

Equality Impact Assessment: Screening Tool

Summary of proposal

Name of proposal	Withdrawal of the Council Policy on allowing barbecues to be held in parks.
Reference number (if applicable)	
Service Area	Greenspace and Leisure
Date screening completed	26/05/2022
Screening author name	Barry Emmerson
Fairness and Equality team sign off	
Authorising Director/Head of Service name	Andrew Bedford

Before completing the EQIA Screening Tool please read the guidance and FAQs. For further help and advice please contact equalities@islington.gov.uk.

Please provide a summary of the proposal.

Please outline:

- What are the aims/objectives of this proposal?
- Will this deliver any savings?
- What benefits or change will we see from this proposal?
- Which key groups of people or areas of the borough are involved?

The decision to allow barbecues in Islington's parks was taken in 2011 following a review of the management and enforcement of barbecues in parks across the borough.

Allowing barbecues in our parks has been extremely popular as most Islington residents do not have any private outdoor space to allow them to have a barbecue.

Permitting barbecues in parks reduces inequalities between those residents who have private garden space for barbecuing and those who do not, and who may also have too little indoor space for any shared meal

Despite large numbers of people supporting the policy the council has also received consistent complaints regarding the use of barbecues in particularly in relation to the smoke they could produce, increased levels of waste left in the park and damage caused to the grass.

The Council has not allowed BBQs in public for the past two years due to the pandemic and the need to discourage large gatherings. Circumstances have changed, such as the declaration of a climate emergency and the desperate need to improve air quality in line with changing air quality target, so the Council is now taking this opportunity to review the policy.

The review has resulted in the following recommendations:

1. We are recommending refreshing the current barbecue policy which will ban the public use of coal/wood barbecues in all public parks and open spaces unless part of a formally approved community or commercial event.
2. The ban on gas barbecues on safety grounds will continue unless part of the formal event.
3. To mitigate the impact the impact of the loss of the facility, we recommend continuing to trial the electric barbecues as a more environmentally friendly alternative to solid fuel barbecues. We will also continue to encourage people to have a picnic as an alternative to barbecuing.
4. We also recommend implementing a borough wide Public Space Protection Order which bans the use of solid fuel barbecues in Council managed parks and green spaces. This will ensure that the Council has the necessary powers to enforce the ban.

On whom will the proposal impact? Delete as appropriate.

Group of people	Impacted?
Service users	Yes
Residents	Yes

Group of people	Impacted?
Businesses	Yes
Visitors to Islington	Yes
Voluntary or community groups	Yes
Council staff	Yes
Trade unions	No
Other public sector organisations	No
Others	Please specify:

What consultation or engagement has taken place or is planned?

Please outline:

- Which groups or communities you have consulted/plan to consult
- Methods used/will use to engage (for example, focus groups)
- How insight gained from engagement or consultation has been/will be fed into decision making or proposal design

If you have not completed any engagement activity and do not plan to, you should outline why this decision has been made.

As part of the review there has been no direct community consultation. It has however considered the years of strong opinion and support that the council has received about the policy.

Consultation has however been conducted with various key internal stakeholder including:

- Environmental Pollution Manager
- Public Health Strategist - Camden and Islington Public Health
- Various Parks Service staff

There are several issues that have been experienced due to barbecues being allowed in parks. The Parks Service highlighted many operational challenges to the policy of allowing barbecues which include:

- Increases in the amounts of litter produced by people barbecuing. While we have no direct tonnage data, our staff have reported significant increases in litter and parks waste because of barbecues. Barbecues, particularly disposable ones are

often discarded without care and create hazards for those using the park and dogs. Discarded food and bones have been issues reported to us by park users.

- Increased in resourcing costs to manage inappropriate barbecue usage, especially at Highbury Fields. To minimise the impact on the park and those using it/living around it, we have needed to have 4+ staff security staff present at Highbury Fields to ensure people barbecue in the correct area, don't damage the grass, and dispose of the barbecues safely.
- Officer time managing complaints about the policy and the issues caused as a result (listed above). Significant officer time has been taken up managing complaints and issues generated as a direct result of the barbecue policy.

The main objection to barbecue use has been on the impact they have on air quality. Air pollution poses the biggest environmental risk to public health in the borough and is a particular risk to vulnerable groups, including the elderly, the very young, and those with existing health conditions.

Short-term exposure to air pollutants emitted from barbecuing has been associated with a mild respiratory response in healthy young adults without a change in lung function, but there is little direct evidence of the impact of air pollution specifically in the context of barbecues on other groups. More widely, susceptible groups with pre-existing lung or heart disease, as well as elderly people and children, are particularly vulnerable to adverse health impacts from particulate air pollution.

The Government are looking to change the UK national air quality objectives for PM2.5. When these are likely adopted, the whole of Islington will not meet the new standards. The new proposed UK standards, for PM2.5, are equivalent to interim target 4 of the new World Health Organisation (WHO) guideline levels for PM2.5. Even if/when Islington meets the new proposed UK guideline levels, Islington will still not meet the WHO 2021 guideline targets. All actions to reduce PM2.5 in the borough will need to be investigated and where possible taken to meet the proposed UK guideline targets. Restricting BBQ use in parks etc. would be an easy and visible measure to take that will show Islington is serious about tackling air pollution.

