

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.

Name or Brief Description of Proposal	Removal of the off-peak classification from the Itchen Bridge toll for Class 2 vehicles and increase in toll for Class 4 vehicles
Brief Service Profile (including number of customers)	
<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 18-20,000 vehicles per day. Crossing the bridge has always been subject to a toll payment, upon opening of the bridge with reasons for maintaining the toll outlined in the Hampshire Act 1983.</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.</p> <p>The toll charges were last amended in 2022, with an increase in the peak charges of £0.20 and off peak charges of £0.10. 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>	

	Non-Smart Card users	Non-resident (Smart Card)	Local Resident (Smart Card)	Local Commercial (Smart Card)	Local Taxi Concession (Smart Card)
Class 1 – motorcycles and three-wheeled vehicles	Free	Free	Free	Free	N/A
Class 2 – cars, small vans and small 4x4s OFF PEAK	80p	80p	30p	30p	N/A
Class 2 – cars, small vans and small 4x4s *PEAK	£1.00	£1.00	40p	40p	N/A
Class 3 large vans (e.g. transit) and large 4x4s	£1.40	N/A	60p	60p	80p
Class 4 HGVs	£25	£25	£2	£2	N/A

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

Summary of Impact and Issues

The 1st proposal is to increase remove the off peak classification from the Itchen Bridge vehicles in classes 2 and above crossing the bridge, who are not eligible for a concession. This will impact all users, whether using a smart card or paying in cash, who are driving cars, small vans and small 4x4.

Southampton Residents that receive a concessionary toll through use of a Smart Card will still have access to the discounted toll, but there will no longer be an off peak option. Southampton Residents who do not currently have a Smartcities card would need to apply for one in order to benefit from this discount.

The 2nd proposal is to increase the toll for Class 4 vehicles from £25 to £40 and the associated concession from £2 to £3.

The proposed charges would be as follows:

	Non-Smart Card users	Non-resident (Smart Card)	Local Resident (Smart Card)	Local Commercial (Smart Card)	Local Taxi Concession (Smart Card)
Class 1 – motorcycles and three-wheeled vehicles	Free	Free	Free	Free	N/A
Class 2 – cars, small vans and small 4x4s	£1.00	£1.00	40p	40p	N/A
Class 3 large vans (e.g. transit) and large 4x4s	£1.40	N/A	60p	60p	80p
Class 4 HGVs	£40	£40	£3	£3	N/A

Potential Positive Impacts

Removing the off-peak classification would encourage an increased number of users currently crossing during that time to make a meaningful decision about whether to use that route for the benefit of reduced traffic along Portsmouth Road corridor. The increased Class 4 toll would strongly encourage HGV traffic to use the alternative routes for gaining access to the M27.

Responsible Service Manager	Richard Alderson
Date	09/11/23
Approved by Senior Manager	Pete Boustred
Date	09/11/23

Potential Impact

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
Age	Removal of the off-peak period will impact on drivers of all ages	Residents of the city not already doing so can apply for a concession via

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
		a Smart Cities card to benefit from the reduced toll
Disability	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
Gender Reassignment	No identified impact	N/A
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No identified impact	N/A
Pregnancy and Maternity	No identified impact	N/A
Race	No identified impact	N/A
Religion or Belief	No identified impact	N/A
Sex	No identified impact	N/A
Sexual Orientation	No identified impact	N/A
Community Safety	No identified impact	N/A
Poverty	This proposal may have a negative impact on users who need to travel to across the bridge to work or other reasons	Southampton Residents can access the concessionary toll via the Smart Cities card which will still constitute a significantly reduced rate
Health & Wellbeing	No identified impact	N/A
Other Significant Impacts	None	N/A