

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** (Section 149 of the Equality Act) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making – it encourages public bodies to be more efficient and effective by understanding how different people will be affected by their activities, so that their policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people’s needs. The Council’s Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) includes an assessment of the community safety impact assessment to comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and will enable the Council to better understand the potential impact of proposals and consider mitigating action.

<b>Name or Brief Description of Proposal</b>	Increase Itchen bridge fees for non-residents and remove the Electric Vehicle concession
<b>Brief Service Profile (including number of customers)</b>	
<p>The Itchen Bridge first opened in 1977 to reduce the congestion from traffic leaving and entering the city. The bridge is operated and maintained by Southampton City Council and uses a variable toll, which is based on the height of the vehicle at the front axle. The Itchen Bridge serves as a major link between the east and west of the city, with a flow of around 20,000 vehicles per day. Crossing the bridge has always been subject to a toll payment, as introduced by the Hampshire Act upon opening of the bridge.</p> <p>Some regular users of the bridge make payments by using a Smartcities card, whilst other users currently pay by cash, including people passing through the city on business or for leisure, and non-regular users. Concessions are available to local residents and local commercial businesses when paying using a Smartcities card.</p> <p>Residents with a Blue Badge and who receive Smartcities eligible mobility related benefit payments are entitled to free travel across the Itchen Toll Bridge with a Smartcities card. Owners of fully electric vehicles can cross the Itchen Bridge free of charge with a SmartCities card by applying for an Electric Vehicle concession.</p> <p>The toll charges were last amended in 2019, with an increase in the peak and off peak charges of £0.20. The discount available to Southampton residents via the Smart Card was frozen.</p> <p>Below is a table which shows the current charge for crossing the Itchen Bridge:</p>	

	<b>Non-Smart Card users</b>	<b>Non-resident (Smart Card)</b>	<b>Local Resident (Smart Card)</b>	<b>Local Commercial (Smart Card)</b>	<b>Disabled person / Electric Vehicle (Smart Card)</b>
<b>Class 1</b> – motorcycles and three-wheeled vehicles	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free
<b>Class 2</b> – cars, small vans and small 4x4s <b>OFF PEAK</b>	70p	70p	30p	30p	Free
<b>Class 2</b> – cars, small vans and small 4x4s <b>*PEAK</b>	80p	80p	40p	40p	Free
<b>Class 3</b> large vans (e.g. transit) and large 4x4s	£1.40	N/A	60p	60p	N/A
<b>Class 4</b> HGVs	£25	£25	N/A	£2	N/A

\*Peak Times are 07:00-09:30 and 16:00 to 18:30

### **Summary of Impact and Issues**

The 1<sup>st</sup> proposal is to increase the Itchen Bridge Toll peak charges by 20p and off-peak charges by 10p to vehicles in classes 2 and 3 and above crossing the bridge, who are not eligible for a concession. This will impact on non-residents, whether using a smart card or paying in cash, who are driving cars, small vans, small 4x4 and large vans, which include large transit and 4x4 vans.

The increase in the toll would not apply to residents that receive a concessionary toll through use of a Smart Card. Residents who do not currently have a Smartcities card would need to apply for one in order to avoid paying the increased charges.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> proposal is to remove the Electric Vehicle Concession. This would impact on approximately 150-200 existing Electric Vehicle concession card holders.

The proposed charges would be as follows:

	<b>Non-Smart Card users</b>	<b>Non-resident (Smart Card)</b>	<b>Local Resident (Smart Card)</b>	<b>Local Commercial (Smart Card)</b>	<b>Disabled person</b>
<b>Class 1</b> – motorcycles and three-wheeled vehicles	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free
<b>Class 2</b> – cars, small vans and small 4x4s <b>OFF PEAK</b>	80p	80p	30p	30p	Free
<b>Class 2</b> – cars, small vans and small 4x4s <b>*PEAK</b>	£1.00	£1.00	40p	40p	Free
<b>Class 3</b> large vans (e.g. transit) and large 4x4s	£1.60	N/A	60p	60p	N/A
<b>Class 4</b> HGVs	£25	£25	N/A	£2	N/A

### **Potential Positive Impacts**

Increasing toll charges may encourage more people to seek alternative methods of transport (public transport, car shares, cycling etc.) and encourage drivers to use the principle eastern approach road leading to air quality and health improvements.

<b>Responsible Service Manager</b>	Richard Alderson
<b>Date</b>	04/10/22
<b>Approved by Senior Manager</b>	Rosie Zambra
<b>Date</b>	04/10/22

### **Potential Impact**

<b>Impact Assessment</b>	<b>Details of Impact</b>	<b>Possible Solutions &amp; Mitigating Actions</b>
<b>Age</b>	The increased charges will impact on drivers of all ages who are non-residents visiting the city for education, business or leisure and fall into the class 2 or 3 bracket, as well as residents who do not use a smart card.	Residents of the city can apply for a concession via a Smart Cities card and would therefore not have to pay for the increased amount
<b>Disability</b>	No specific impact as increased charges will impact on all drivers. Existing mitigation for drivers with mobility issues is already in place.	People with mobility issues may qualify for the Disabled Concession
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	No identified impact	N/A
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>	No identified impact	N/A
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	No identified impact	N/A
<b>Race</b>	No identified impact	N/A
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	No identified impact	N/A
<b>Sex</b>	No identified impact	N/A
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	No identified impact	N/A
<b>Community Safety</b>	No identified impact	N/A
<b>Poverty</b>	This proposal may have a negative impact on some users who are non-residents or non-smart card users, who are low income earners and need to travel to Southampton to work.	The price increase is to meet the running costs of the bridge, including maintenance and management. This charge would not apply to residents that receive a concessionary toll and this discount would be protected.
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	No identified impact	N/A
<b>Other Significant Impacts</b>	None	N/A