Barbecues provide an opportunity for health and wellbeing through social interaction, with shared food an important element of the meal, often culturally important. Permitting barbecues in parks reduces inequalities between those residents who have private garden space for barbecuing and those who do not, and who may also have too little indoor space for any shared meal.

However, the presence of barbecues and associated smoke may deter other residents from visiting and enjoying Islington's parks, particularly those who are more vulnerable to the impacts of air pollution.

Restricting barbecues use in parks and green spaces, supports Islington's commitment to tackling air pollution. Further, allowing resumption would send a very mixed message to local people, in particular about the burning of fossil fuel and its impacts

What impact will this change have on people with protected characteristics and/or from disadvantaged groups?

Of the groups you have identified above, please now indicate the likely impact on people with protected characteristics within these groups by checking the relevant box below. Use the following definitions as a guide:

Neutral – The proposal has no impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Positive – The proposal has a beneficial and desirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Negative – The proposal has a negative and undesirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

You should then assess whether the negative impact has a low impact, medium impact or high impact. Consider the level and likelihood of impact. Please also think about whether the proposal is likely to be contentious or perceived as a negative change by certain groups, as this could justify the completion of a full EQIA. See the guidance for help.

Protected characteristic	Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Description of the impact (if applicable)
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium	<p>This policy change will have both negative and positive impacts for all ages. Over by improving air quality you are benefiting all groups, especially the elderly and young who are more susceptible to air pollution.</p> <p>The impact of not being able to have a BBQ in a park will be felt more so by young people 18-30 who may not have access to private garden.</p>
Disability (include carers)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Low	<p>This policy change will have a positive impact on people with disabilities, especially ones that are affected by poor air quality.</p>

Protected characteristic	Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Description of the impact (if applicable)
Race or ethnicity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium	<p>Barbecues provide an opportunity for health and wellbeing through social interaction, with shared food an important element of the meal, often culturally important. Permitting barbecues in parks reduces inequalities between those residents who have private garden space for barbecuing and those who do not, and who may also have too little indoor space for any shared meal. This change will potentially have an impact on specific ethnic groups.</p> <p>However, the presence of barbecues and associated smoke may deter other residents from visiting and enjoying Islington's parks, particularly those who are more vulnerable to the impacts of air pollution.</p>
Religion or belief (include no faith)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	
Gender and gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Description of the impact (if applicable)
(male, female or non-binary)				
Maternity or pregnancy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Choose an item.	<p>The presence of barbecues and associated smoke may deter other people who are pregnant or with a young baby from visiting and enjoying Islington's parks, particularly those who are more vulnerable to the impacts of air pollution.</p> <p>By banning barbecues, this barrier to using the parks will be removed.</p>
Sex and Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	
Marriage or Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	
Other (e.g. people living in poverty, looked after children, people who are homeless or refugees)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium	The main reason for introducing this policy in 2013 was that with 80% of Islington's population living in flats, it was the Council's belief that the ability to enjoy a barbecue with family and friends should be something that all Islington residents can

Protected characteristic	Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Description of the impact (if applicable)
				<p>enjoy. This change will mean this ability is now removed for a large number of people.</p> <p>The benefit however is that the presence of barbecues and associated smoke may deter other people from visiting and enjoying Islington's parks, particularly those who are more vulnerable to the impacts of air pollution.</p> <p>By banning barbecues, this barrier to using the parks will be removed.</p>

How do you plan to mitigate negative impacts?

Where there are disproportionate impacts on groups with protected characteristics, please outline:

- The other options that were explored before deciding on this proposal and why they were not pursued
- Action that is being taken to mitigate the negative impacts

Action	Lead	Deadline	Comments
<p>To mitigate the impact of the loss of the facility, we recommend continuing to trial the electric barbecues as a more environmentally friendly alternative to solid fuel barbecues.</p>	<p>Barry Emmerson</p>	<p>Start trial by the 1st July 2022.</p>	<p>An alternative to solid fuel barbecues is electric hot plate barbecues which use a heating element to provide a hot cooking surface. These units have been used extensively in other countries, such as Australia and provide a more environmentally friendly alternative to solid fuel barbecues.</p> <p>The council is currently working with an externally provider of these units to trial them in the borough. The two-cooking plate unit is bookable via an online app which will allow users to check when the barbecue is available and pay online.</p> <p>Should the trial be successful electric barbecues could be an alternative and more environmentally friendly way of allowing people to enjoy a barbecue in an outdoor setting.</p>

Screening Decision	Outcome
Neutral or Positive – no full EQIA needed*.	Yes/No
Negative – Low Impact – full EQIA at the service director’s discretion*.	Yes/No
Negative – Medium or High Impact – must complete a full EQIA.	Yes/No
Is a full EQIA required? Service decision:	Yes/No
Is a full EQIA required? Fairness and Equality recommendation:	Yes/No

* If a full EQIA is not required, you are still legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.

Please send this completed EQIA Screening Tool to equalities@islington.gov.uk for quality checking by the Fairness and Equality Team.