

West Berkshire Council

Equity Impact Assessment

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Place, Environment
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	The proposal is to increase the fees for hiring an artificial sports pitch in Newbury by 35%. This change is intended to reflect rising maintenance costs, operational expenses, and ensure the facility remains financially sustainable.
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	New
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	The proposal does not intentionally discriminate against any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. However, it may indirectly disadvantage: • Low-income individuals and families, who may find the increased cost prohibitive. • This group may include those with protected characteristics. • Community and grassroots sports groups, which often operate on limited budgets. • Young people, if schools or youth clubs reduce bookings due to higher costs. Positive impacts: • Improved financial sustainability of the facility. • Potential reinvestment into better maintenance and service quality. Negative impacts: • Increased cost may reduce affordability for some individuals, clubs, and community groups. • Possible decline in usage by lower-income households, grassroots teams, and youth groups. • Risk of reduced participation in sports, which could affect health and wellbeing outcomes for certain groups.

Completed By	Paul Hendry
Authorised By	Kofi Adu-Gyamfi
Date of Assessment	20/11/2025

Section 2: Detail of proposal

Context / Background Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.	Henwick Worth Playing Fields is a highly valued and often oversubscribed community sports facility, serving a wide range of users including local clubs, schools, and occasional community users. The site requires significant ongoing maintenance to ensure health and safety and quality standards, and these costs have been rising significantly due to inflation and increased material and labour expenses. Despite this, hire fees have not seen any substantial increase beyond inflation for many years. In recent years, the Council has invested heavily in the facility, including the installation of new sports infrastructure, replacement of the artificial pitch surface, refurbishment of public toilets, improvements to grass pitches, and upgrades to car parking provision. These enhancements have ensured the site remains an excellent venue for sport and physical activity, but the growing cost of maintenance and operation now requires a review of pricing to maintain financial sustainability and protect the long-term viability of the facility.
Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	The proposal is to increase the hire fees for the artificial sports pitch in Newbury by 35%. This adjustment aims to cover rising maintenance and operational costs, ensuring the facility remains financially sustainable and continues to meet safety and quality standards.

Evidence / Intelligence List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	UK-based studies and guidance indicate that increasing fees for sports facilities disproportionately affects protected groups, including disability, low income, youth, and older people: • International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics - IJSPP (2025): reported that local deprivation, lack of facility access, and policy decisions like price increases combine, reducing participation among women, over-75s, people with disabilities, and some ethnic groups. • Public Health England / University of Derby (2021): analysis of Sport England's "Active Lives" data showed socioeconomic, age, disability, ethnic minorities—all were disproportionately affected by cost/barrier increases. However, there is also evidence that sports facilities which are more economically viable and publicly available can have positive benefits in addressing inequality: • Local Government Association & International Case Studies: Illustrate how inclusive facility investments support cohesion, accessibility, and socioeconomic inclusion. • Activity Alliance is the national charity in England focused on disabled people's inclusion in sport and physical activity. Their factsheet 7 emphasises proactive management and co-production to continually improve access—vital for sustaining inclusive use. These findings highlight that maintaining a well-funded, inclusive pitch supports health equity, social inclusion, and cohesion, particularly for disabled individuals, low-income families, youth, women, older people, and ethnically diverse groups.
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Alternatives considered / rejected Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.	Other options we have implemented or explored include improving energy efficiency to reduce operating costs. Car parking charges were considered but discounted, as this could displace vehicles onto surrounding streets and grass verges, creating additional management challenges. We will continue to pursue local business sponsorship for the pitch or specific facilities (such as naming rights or advertising boards) and seek external grant funding through sports governing bodies. However, it should be noted that most grant funding opportunities are restricted to capital projects rather than ongoing operational costs.
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Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	☐	☐	☒	It is noted that youth teams and 'minis' may be adversely affected by fees increases.	Consider targeted pricing support or subsidies to maintain inclusive access	Paul Hendry. Countryside Manager	In consultation with clubs by 31 st March 2026
Disability	☒	☐	☐	Generally underrepresented at Henwick.	Ensure ongoing stakeholder engagement with underrepresented groups	Paul Hendry. Countryside Manager	Internal discussions with Adult Social Care by 31 st March 2026
Gender Reassignment	☒	☐	☐				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	☒	☐	☐				
Pregnancy & Maternity	☒	☐	☐				
Race	☒	☐	☐				
Sex	☒	☐	☐				
Sexual Orientation	☒	☐	☐				
Religion or Belief	☒	☐	☐				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (* Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	☒	☐	☐				
Areas of deprivation	☐	☐	☒	There are very few areas of deprivation in West Berkshire, but low-income families may be impacted.	Encourage off peak usage. Consider special hardship	Paul Hendry Countryside Manager	Monitor from implementation, consider requests ongoing.
Displaced communities	☐	☐	☒	Lack of participation	Encourage off peak usage.	Paul Hendry Countryside Manager	Monitor from implementation, consider requests ongoing.
Care experienced people	☐	☐	☒	Lack of participation	Encourage off peak usage.	Paul Hendry	Lack or participation
The Armed Forces Community	☒	☐	☐				

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	20/09/2026
Person Responsible for Review	Paul Hendry
Authorised By	Kofi Adu-Gyamfi, Service Lead – Climate Change