

Universal Services

Name of SP25 proposal:	SP25 Proposal Reference:
Rural Parking	<i>EIA - US15B</i> Universal Services

EIA writer(s) and authoriser

No.		Name	Department	Position	Email address	Phone number	Date	Issue
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2	EIA authoriser	Patrick Blogg	Universal Services	Director of Universal Services			15/04/2024	2
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Section one – information about the service and service change

Service affected	Countryside Parking Services
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<p>Please provide a short description of the service / policy/project/project phase</p>	<p>Hampshire County Council has over 100 rural countryside car parking sites across Hampshire that help provide access to nature reserves, country parks and the wider countryside. These range in size from lay-bys for two vehicles to large car parks with over 70 spaces. There is a cost to maintain these sites – for example, a 40-space rural car park costs approximately £1,100 per year to directly maintain.</p> <p>The income generated from car parking at these sites is used to invest in countryside services including the sites that the car park serves.</p>
<p>Please explain the new/changed service/policy/project</p>	<p>It is proposed to introduce car parking charges at the rural countryside car parks that we manage, where we expect doing so would be commercially viable from April 2025, with a phased introduction to allow for supporting infrastructure to be put in place. We anticipate this could raise around £65,000 each year.</p> <p>If charges were implemented at any of our countryside sites, fees could be structured to support short-term use, such as for dog walkers, and deter longer stays such as parking for commuting purposes. We would look to ensure that charges were reasonable and in-keeping with other district/borough council charges and opportunities would be investigated to mitigate this impact such as the offer of a season ticket, to bring the cost down for regular visitors, or an initial free period, if commercially viable.</p> <p>Where implemented, charges at rural countryside car parking sites would be reviewed annually in accordance with the current pricing policy as amended from time to time.</p> <p>Income from car parking charging would contribute to the costs to Hampshire County Council of managing Hampshire Countryside Sites.</p>

Engagement and consultation

The County Council's *Making the Most of your money budget* consultation (2024-2026) sought residents' and stakeholders' views on strategic options for funding the Authority's budget gap. Where applicable, detailed proposals for making savings were subject to further, more detailed 'stage two' consultation (detailed below).

Has any pre-consultation engagement been carried out?

Yes

Describe the consultation or engagement you have performed or are intending to perform.

Describe who was engaged or consulted. What was the outcome of the activity and how have the results influenced what you are doing? If no consultation or engagement is planned, please explain why.

Between 8th January and 31st March 2024, the County Council consulted on the proposal to introduce charging for parking at rural countryside car parks where it is commercially viable to do so – asking respondents to comment on sites that are 20 or more spaces and those that are fewer than 20 spaces or jointly owned with other organisations. The proposal received over 4,500 responses. This consultation formed part of the County Council's wider Future Services consultation.

4,459 responses came from individuals, 39 from organisations, and a further 33 from elected representatives.

The organisations responding were chiefly made up of charity, voluntary or local community groups (17 responses), and local authorities (10 responses). In order to help capture the views of young people about the consultation, members of the Hampshire County Council Youth Forum (aged between 11 and 18) were invited to consider the proposals and attend a discussion group to share their feedback.

The consultation was promoted via posters at the ten car parking sites with 20 spaces or more listed in the Future Services consultation to engage with existing users. Relevant key organisations who are known to utilise the sites or represent people that could have an interest in the proposals were contacted directly via email with a link to the consultation, inviting them to review and respond.

The results from the consultation were broadly supportive of both elements of this proposal, with both potential positive and negative impacts cited by respondents.

People responding to the proposed changes were most likely to indicate that the withdrawal of the funding would impact people because of rurality (40%), poverty (36%), age (32%), or disability (30%).

If the decision is taken to progress this proposal, then engagement with relevant bodies, organisations and stakeholders would take place where necessary on a scheme specific basis to ensure that any necessary processes are followed. Any changes to traffic regulations are subject to the Traffic Order process and therefore formal consultation would be similarly undertaken on a scheme specific basis.

Section two: Assessment

Carefully and consciously consider the impacts of the proposed change.

Consider at this point whether the assessment is of impacts on staff or service users. If it is both the impacts may be contradictory for each group (negative for staff but positive for customers, or vice versa). Consider completing two assessment tables (one for staff and one for customers) and providing one equality statement for both groups.

If the proposed change is expected to have a positive, neutral (no impact) or negative (low, medium, or high) impact on people in protected characteristics groups or those who may be impacted by poverty or rurality. Indicate the impact by entering the risk score in the relevant column in the table below.

If an overview assessment of due regard is appropriate, please go to box 2.

Table 1 Impact Assessment [add ✓ to relevant boxes)

Protected characteristic	Positive	Neutral	Negative - low	Negative - Medium	Negative - High	Affects staff, public or both?
Age			✓			
Disability			✓			

Gender reassignment		✓				
Pregnancy and maternity		✓				
Race		✓				
Religion or belief		✓				
Sex		✓				
Sexual orientation		✓				
Marriage & civil partnership		✓				
Poverty			✓			
Rurality			✓			

Table 2 Geographical impact

Does the proposal impact on a specific area? Consider the [demographic data](#) of the locations.

