



# Equality impact of 2024/25 draft budget proposals: summary

November 2023

## Contents

Equality impact of 2024/25 draft budget proposals: summary .....	1
Overview .....	3
List of draft budget proposals and summary of equality impact .....	4
Annex 1: Equality Impact Assessments .....	9
Proposal: To increase Council Tax by the referendum limit (up to a 2.99% increase which equates to £7.47 per year per Band D property in 2024/25.....	10
Introduction .....	10
Summary of the proposal.....	10
Assessment of Relevance .....	10
Equality Impact Assessment.....	11
Proposal: Changes to room hire charges in community centres .....	16
Introduction.....	16
Summary of the proposal.....	16
Assessment of Relevance .....	16
Equality Impact Assessment.....	17
Proposal: Increase in car park charges .....	25
Introduction.....	25
Summary of the proposal.....	25
Assessment of Relevance .....	25
Equality Impact Assessment.....	26
Proposal: Increase in fees for issuing of Summons and obtaining Liability Orders for Council Tax and Business Rates.....	32
Introduction.....	32
Summary of the proposal.....	32
Assessment of Relevance .....	32
Equality Impact Assessment.....	33

## Overview

This document provides an assessment of the equality implications of the Council's draft budget proposals for 2024/25.

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 2024.

## List of draft budget proposals and summary of equality impact

### Council Tax

Service or function	Description	Initial impact assessment
<b>Revenues, Benefits &amp; Fraud / Finance</b>	To increase Council Tax by the referendum limit (which the Government has confirmed to be up to a 2.99% increase which equates to £7.47 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
<b>Corporate Policy</b>	Growth to fund additional staff post in the Sustainability Team (1FTE)	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Licencing</b>	Growth to fund additional staff post in the Environmental Health Team (1FTE)	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Licencing</b>	Growth to fund additional staff capacity for housing inspections (0.5FTE)	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>ICT</b>	Growth to fund additional staff posts (3 FTE)	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Legal Services</b>	Saving from deletion of a vacant post (1FTE)	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Legal Services</b>	Saving due to review of historic salary budgets	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided

<b>Planning &amp; Development Management</b>	Growth to fund additional staff post – ecology officer (0.5FTE)	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
--	---	--

### Services: Non-Pay

<b>Service or function</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Initial impact assessment</b>
<b>Communications</b>	Purchase of accessibility and web evaluation software to comply with legislation	Positive – will help ensure website is accessible
<b>Community Centres</b>	Forecast income increase from bookable facilities	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	External funding contribution to reduce revenue spend	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Democratic Services</b>	Deletion of un-used budgets	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Economic Prosperity</b>	Increase in income forecast (markets)	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Licencing</b>	Cessation of pest control service (income reduction)	None – optional service for residents, other providers available
<b>Fleet</b>	Increase in sweeper leasing costs	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Fleet</b>	Additional cost of switching to HVO fuel	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>ICT</b>	Increased cost of IT system support and maintenance contracts	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided

<b>Housing</b>	Use of Homelessness Prevention Grant Reserve to support service delivery	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Parking</b>	Deletion of residual / now un-utilised budgets	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Property</b>	Income from new property acquisitions at Reading Arch Road, Redhill	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Property</b>	Rationalisation and renewal of energy contracts	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Property</b>	Forecast void costs and net rental increase at Forum House, Redhill	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Property</b>	Additional costs associated with Priory Park toilets	Positive – toilets will no longer only be able to be accessed via the café
<b>Property</b>	Additional income from The Rise, Redhill	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Property</b>	Additional income from new café leases	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Waste &amp; Recycling</b>	Efficiency savings following installation of solar compacting bins	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided

## Changes to fees and charges

Service	Description	Initial impact assessment
<b>Community Centres</b>	Fee changes – Community Centres room hire	May impact on those with protected characteristics, a full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken
<b>Data and Insight</b>	Street naming and numbering fee increase	None, service primarily used by developers, optional service for residents
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Licencing</b>	Fee increase – hackney carriage and private hire licensing and preapplication advice and information requests	None, changes proposed to ensure cost recovery and to address inflationary costs
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Licencing</b>	Fee increase – Property licensing (mobile home sites, houses in multiple occupation and property inspections)	None, charges apply to owners and operators of sites which are generally run as commercial businesses
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Licencing</b>	Increased charges for food hygiene rating re-visits	None, optional service for businesses
<b>Greenspaces</b>	Fee increase – allotments	None, charge increase limited to lower than inflation and represents marginal increase overall.
<b>Greenspaces</b>	Fee increase – cemeteries	None, changes proposed to ensure cost recovery and to address inflationary costs
<b>Greenspaces</b>	Fee increase - banner advertising	None, optional service for organisations
<b>Greenspaces</b>	Fee increases – sports pitch hire	None, changes proposed to ensure cost recovery and to address inflationary costs
<b>Parking</b>	Fee increase – car parking charges and permits	May impact on those with protected characteristic, a full Equality Impact

