not intentionally exclude one or more protected characteristic groups.

It has been identified that the proposal does not have the potential to reduce inequality or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups.

Information about the protected characteristics of the intended audience and/or people who might be affected

In summary, the following information is available about the protected characteristic groups of the intended audience and / or people who might be affected by the proposal

Age

General information about the age profile of borough residents who are owner occupiers is available from the Census and ONS mid year estimates and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report, which is available on the Council's website at www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/equality.

Disability

General information about the disability characteristics is available from the Census and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Gender reassignment

General information about the representation of trans-people in the population generally is available from national and regional annual population survey data from the ONS, however is not currently available at a borough level. National and regional data is reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Marriage and civil partnership

General information about borough residents' partnership arrangements is available from the Census and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Pregnancy and maternity

General information about live births and lone parents in the borough is available from the Census and other ONS data sources and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Race or ethnicity

General information about the ethnicity of the borough's residents is available from the Census and the ONS Annual Population Survey and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

General information about the religion and/or beliefs of borough residents is available from the Census and the ONS Annual Population Survey and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Sex

General information about the gender profile of borough residents is available from the Census and ONS mid year estimates and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Sexual orientation

General information about the representation of trans-people in the population generally is available from national and regional annual population survey data from the ONS, however is not currently available at a borough level. National and regional data is reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Other vulnerabilities

Information about the geographic spread of deprivation across the borough is available from the Index of Multiple Deprivation, which is reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report. Specific information about those receiving Council Tax support is also held by the Council.

Consultation

Consultation on the proposal is planned as part of the Council's public consultation on the draft 2023/24 budget.

Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts

The increase in fees for Summonses and Liability Orders will affect any residents that do not maintain payments of Council Tax or Business Rates. Before this stage, there is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date. There are measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability under Section 13(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Children and persons under the age of 18 are not legally liable for Council Tax or Business Rates and therefore not affected by this proposal.

Assessment of potential impact

This section summarises our assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on protected characteristic groups.

Age

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to age. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Disability

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to disability. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Gender reassignment

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to gender reassignment. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Marriage and civil partnership

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Pregnancy and maternity

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Race or ethnicity

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to race or ethnicity. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to religion or belief. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Sex

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to sex or gender. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Sexual orientation

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to sexual orientation. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Other vulnerabilities

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to other vulnerabilities. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Monitoring and review

The Local Council Tax Support scheme is in place to support all residents who are on a low income and experiencing financial hardship. Residents that already receive support through this scheme will see their support increased in line with the increase. Additionally, reductions of Council Tax liability can also be made at the discretion of the Council under relevant legislation. The Council will monitor numbers of residents in receipt of Council Tax support to ensure their continued effectiveness.

The Summons stage is towards the end of the recovery process, and prior to this all residents and businesses receive bills and reminders where Council Tax and Business Rates remain unpaid, thereby giving all groups the opportunity to engage with the Council.

The Council will monitor the number of Summonses and Liability Orders granted, as well as the levels of residents receiving Council Tax Support.