Area	Yes / no
All Hampshire	✓
Basingstoke and Deane	
East Hampshire	
Eastleigh	
Fareham	
Gosport	
Hart	
Havant	
New Forest	
Rushmoor	
Test Valley	
Winchester	

Section three: Equality Statement

For all characteristics marked as either having a neutral or low negative impact, challenge your assessment - carefully consider the protected characteristics, if necessary, review the Inclusion and Diversity eLearning, discuss with an EIA co-ordinator.

Table 3 Consideration of and explanation for neutral or low negative impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having neutral or low negative impact
Age – Low Negative	<p>32% of respondents raised this as an issue in the consultation feedback. It is thought that this is largely due to concerns about ability to pay. Young people and the elderly are more likely to be on low incomes and are therefore more likely to be adversely impacted by any parking charges.</p> <p>Charging for parking may discourage those less able to pay from using selected sites and cause them to miss out on the health and wellbeing benefits of accessing the countryside, but by not charging in all locations, alternatives would remain available for those who do not want to or cannot afford to pay.</p> <p>There would still be many rural sites that are free to visit. We maintain an extensive network of rights of way that provide free access to the countryside.</p> <p>We would look to ensure that charges are reasonable and in-keeping with other district/borough council charges and opportunities would be investigated to mitigate this impact such as the offer of a season ticket to bring the cost down for regular visitors, or an initial free period, if commercially viable.</p> <p>Some elderly people may struggle with the introduction of new technologies (e.g. paying parking charges by mobile phone). The recommended approach includes an option to pay by card as an alternative as well as accessible signage with clear instructions.</p>
Disability – Low Negative	<p>30% of residents raised this as an issue in the consultation feedback. People with certain disabilities may struggle with the introduction of new technologies (e.g. paying parking charges by mobile phone). The recommended approach includes an option to pay by card as an alternative as well as accessible signage with clear instructions.</p>

	<p>Another consideration is that the future rural car parking charges proposals would include making improvements to the car park surfacing which would impact positively on people with mobility requirements.</p>
<p>Rurality – Low Negative</p>	<p>40% of people raised this as an issue in the consultation feedback. Although rurality is not a statutory protected characteristic, people living in rural areas may be more car dependent and therefore more likely to have to pay for parking in certain locations. Rural residents are also more likely to make regular use of rural car parks.</p> <p>Rural residents may be more exposed to disruption caused by informal parking that may arise.</p> <p>All car parks where charging is proposed would be assessed for the likely impact on the surrounding area, with discussions held with relevant neighbouring landowners, local and highway authorities on how to dissuade unsafe parking in the surrounding areas. Traffic impacts would be monitored, and mitigation put in place, as necessary.</p>
<p>Poverty – Low Negative</p>	<p>36% of people raised this as an issue in the consultation feedback. Although poverty is not a statutory protected characteristic, charging for parking may discourage those less able to pay from using selected sites and cause them to miss out on the health and wellbeing benefits of accessing the countryside, but by not charging in all locations, alternatives would remain available for those who do not want to or cannot afford to pay.</p> <p>There would still be many rural sites that are free to visit. We maintain an extensive network of rights of way that provide free access to the countryside.</p> <p>We would look to ensure that charges are reasonable and in-keeping with other district/borough council charges and opportunities would be investigated to mitigate this impact such as the offer of a season ticket to bring the cost down for regular visitors, or an initial free period, if commercially viable.</p>

Other – Neutral	No specific impact on other protected characteristics has been identified. Further consultation would be carried out on proposals. Any changes to traffic regulations are subject to the Traffic Order process and therefore formal consultation would be undertaken on a scheme specific basis.
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For all characteristics marked as either having a ‘medium negative’ or ‘high negative’, please complete table 4:

Table 4 Explanation and mitigation for medium and high impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having medium or high negative impact	Is there a Geographical impact? If so, please explain - use list above to identify geographical area(s)	Short explanation of mitigating actions

If you have specified mitigations as part of the assessment, now consider reviewing the impact severity/risk assessment.

For all characteristics marked as either having a positive impact please explain why in table 5.

Table 5 Consideration of and explanation for positive impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having positive impact

Further actions and recommendations to consider:

- If neutral or low negative impacts have been carefully considered and identified correctly, the activity is likely to proceed.
- If medium negative or high negative have been identified:
 - The policy, service review, scheme or practice may be paused or stopped.
 - The policy, service review, scheme or practice can be changed to remove, reduce, or mitigate against the negative impacts.
 - Consider undertaking consultation/re-consulting¹.
 - If all options have been considered carefully and there are no other proportionate ways to remove, reduce, or mitigate - explain and justify reasons why in the assessment.
 - Carry out a subsequent impact severity assessment following mitigating actions.

Box 1

Please set out any additional information which you think is relevant to this impact assessment:

Box 2

If appropriate, (i.e., it is immediately evident that a full EIA is not necessary) please provide a short succinct assessment to show that due regard has been given and that there is no requirement for a full EIA:

