

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM



Equality impact assessment is a legal requirement for all strategies, plans, functions, policies, procedures and services under the Equalities Act 2010. We are also legally required to publish assessments.

Section 1: Description

Department	Places		Lead officer responsible for assessment		Chris Williams	
Service	Highway & Transport		Other members of team undertaking assessment		Jenny Marston Janet Mills Neil Roberts	
Date	3 September 2012		Version		2.0	
Type of document (mark as appropriate)	Strategy	Plan	Function	Policy	Procedure	Service
Is this a new/existing/revision of an existing document (mark as appropriate)	New		Existing		Revision	
<p>Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation)</p> <p>Please attach a copy of the strategy/plan/function/policy/procedure/service</p>	<p>Proposed reductions in public transport support</p> <p>The budget proposals anticipate a reduction in funding devoted to subsidising public transport. The adopted support criteria (agreed by Cabinet on 1st August 2011) target the support at those services deemed to most meet the strategic needs of the council. The criteria aim to provide a fair, transparent and accountable process to manage contracts within budget constraints, provide maximum value for money and support wider strategic considerations in the Council's Local Transport Plan. These criteria contain specific reference to the needs of older and disabled residents to discharge the council's obligations under the Transport Act 1985.</p> <p>The proposal is to withdraw support for certain services, which when assessed against the adopted criteria, are considered "low priority" relative to other supported services. The majority of bus services in Cheshire East are operated commercially by local bus operators without subsidy from the Council and these services are largely unaffected by any budgetary review.</p>					
Who are the main stakeholders? (eg general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences)	Transport users, including disabled users, older people, young people. Press & media, businesses, service providers (e.g. health care). Public transport operators					

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Section 2: Initial screening

Who is affected? (This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)	All residents of Cheshire East – subsidised bus services are available to all and therefore potentially all elements of the community are affected.										
Who is intended to benefit and how?	The proposal aims to deliver a balanced budget in 2012/13 by reducing subsidy for public bus services. The key beneficiary is therefore the local taxpayer.										
Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?	Yes – The impact on older people, disabled people and low income families may prevent access to work and key services – even with mitigation.										
Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?	No										
Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected? (eg will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)	Following the Council's withdrawal of subsidy, if bus operators decide to stop operating the service this is inevitably an unpopular and unwelcome development which may impact on relations between local communities, as well as between the Council and communities. It has the potential to disadvantage some groups more than others – eg frail older people, disabled residents.										
Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough evidence to prove otherwise)?	A higher proportion of public transport users in Cheshire East, tend to be older people, younger people, have a life long limiting illness or disability or are low income. To assist targeted groups, it is proposed to procure community/flexible transport through a competitive tender process to provide coverage across the borough. The aim of the new flexible transport system will be to ensure that residents living in areas where there is no fixed public transport will be able to access flexible transport 1 or 2 days a week.										
Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics? (Please tick)											
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion & belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pregnancy & maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Socio-economic status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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What evidence do you have to support your findings? (quantitative and qualitative) Please provide additional information that you wish to include as appendices to this document, i.e., graphs, tables, charts		Consultation/involvement carried out	
<p>In order to get a better understanding of the impacts of the withdrawal of the support for certain services a full and detailed consultation process was carried out between April and June 2012. The aim of the consultation was to fully understand the impact of the withdrawal of the subsidy on public transport with the local community and particularly with protected equality groups.</p> <p>Individuals and organisations were able to respond to the consultation by either completing an 'on-line' questionnaire, a paper questionnaire, by emailing or writing to the Council. Surveys were available from all Cheshire East libraries and main offices of the Council or by attending one of the consultation 'drop-in' events held in 10 locations around the borough. Over 1,600 people responded to the consultation, and a detailed report on the consultation feedback is available.</p> <p>In addition to the consultation, a further focus group was held to drill down into the impacts on the older population and disability groups.</p>		Yes	
Age	<p>The consultation suggests that the age profile of bus users does not match the age profile of the general population. 60% were aged 65+ including 26% aged 75+, whereas the overall profile in Cheshire East is that 24% of the adult population are aged 65+ including 11% aged 75+.</p> <p>Older respondents used buses to access services with many mentioning they shopped regularly to avoid carrying heavy bags. There was concern, mainly among older respondents, about the difficulty in making medical appointments to fit in with bus services. A concern for many older respondents was that they would be isolated and that a regular bus service was their lifeline.</p> <p>The consultation showed that older and younger age groups are less likely to have constant access to their own transport. A high proportion of younger respondents relied on bus services to get to their place of work, several mentioning that shift work meant that they needed to use early and late services.</p>	Yes	
Disability	<p>45% of respondents had a long standing illness, disability or infirmity and over four in five of these people said it limited their activities in some way.</p> <p>The focus group discussed that a major concern for the disabled was the fear of isolation and inability to get out of their house.</p> <p>Finally, particular issues surrounding specific disabilities were raised – such as blind and partially sighted people find it difficult or impossible to use some forms of transport such as general public transport. For such people, flexible transport</p>	Yes	

