

COUNTY COUNCIL FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Stage of EIA	Description of Step	Checklist	Checklist
	Is this a new or an existing policy?	This is a reform of the current blue badge policy to be implemented from 01 January 2012	
Stage 1	Defining policy objectives and how they will be achieved	<p>Reform of the Blue Badge policy is taking place at a national level. The objectives of the reform programme are to address current problems, especially those relating to fraud and abuse. The reform aims to improve operational efficiency, reduce public sector costs and improve customer service. The programme supports freedom and fairness and is targeted at addressing the mobility needs of those disabled people who need the most help to travel. There are currently 2.5 million badges on issue. The number has trebled in the last 20 years and demand is forecast to increase further as the population ages. Worcestershire is one of the 152 top tier issuing authorities of Blue Badges in England.</p>	<p>Worcestershire proposes to raise the current charge of a blue badge from £2 to £10 in line with national guidelines. This increased cost would allow for the new improved badge design to be produced and would help Worcestershire to cover costs more appropriately.</p>

<p>Stage 2</p>	<p>Information gathering/consultation Detail existing data/research/consultation sources you will use.</p>	<p>Blue Badge Reform Programme Consultation: Summary of Responses and Government Response</p> <p>Communities of Practice – Blue Badge Online Community & BBIS Online Community</p> <p>Blue Badge Reform - Equalities Impact Assessment</p> <p>ACORN 2011</p>	<p>Following this consultation the government decided to proceed with a discretionary charge increase from £2 to £10.</p> <p>A survey was conducted on this site of 16 LA's. Of those 16, all but one are proposing to charge the full £10. There is also a post on one of the forums asking what charge LA's will be proposing, all 12 responses to this question confirm that LA's will propose the full £10 also.</p> <p>This EIA states that LA's will benefit from being able to charge a higher fee for a badge that more appropriately covers costs, efficiency savings from the service delivery system and social benefits from improvements to enforcement and the new badge design.</p> <p>Detail provided on the profile of Blue Badge holders (more detail provided in Stage 3).</p>
	<p>Do you consider these sources to be sufficient? Y/N</p>	<p>Yes</p>	

	<p>What further user engagement (if any) do you need to undertake?</p>	<p>None</p>	
<p>Stage 3</p>	<p>Assessing the equality impact of your policy from evidence gathered.</p> <p>Decision should be based on 4 factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims of the policy • Evidence collected • Results of both formal/informal consultation • Pros and cons of alternative approaches to delivering policy objectives <p>*See 'what should be done if adverse impact is identified?' to help with your decision.</p>	<p>Most administering authorities intend to introduce the full charge of £10 as it is acknowledged that the new scheme will cost more to administer and produce. Each badge will cost Worcestershire £4.60 to produce and this does not include internal administration and processing fees. This will mean the £10 should appropriately cover costs.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that different groups will be adversely affected due to the increased cost. Older people will be one of these groups. As at 10/10/2011 there were 30243 Blue Badges on issue in Worcestershire. Of these, 20120 have age data associated with them. 79% of these badges are issued to customers aged 60+ (10123 of these do not have any age information).</p> <p>Overall the profile of the blue badge holders is similar to the county</p>	<p>The application cost remains relatively low for the advantages that a blue badge provides. The new badge will also be much harder to replicate and for fraudulent applications to get through which should significantly reduce inappropriate use. As the badge is valid for three years it is felt that the £10 is a modest charge.</p>

		<p>population when classified by ACORN, however there is a slight over representation of the lower socio-economic ACORN categories, with 20.1% of blue badge holders being classified as 'Hard – Pressed' compared with 16.0% of Worcestershire's population. The Hard-Pressed category are likely to be living of low incomes, of around £23,300 compared to the County average of £30,000 (PayCheck, CACI 2011). Despite this, the category 'Wealthy Achievers' still make the largest segment of the population with 36.0% of the blue badge issues being categorised in this category, compared to 39.5% of Worcestershire's total population. The category 'Wealthy Achievers' are most likely to be in high earning jobs with a mean income of approximately £46,700.</p>	
		<p>The new style badge will be printed and will include a photo and also a hologram, making it hard to replicate or be used by someone that is not the owner of the badge. The new badge should significantly reduce inappropriate use of Blue Badges. Enforcement</p>	

		<p>Officers will be able to cross check displayed badges against a national database to ensure the badge us being used legally.</p> <p>Worcestershire did consider staging the increase in cost however it was agreed that the increase spread over three years is minimal and it was considered more cost efficient use of resources to introduce this in one go rather than complicating matters.</p> <p>Worcestershire County Council is currently looking to make significant efficiencies and the current scheme has been significantly subsidised, this reform will help the scheme to be self funding.</p> <p>External funding for occupational therapists is available for two years, this cost will need to be supported from the charge for blue badges from year 3.</p>	
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Stage 4	Action Planning and Time Frames	Monitor the level of applications and reapplications. If there was a decrease consider forwarding information to the government.	
Stage 5	<p>Publication</p> <p>This is a legal requirement so you MUST send your EIA results for publishing.</p> <p>*This is for accessibility purposes for lengthy EIA's.</p>	A copy of this EIA will be sent to the Corporate Equality and Diversity Team for publication on the website	A copy of this assessment will be sent to the WCC Directorate Equalities Lead
Stage 6	Monitoring and Review	The policy will be monitored on a cyclical basis. This will include monitoring qualitative and quantitative measures of performance and adherence to process to ensure that Blue Badges are issued according to the new guidance and processes.	<p>The process will be monitored by the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Operations Manager with the results fed back to the operational teams and to the service area.</p> <p>The results of the monitoring will be utilised to ensure performance against agreed processes and inform further improvement to process going forward.</p>

Signed (Completing Officer).....Kirsty Gilmour

Date.....26th October 2011.....

Signed (Lead Officer)Sarah Daniel

Date.....26th October 2011.....