		Assessment will need to be undertaken
<b>Planning &amp; Development Management</b>	Fee increase – pre-application fees	None, optional service for those considering development
<b>Revenues, Benefits &amp; Fraud</b>	Fee increase – summons and liability orders	May impact on those with protected characteristic, a full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken
<b>Waste &amp; Recycling</b>	Fee increase – bulky waste collections	None, optional service
<b>Waste &amp; Recycling</b>	Fee increase – garden waste	None, optional service
<b>Waste &amp; Recycling</b>	Fee increase – waste containers and sacks	None, lower than inflation increase to cover rising costs
<b>Waste &amp; Recycling</b>	Fee increase – trade waste	None, optional service for commercial businesses





## Annex 1: Equality Impact Assessments

## **Proposal: To increase Council Tax by the referendum limit (up to a 2.99% increase which equates to £7.47 per year per Band D property in 2024/25)**

### **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 2.99% increase which equates to £7.47 per year per Band D property) for 2024/25, including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

### **Summary of the proposal**

To increase the Reigate & Banstead Borough Council element of Council Tax by the Government-set referendum limit from 1 April 2024. This is anticipated to be £7.47 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 2024/25 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 2023.

### **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](http://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. It is proposed to remove some restriction from the scheme to offer additional support to our most vulnerable residents.

## 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. It is proposed to remove some restriction from the scheme to offer additional support to our most vulnerable residents. 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: 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.

### Summary of the proposal

The proposal is to increase community centre room hire charges by an average of 6.6% net (however differential price uplifts are proposed to reflect a range of considerations including current utilisation rates, competitors costs and balancing the need to cover costs while also delivering social and community benefits).

### Assessment of Relevance

The Stage 1 Relevance Assessment has concluded the following:

- The proposal will – in some centres and for some rooms - introduce a change which will affect how services or functions are delivered by increasing the charge for hire of space
- The proposals may 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 – whether this is the case will vary from location to location and room to room as differential price increases are being applied.
- 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 who either hire spaces directly or attend activities in the spaces provided by a third party
- Local businesses that currently hire spaces
- Partner organisations that currently hire spaces.

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

- Information about who currently hires rooms, how frequently and for how long, and the activities provided
- Utilisation rates
- Competitor rates

Anyone who currently hires a room may be impacted by the changes, regardless of whether or not they have any protected characteristics. However, evidence indicators 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.

In reviewing room rates, consideration has been given to current utilisation rates, service users and the need to balance cost recovery against social and community objectives.

## **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 there is also a growing number of newer family focused activities.

### **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 2024/25 budget.

### **Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts**

Changes to room hire charges have been proposed based on an assessment of competitor costs, current hirers and patterns of use, but also the need to balance cost recovery against wider social and community objectives.

No or low cost increases are proposed where there is an opportunity to increase utilisation, or where costs are currently less competitive. Both these are intended to improve the attractiveness of the centre to hirers, which could result in a wider range of activities being provided, with associated positive benefits.

## **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 average increase in charges is 6.6% with charges not being increased at all in many cases.

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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

### **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 average increase in charges is 6.6% with charges not being increased at all in many cases.

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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

### **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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

### **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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

### **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 average increase in charges is 6.6% with charges not being increased at all in many cases.

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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

### **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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

### **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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

## **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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

## **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 average increase in charges is 6.6% with charges not being increased at all in many cases.

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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

### **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.

### 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 7%, however the proposal incorporates the proposal to introduce free short stay parking in Horley, the income loss for which is offset by higher charges for longer stays in car parks across the borough. Elsewhere due to rounding of figures the exact % increase for different time periods may be slightly higher or lower than the average. 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 (e.g. to run errands) will be small (generally 10-20p for a stay of up to 1 hour).

### 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.
- It remains the case that other parking and transport opportunities are also available for those who do not wish to pay increased charges in council car parks.

## **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.

The proposal to introduce free short stay parking in Horley may potentially benefit residents with protected characteristics other than disability by enabling them to pop into the town for short periods of time and park free of charge. However any car park user (including with protected characteristics – excluding disability) who uses long stay parking may relatively pay marginally more as these costs have been increased to mitigate income losses associated with free short stay parking in Horley. There is currently no evidence that longer stay parking is used more by residents with protected characteristics than without.

## **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](http://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 (149,243) there are approx 2,388 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**

In preparing the proposal, consultation is planned as part of the public consultation on the draft 2024/25 budget. The process of raising fees and charges for off street parking also 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 identify additional 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 a jointly funded active travel officer working in identified community development areas and with target schools to encourage walking and cycling for daily trips – as part of this work, it may be possible to provide free bicycles to those who need and would benefit from them most. Together 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 free 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 free 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 – and in Horley it is proposed to be removed altogether for stays of 20 minutes or under. 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 – and in Horley it is proposed to be removed altogether for stays of 20 minutes or under. 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.

Consideration will be given to whether a survey of car park users would be beneficial to 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 could 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 2023.

### **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 7%.

### **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.

In 2022/23 Summonses were issued to 3,686 residents and 177 businesses. Due to the closure of the Courts during 2020/21, recovery was paused for a number of prior year accounts, and the Council is now ensuring that these accounts are progressed through the recovery process which may result in a Summons.

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](http://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 2024/25 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.