

## Appendix 5

### **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)** **Engagement and our equality duty**

Whilst [the Gunning Principles](#) set out the rules for consulting ‘everyone’, additional requirements are in place to avoid discrimination and inequality.

Cheshire East Council is required to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Act 2010 simplified previous anti-discrimination laws with a single piece of legislation. Within the Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149) has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, by consciously thinking about equality when making decisions (such as in developing policy, delivering services and commissioning from others)
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, by removing disadvantages, meeting their specific needs, and encouraging their participation in public life
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not

The Equality Duty helps public bodies to deliver their overall objectives for public services, and as such should be approached as a positive opportunity to support good decision-making.

It encourages public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people’s needs. By understanding the effect of their activities on different people, and how inclusive public services can support and open up people’s opportunities, public bodies are better placed to deliver policies and services that are efficient and effective.

Complying with the Equality Duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. For example, it may involve providing a service in a way which is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic, such as providing computer training to all people to help them access information and services.

The Equality Act identifies nine 'protected characteristics' and makes it a legal requirement to make sure that people with these characteristics are protected from discrimination:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

### **Applying the equality duty to engagement**

If you are developing a new policy, strategy or programme you may need to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. You may be able to ascertain the impact of your proposal on different characteristics through desk-based research and learning from similar programmes, but you also need to carry out some primary research and engagement. People with protected characteristics are often described as 'hard to reach' but you will find everyone can be reached – you just need to tailor your approach, so it is accessible for them.

Contacting the [Equality and Diversity mailbox](#) will help you to understand how you can gain insight as to the impacts of your proposals and will ensure that you help the Council to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## Section 1 – Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure

<b>Proposal Title</b>	Going Cashless – the withdrawal of coins as a payment method at the council's pay and display parking machines for a parking space
<b>Date of Assessment</b>	6/11/23 (Previously piloted with an EIA 27/3/2020 - during the Covid pandemic)
<b>Assessment Lead Officer Name</b>	Lorraine Martin
<b>Directorate/Service</b>	PLACE – Strategic Transport & Parking – Parking Services
<b>Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure.</b>	<p>In summary, the Council currently operates some 127 Pay and Display machines across the borough in those car parks that are currently charged. The majority of these accept payment by coinage, chip/pin, contactless with debit/credit cards.</p> <p>The Council also operates a mobile payment app solution (PayByPhone) which negates the need to approach the pay and display machines. This can be used on smartphones running IOS or android systems or other devices including a laptop via the internet.</p> <p>Currently the machines have to be emptied of coins regularly at a cost of approximately £65,000 per annum.</p> <p>Key considerations, in addition to the cost, associated with offering cash as a payment method:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending to coin jams, 'jackpotting' (this is when the machine is too full or, due to a fault it jettisons out the coins all over the floor) and waiting for service engineers from the suppliers detracts Civil Enforcement staff from other priority duties; and</li> <li>• Since Covid-19 – the majority of retailers, supermarkets and other services are still only accepting debit and credit card payments to assist in the continued reduction of the spread of the virus and to keep costs down.</li> <li>• Theft of the cash from the machines.</li> <li>• Repairs to the machines for 'cash payment issues' can be significant, can render the machine out of use and costly to repair.</li> </ul>

	<p>Should approval be given in January 2024 by the Highways and Transport Committee to implement parking charges across the towns that are currently free, the cost of purchasing 30-60 new pay and display machines including coinage as a payment option could equate to circa £200,000 plus additional cash collection charges. It is £6.80 per tin collection plus a handling/processing fee based of 67p per £100 collected. The potential cost of cash collection from an additional 60 machines would be circa £30,000 per annum. This means the council is forecasting paying approximately £100,000 per annum for cash collection at all machines if the proposals are implemented. This cost is in addition to ongoing service and maintenance charges per machine (for this type, Elite LS), which amounts to approximately £365 per machine per year.</p> <p>Nationally, many local Councils have chosen to only accept debit/credit card transactions at their pay and display machines. Others have taken the step to remove/ reduce the number of pay and display machines across their estate by only accepting payment on some car parks and on-street parking places by mobile app only (e.g., Brighton &amp; Hove).</p> <p>It is therefore appropriate that the Council genuinely considers the removal of a cash option at pay and display machines not only for any new machines (and cashless models are cheaper to purchase) but across our entire estate.</p> <p>If the cash option was removed, it would still be possible to pay for parking with the following options: Debit/Credit cards via chip and pin or contactless or the use of the PayByPhone App. The app can be downloaded to an IOS or Android device and payment can be made either as a guest or by signing up for an account. Other key considerations for PayByPhone are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PayByPhone website – this can be accessed by any web browser, either on a mobile device or computer and payment can be made either as a guest or by signing up for an account. .</li> <li>• PayByPhone by telephone – users can call PayByPhone and make payment by card. .</li> <li>• PayByPhone by SMS text – users can text PayByPhone to make payment by card.</li> </ul> <p>The move to cashless and digital parking sessions will also achieve savings through the reduction in the costs of physical revenue collection, machine maintenance and repair. It will also avoid</p>
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	<p>potential costs/lost revenue through theft from the machines. Going cashless across the borough means a significant financial saving of up to £100,000 per annum in cash collection fees.</p>
<b>Who is Affected?</b>	<p>Those affected include the actual service users themselves (motorists) who may be residents, workers, commuters, shoppers and visitors to the borough. Some service users will come from outside of the borough.</p> <p>Additionally, service users who may not have either a debit or credit card (neither chip/pin or contactless) or a mobile phone (not necessarily a smart or android device) would be affected.</p> <p>The existing provisions for free parking for Blue Badge holders (Disabled persons) and free Carer permits will be unaffected by these proposals.</p>
<b>Links and impact on other services, strategies, functions or procedures.</b>	<p>The links are various – health, safety, wellbeing and service fulfilment of staff, contractors and the service users and the cost benefits and service efficiencies.</p> <p>The proposals also link to and impact on a number of other services and strategies. This includes staff travel plans, school SMOTS (Sustainable Modes of Travel to School), Local Transport Plans, Town Vitality Plans, Regeneration projects, the effects of the cost-of-living crisis, Air Quality and public health and wellbeing.</p> <p>However, it has a significant impact on the services budget and the council's financial situation MTFS (Medium Term Financial Strategy).</p> <p>The outcomes are deemed to be consistent with the aims and objectives contained within the High-Level Parking Strategy that appends the adopted Local Transport Plan (2019 – 2024).</p>

<p><b>How does the service, service change, strategy, function or procedure help the Council meet the requirements of the <a href="#">Public Sector Equality Duty</a>?</b></p>	<p>The Public Sector Equality Duty is a legal requirement contained within the Equality Act 2010 which requires public authorities and others carrying out public functions to have due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a <a href="#">protected characteristic</a> and those who do not</li> <li>• Foster good relations between people who share a <a href="#">protected characteristic</a> and those who do not</li> </ul> <p>The above aims may be more relevant to some proposals than others, and they may be more relevant to some <a href="#">protected characteristics</a> than others.</p> <p>The proposals have been assessed against each of the above aims. The proposals do not impact on the importance of ensuring that anyone classed as within a protected characteristic group is protected from discrimination. The proposals do not discriminate based on any group.</p>
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## Section 2- Information – What do you know?

What do you know?	What information (qualitative and quantitative) and/or research have you used to commission/change/decommission the service, strategy, function, or procedure?
Information you used	<p>From analysing the handful of complaints and correspondence directly to the service or the contact centre, as well as statutory consultation responses, there is the potential for the elderly to be affected by this change as some do not have mobile phones. Cheshire East had a higher average (median) age than the North West region as a whole in 2021 (40 years) and a higher average (median) age than England (40 years).</p>

During November-January 2022/23, Cheshire East Council undertook a consultation on its Draft Digital Inclusion Partnership Strategy. In total 136 responses were received. Encouragingly, the majority of respondents (over 60%) rated the vision and ideas within the delivery plan as very good or good. The majority of respondents also agreed (either strongly or tend to) that the priorities set out with the strategy are the right areas for Cheshire East Council to focus on. Three quarters of respondents (75%) described themselves as digitally enabled, 7% would consider themselves digitally averse and 8% would consider themselves digitally excluded.

### **Access to Bank Accounts**

It is possible that the proposals may affect somebody who does not have a bank account. There are approximately 1.5 million people in the UK (United Kingdom) who do not have a bank account. There are at least 9 different banking organisations that offer a basic bank card with Chip and Pin facilities. In an increasingly cashless society, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic, it is becoming more difficult to conduct transactions without a bank account. Prepayment bank cards are also available if necessary.

The Finance Conduct Authority published research estimating that 1.3 million UK adults are 'unbanked', meaning they do not have a bank account.

The unbanked rate in 2021 (4.5%) was the lowest since the survey began in 2009. Between 2019 and 2021, the unbanked rate fell 0.9% corresponding to an increase of approximately 1.2 million banked households. The highest percentage of unbanked people fall into the 18–24-year age group followed by the 75+ age group.

We must consider that motorists pay for petrol/diesel/EV, insurances, MOT's, servicing and road tax. Many of these services are on-line accepting payment by cards only (i.e., require a bank account).

### **Access to Mobile Phone**

There may be a differing impact for older residents who may not have a mobile phone. In 2023, 87% of UK adults owned a smartphone. 96% of 16- to 24-year-olds owned a smartphone, **but just 69% of over-65s own a smartphone.**

There are 66.11 million internet users in the UK, around 98% of the population. 7% of UK households do not have access to the internet at home in 2023. **A quarter (25%) of those aged 65 and over don't have access to the internet at home.**

The table below presents the percentage of the population with access to a mobile phone.

Age	% of Population with a mobile phone
65+	69%
55-64	77%
35-54	95%
25-34	94%
16-24	96%

Source: <https://www.finder.com/uk/mobile-internet-statistics>

Analysis conducted by finder.com

### **Access to Internet**

Office for National Statistics data shows that at the end of 2020, 92% of adults in the UK were recent internet users. Other key points relevant to Cheshire East are:

- Almost all adults aged 16 to 44 years in the UK were recent internet users (99%), compared with 54% of adults aged 75 years and over.
- While there has been little change in internet use for adults aged 16 to 44 years in recent years, the proportion of those aged 75 years and over who are recent internet users nearly doubled since 2013, from 29%, to 54% in 2020.
- 6.3% of adults in the UK had never used the internet in 2020, down from 7.5% in 2019.
- The number of disabled adults who were recent internet users in 2020 reached almost 11 million, 81% of disabled adults; up from just over 10 million (78% of disabled adults) in 2019.

Source: ONS (Office for National Statistics) -

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/2020>

In addition, Age UK has undertaken research during 2021, which identified:

- 88% of 50-64 year olds and 75% of 65-74 year olds in England use the internet every day or almost every day.
- 42% of those aged 75+ do not use the internet, making them at most risk of digital exclusion. Additionally, only 15% of this group saying they would like to use the internet more with the most common barrier being a lack of digital skills and trust in the internet.
- While acknowledging the benefits of digital technology, those who cannot, or do not want to be online should be able to access services and support in a way that suits them.

The Covid-19 pandemic enabled some adults to gain new digital skills and enjoy the benefits of being online, but for others the digital divide has become more entrenched as an increasing number of everyday activities and services have moved online.

Source: Age UK - <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/active-communities/digital-inclusion-in-the-pandemic-final-march-2021.pdf>

### **Disability**

In 2021, 6.5% of Cheshire East residents were identified as being disabled and limited a lot. This figure decreased from 7.8% in 2011. Conversely, just under 1 in 10 people (9.8%) were identified as being disabled and limited a little, compared with 9.5% in 2011. The proportion of Cheshire East residents who were not disabled increased from 82.7% to 83.8%.

There are currently 23,000 blue badge holders in Cheshire East, which entitles them to unlimited free parking in Cheshire East car parks.

### **Income Deprivation**

	In Cheshire East, <b>8.3%</b> of the population was income-deprived in 2019. Of the 316 local authorities in England (excluding the Isles of Scilly), Cheshire East is ranked <b>226th most income deprived</b> .
<b>Gaps in your Information</b>	Although impacts for people with individual protected characteristics are identified, if people have multiple protected characteristics, they are likely to be more significantly affected by these changes.

### 3. What did people tell you?

<b>What did people tell you</b>	<b>What consultation and engagement activities have you already undertaken and what did people tell you? Is there any feedback from other local and/or external regional/national consultations that could be included in your assessment?</b>
<b>Details and dates of the consultation/s and/or engagement activities</b>	<p><b><u>Cheshire East Council – Cashless Trial (2020)</u></b></p> <p>During the pandemic, the Council took all reasonable measures to keep our service users safe. A decision was taken to temporarily remove the cash payment option across the borough between June and August 2020. The cashless trial for Cheshire East only continued for approximately 8 weeks with the decision being overturned as complaints were received inferring that it disenfranchised the elderly.</p> <p><b><u>MTFS Parking Review – Statutory Consultation (September to November 2023)</u></b></p> <p>152 representations out of 8,384 (1.8%) of representations made during the councils 2023 statutory consultation on the MTFS Parking Review also cited the need for cash payments to be retained.</p> <p><b><u>National Media</u></b></p> <p>There is a lot of research and consultation conclusions in the National newspapers on the ‘going cashless’ route.</p>

*“National newspapers have run articles professing this argument. Non-Government Organisation (NGO’s) and charities have also supported the claim. Age UK believe pay by phone parking and other automated services present “huge difficulties” for many older people, more than half of whom are deaf or have hearing problems, with large numbers suffering from arthritis, making it hard for them to use mobile technology. Caroline Abrahams, Charity Director has said that “Payment systems are an essential service and must be designed inclusively so that they are easily accessible to everyone.”*

However, there are arguments that purport that cashless payment also excludes other groups, such as:

- Motorists without a credit or debit card
- Motorists without a working mobile phone at the time of parking
- Deaf or speech impaired motorists

On their own each payment method has limitations and could result in access issues but the combination of both card and PayByPhone parking limits this impact.

Any impact is likely to be negligible given that it is increasingly difficult to legally buy a car, obtain annual insurance, obtain a driving license, obtain car tax etc., without a bank account or electronic means of payment or by persons for whom English or reading are difficult.

The introduction of pay by phone as an additional payment method can also help improve accessibility for disabled people who may not be able to walk far or to where a pay & display machine is located.

**Liaison with the British Parking Association (BPA) and Midland Service Improvement Group (MSIG)**

The councils parking services team asked other councils via the BPA and MSIG forums on 23/6/2020 as to whether they were intending to go cashless (or already operated cashless). In November 2023, further research was conducted, and the updated responses are below:

- Rutland – went cashless and progressed to not accepting chip and pin at their machines.
- Allerdale – gone cashless as a result of Covid-19.
- Cotswold District Council (including Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire District Council) went cashless in 2022

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxford are progressively moving towards cashless payments, car park by car park Oct 2023 (5<sup>th</sup> car park gone cashless)</li> <li>• Telford &amp; Wrekin Council has gone cashless</li> <li>• Tower Hamlets went cashless in November 2019</li> <li>• Somerset, who had reintroduced charges, have removed the cash facility from all their seafront machines and 50% of their other machines.</li> <li>• BathNES are making a gradual move to cashless but provided the following observations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In a particular town centre car park, they did see a reduction in income and an increase in space availability. <i>'I see this as beneficial as the car park suffered from meter feeding and low turnover where some commuters working locally would swap between P&amp;D and cashless. Moving to cashless only, has prevented this as we have controls in place to prevent this.'</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Nottingham have gone cashless and are removing pay and display machines gradually.</li> </ul>
<b>Gaps in consultation and engagement feedback</b>	<p>There is a national lack of knowledge with regards to the number of actual motorists who do not have a bank account and/or a mobile device. In essence, these would be the only persons affected by this service change. Correspondence would have to be treated delicately but evidence is needed to support their impact. However, to purchase or hire a motorised vehicle in itself usually involves some form of bank transaction. To support the ongoing servicing, road fund licence, MOT and insurances also alludes to bank payment transactions.</p>

#### 4. Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

<b>Protected characteristics groups from the <a href="#">Equality Act 2010</a></b>	<b>What do you know?</b> Summary of information used to inform the proposal	<b>What did people tell you?</b> Summary of customer and/or staff feedback	<b>What does this mean?</b> Impacts identified from the information and feedback (actual and potential). These can be either positive, negative or have no impact.
<b>Age</b>	<p>We know that there are some limitations for service users in this category. It is estimated that only 69% of those aged above 65 have a mobile phone. Some 25% of users of this age group do not regularly use the internet.</p> <p>However, car owners are likely to pay for their insurance/Tax digitally and for petrol and servicing/MOTs via card payments.</p>	<p>In 2020, representations were received which indicated the elderly motorist was significantly impacted as they did not have a mobile phone.</p> <p>During the 2023 statutory consultation, 152 representations also referenced the need to retain cash (1.8%).</p>	Motorists generally have credit/debit cards as a means of payment for petrol, insurance, servicing and MOTs. If cashless payment was introduced, this would not affect this group as debit/credit card payments via chip and pin and contactless methods will still be accepted.
<b>Disability</b>	These proposals do not affect our disabled users. Blue Badge holders can park for free on any car park without the need to purchase a pay and display ticket.	<p>Concerns from customers raised that those with physical dexterity conditions – such as arthritis cannot use a mobile phone.</p> <p>Concerns from customers raised that some people with certain mental health conditions might struggle to use a mobile phone to make a payment, e.g., someone dealing with severe anxiety.</p>	No specific disproportionate negative impacts identified for this group at this time. If location code is known and account set up, it should be easier for people with mobility-related disabilities to pay via app, phone or text compared to using a machine.
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	0.4% identify with a gender different from their sex registered at birth	No specific disproportionate negative impacts identified for this group at this time.	No specific disproportionate negative impacts identified for this group at this time

<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Figures show there were <b>3,717 live births</b> in Cheshire East in 2022 – a fall from 3,806 the year before.	Clear and accessible communications to ensure people with mobility issues, those using prams, pushchairs etc are aware of the options available to them.	No specific disproportionate negative impacts identified for this group at this time. Clear and accessible communications to ensure people with mobility issues, those using prams, pushchairs etc are aware of the options available to them.
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	<p>In 2020, The FCA financial life survey report found that a significant number of people from a Black and Racially Minorities background (4%) do not have a bank account (are unbanked), compared to people from a White UK background (2%).</p> <p>In 2021, 94.4% (376,543) of usual residents in Cheshire East identified their ethnic group within the high-level “White” category, a decrease from 96.6% (357,627) in the 2011.</p>	Digital exclusion may occur from the app, phone, and text options if the user does not have a bank card or uses English as an additional language.	<p>Motorists generally do have credit/debit cards as a means of payment for petrol, insurance, servicing and MOTs. The impact we are proposing does not affect this group as debit/credit card payments will still be accepted.</p> <p>Produce accessible and culturally aware communications to ensure people with English as an additional language are made aware of the options available to them, including the fact that most mobile phones have options for a translator for websites that could be used. Utilise the support and expertise of representative groups to ensure information is as accessible as possible and actions are targeted to ensure a broad spectrum of concerns are addressed. Gather and analyse customer satisfaction data from diverse Black and Racially Minorities groups and faith groups and engage with those community groups to learn about their barriers and ideas for solutions/ mitigations.</p>

<b>Religion or belief</b>	There is no data to suggest this group is affected by this change.	No specific disproportionate impacts identified for this group at this time.	No specific impacts of the scheme identified for this group.
<b>Sex</b>	51% of the population is female and 49% male.	No specific disproportionate impacts identified for this group at this time.	No specific disproportionate impacts identified for this group at this time.
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<p>All residents aged 16 and over in Cheshire East: 329,471 (100.0%)</p> <p>Straight or Heterosexual: 301,391 (91.5%)</p> <p>Gay or Lesbian: 4,238 (1.3%)</p> <p>Bisexual: 2,982 (0.9%)</p> <p>Pansexual: 265 (0.1%)</p> <p>Asexual: 144 (0.0%)</p> <p>Queer: 50 (0.0%)</p> <p>All other sexual orientations: 420 (0.1%)</p> <p>Not answered: 19,981 (6.1%)</p>	No specific disproportionate impacts identified for this group at this time.	No specific disproportionate impacts identified for this group at this time.
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<p>Legal partnership status Persons Cheshire East Local Authority, count, %</p> <p>All residents aged 16 and over: 329,473 (100.0%)</p>	No specific disproportionate impacts identified for this group at this time.	No specific disproportionate impacts identified for this group at this time.

	<p>Never married and never registered a civil partnership: 104,002 (31.6%)</p> <p>Married or in a registered civil partnership: 163,794 (49.7%)</p> <p>Married: 163,192 (49.5%)</p> <p>In a registered civil partnership: 602 (0.2%)</p> <p>Separated, but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership: 6,679 (2.0%)</p> <p>Divorced or civil partnership dissolved: 32,336 (9.8%)</p> <p>Widowed or surviving civil partnership partner: 22,662 (6.9%)</p>		
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## 5. Justification, Mitigation and Actions

Mitigation	What can you do?
<p>Please provide justification for the proposal if negative impacts have been identified?</p> <p>Are there any actions that could be undertaken to mitigate, reduce or remove negative impacts?</p>	<p><b>Actions to mitigate any negative impacts or further enhance positive impacts</b></p> <p>It is important to note that the council is not forcing its service users to use a mobile payment app.</p> <p>The Council takes the concerns seriously in respect of the negative impacts that have been identified on persons within the particular protected characteristics groups.</p> <p><b><u>Actions to mitigate, reduce or remove the negative impacts</u></b></p>

<p>Have all available options been explored? Please include details of alternative options and why they couldn't be considered?</p> <p>Please include details of how positive impacts could be further enhanced, if possible?</p>	<p>Motorists can still pay at the machines using debit/credit cards, chip and pin or contactless. They can also use the mobile payment app (currently PayByPhone) which does NOT need to be downloaded. Parking can be paid by just calling up an automated payment line.</p> <p>Motorists can download the app to register or <a href="#">register online</a> to pay for their parking from their mobile phone. Payments can then be made by: Phone: 01158 720250; or Text: 65565.</p> <p>The council will make it clear that a smartphone (internet capability and functions as a minicomputer) or an android device (smartphone that runs the android operating system) are not a requirement to make payment. Payment can be made on approach to the machine with a debit or credit card. Payment can be made using a normal phone. All payment options are clearly displayed on the machine as well as on the Council's web pages.</p> <p>Although some older people, especially those that also fall into other groups with protected characteristics such as disability (e.g., arthritis in hands) or ethnicity (e.g., English as an additional language) may struggle to use these options – they can still use a debit/credit card at the machines.</p> <p>The council will widely promote these changes well in advance of any action and will signpost car park service users to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agencies and specialist groups which represent older service users and those more local groups across the borough such as Age UK, Action for Elders and MHA Befriending groups (who provide group and face2face support and newsletters); and</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Citizens support groups, the RVS and Able Community care who offer support to those with low digital skills by promoting initiatives to increase Digital Inclusion such as Good Things Foundation, Citizen's online and Age UK's phone based digital support.</li> </ul> <p>The council will also ensure that there are some user-friendly instruction posters for our service users, helping them to use either the mobile payment/app or debit/credit cards at the machines. These will be communicated to the support network and also put up at the car park locations.</p> <p>Blue badge (disabled) holders will be unaffected by the recommendations of this report.</p> <p>The customer contact centre will be there to assist users (and be trained) and provide advice on how to use the alternative methods of payment.</p> <p>The communication and support strategy will detail: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Communicate the Change to Customers:</b> Inform our customers about the newly introduced cashless payment system. Display signage, update our website and social media channels, and train our staff to educate customers about the benefits and simplicity of cashless payments. Encourage them to make the transition and assure them of the security measures in place.</li> <li>2. <b>Educate Customers:</b> Provide clear and concise information about the benefits and convenience of cashless payment methods. Highlight how these methods can save time, enhance security, and streamline the payment process. Emphasize the ease of use and the various payment options available to cater to different customer preferences.</li> <li>3. <b>Display Visible Signage:</b> Place eye-catching signage at our car parks and in our reception areas and pass these onto the local support groups. Use visuals that depict cashless payment symbols and encourage customers to "Go</li> </ol>
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	<p>Cashless.” This will attract attention and serve as a reminder that cashless payments are accepted and encouraged.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. <b>Create Awareness through Marketing Channels:</b> Leverage our website, social media platforms, and email newsletters to spread the word about our cashless payment options. Use these channels to inform customers about the convenience, security, and rewards associated with cashless transactions. Provide step-by-step guides on how to make cashless payments using different methods to make it easier for customers to adopt the technology.</li> <li>5. <b>Provide a Seamless and User-Friendly Experience:</b> Ensure that our cashless payment system is intuitive and easy to navigate. Simplify the payment process by minimizing the number of steps required to complete a transaction. This will enhance the overall customer experience and make customers more likely to choose cashless payment options in the future.</li> <li>6. <b>Train and Engage Staff:</b> Educate our staff about the benefits and functionalities of cashless payment methods. Encourage them to proactively promote and suggest cashless payment options to customers. This personal interaction can help build trust and confidence in the new payment methods.</li> </ol> <p>During the PCN (Penalty Charge Notices) appeals process, we can further educate users on the PayByPhone/Debit/Credit card processes and what services are available to them in the future.</p> <p>Our libraries are working with the Good Things Foundation to distribute free SIM cards and mobile data to local people facing digital exclusion through not being able to afford sim cards and mobile data. See our libraries page on free SIM cards and mobile data.</p> <p>Inclusive and accessible communication on all available payment methods and support services and how they can be accessed will be key. Evaluation and decision-making of PCNs (Penalty Charge Notices) will also need to consider diverse barriers and account for inclusive adjustments in decision-making.</p>
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	<p>The council will also promote strategies to ‘Bank the Unbanked.’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer the unbanked stepping stones to help ease them into services. These can be prepaid products like a prepaid credit card. This can prove quite useful in convincing many unbanked individuals to start using other offered services, especially when they open an account. This will lead to them having a debit card or pre-paid credit card.</li> </ul> <p>Going cashless will lead to a reduction in crime in local areas making them a safer environment for service users to go about their daily business.</p> <p>Cashless payments are safer and more convenient than needing to have the correct coins for the required length of stay.</p> <p>A Council telephone number is provided should motorists need to request assistance or report a fault.</p> <p>Access to a transactional bank account is seen by national Government as crucial. Payment Accounts Regulations 2015 legislate that the nine biggest current account providers in the UK must offer basic bank accounts free to anyone, including those who cannot open a standard current account because they are ineligible or people who don’t use banks.</p> <p>The council will continue to reach out via the libraries to improve digital inclusion and discuss other possible campaigns. Work with PayByPhone to continuously improve accessibility on all of its platforms, including the app, website and helpline/phone options – e.g., looking at whether a textphone or a BSL (British Sign Language) Interpreter option are able to be made available in the future.</p>
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	Increase accessibility and inclusivity of information on the changes and the mechanisms for feeding back views. Provide in Easy Read, Braille, and Large Print versions on request.
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## 6. Monitoring and Review -

<b>Monitoring and review</b>	<b>How will the impact of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure be monitored? How will actions to mitigate negative impacts be monitored? Date for review of the EIA</b>
<b>Details of monitoring activities</b>	<p>The impact of the proposals will be closely monitored using icasework (Complaints, FOIA requests, MP's letters etc). Revenue will be monitored and the payment methods for parking spaces will be monitored to see if there is an overall reduction in service users or if the revenue simply changes from one method to another over time.</p> <p>The service change will need to embed to get back to Business as usual before any alterations are made to ensure there are no knee-jerk reactions.</p>
<b>Date and responsible officer for the review of the EIA</b>	The EIA will be reviewed 6 months after implementation of the proposals circa 12 months from any committee decision from Jan 24. Lorraine Martin.

## 7. Sign Off

When you have completed your EIA, it should be sent to the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mailbox](#) for review. If your EIA is approved, it must then be signed off by a senior manager within your Department (Head of Service or above).

Once the EIA has been signed off, please forward a copy to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer to be published on the website. For Transparency, we are committed to publishing all Equality Impact Assessments relating to public engagement.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Richard Hibbert</b>
<b>Signature</b>	<i>R.J. Hibbert</i>
<b>Date</b>	6 December 2023

## 8. Help and Support

For support and advice please contact [EqualityandInclusion@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:EqualityandInclusion@cheshireeast.gov.uk)