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	(with its associated level of additional assistance from drivers) was considered to be more suitable.		
Gender reassignment	This policy is not expected to impact on gender reassignment	N/A	
Marriage & civil partnership	This policy is not expected to impact on marriage & civil partnership	N/A	
Pregnancy & maternity	This policy is not expected to impact on pregnancy and maternity	N/A	
Race	This policy is not expected to impact on race.	N/A	
Religion & belief	This policy has a marginal impact since the withdrawal of support for Sunday services may affect worshippers more than other religious groups.	N/A	
Sex	National data suggests that more women use bus services than men and the Public Transport consultation survey analysis showed that 39% of respondents were male and 61% female, a higher proportion of females than found in the general population which are 49% and 51% respectively.	Yes	
Sexual orientation	This policy is not expected to impact on sexual orientation	N/A	
Carers	This policy is not expected to impact on carers	Yes	
Socio-economic status	The consultation showed that the majority of respondents who gave an answer were retired (66%). Over a fifth (21%) were employed either full, part-time or self employed. Over half (56%) had access to a car either themselves or by someone else in their household. This proportion is considerably lower than the 82% of households in Cheshire East who had access to a car from the 2001 Census of Population data. This left 44% (528 individuals) reliant on other transport.	N/A	
Proceed to full impact assessment? (Please tick)		Yes	Date –

If yes, please proceed to Section 3. If no, please publish the initial screening as part of the suite of documents relating to this issue

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Section 3: Identifying impacts and evidence

This section identifies if there are impacts on equality, diversity and cohesion, what evidence there is to support the conclusion and what further action is needed

Protected characteristics	Is the policy (function etc....) likely to have an adverse impact on any of the groups? Please include evidence (qualitative & quantitative) and consultations	Are there any positive impacts of the policy (function etc....) on any of the groups? Please include evidence (qualitative & quantitative) and consultations	Please rate the impact taking into account any measures already in place to reduce the impacts identified High: Significant potential impact; history of complaints; no mitigating measures in place; need for consultation Medium: Some potential impact; some mitigating measures in place, lack of evidence to show effectiveness of measures Low: Little/no identified impacts; heavily legislation-led; limited public facing aspect	Further action (only an outline needs to be included here. A full action plan can be included at Section 4)
Age	<p>Yes – The profile of public transport users includes a significant proportion of older and young people. The consultation feedback report contains further details.</p> <p>Withdrawals of Council support for certain services may result in bus services ceasing to operate or operating in a different way, which may have a disproportionate impact on older people and young people.</p>	<p>Concessionary fare data has been incorporated into the Council's support criteria and those services carrying a high proportion (+50%) of older and disabled people score more highly in the assessment – resulting in greatly likelihood support continues.</p> <p>The existing concessionary fare scheme allows people over the age of 65 to use public transport for free after the 9.30 am. Concessionary fare pass can be used on all</p>	High	<p>The responses from the consultation and focus groups have helped shape the development of a strategy and assist with forming the mitigation measures with the aim to reduce the impact of the changes in subsidies. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and specification of flexible demand responsive transport • Availability of alternative suitable public transport and minor route or timetable amendments

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		<p>commercial bus services (which cover about 90% of all public service busses in Cheshire East) as well as supported bus services</p> <p>Flexible transport is available free to all concessionary pass holders.</p> <p>Flexible demand-responsive transport is targeted at older (especially frail) people.</p>		
Disability	<p>Yes –.</p> <p>The proposed budget reductions may adversely impact on disabled transport users, as revealed during the consultation process and contained in the consultation feedback report.</p>	<p>The services which carry a high proportion of concessionary fare passengers are scored more highly in the assessment – resulting in mitigation of some potential impacts for disabled people. Approximately 10% of concessionaires qualify by way of a disability, with 90% of usage based on age.</p> <p>Continuation of (and enhancement of) flexible transport is seemed as a key way of mitigating adverse impacts and promoting equality.</p>	High	<p>Continuation of engagement with groups representative of disabled people is seen as key to further actions to mitigate adverse impacts and promote equality. Specifically, the design and operation of flexible demand responsive services is a future action that will mitigate any adverse impacts.</p> <p>Following comments in the consultation process from the Deafness Support society, the council will consider a text and email service to assist deaf people access flexible transport .</p>

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				<p>In addition to flexible transport, the council will consider additional support for other forms of community transport, these being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shop mobility • Voluntary car schemes <p>The council is also working with the Iris Centre, to ensure that the transport needs of blind and partially sighted people are represented and services designed to meet their specific needs.</p>
Gender reassignment	No	No	Low	
Marriage & civil partnership	No	No	Low	
Pregnancy and maternity	No	No	Low	
Race	No	No	Low	
Religion & belief	No	No	Low	

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Sex	Yes – Nationally public bus services are generally used more by women than by men – consequently any reduction in bus service provision may have a greater effect on women.	No	Low	No further action is possible to mitigate impacts of subsidy reduction.
Sexual orientation	No	No	Low	
Carers	Yes – Carers of older and disabled people are more likely to be users of public transport. The criteria considers the needs of older and disabled people, this in turn assists in mitigating the impact on carers.	No	Low	Consideration be given to companion bus passes for carers of people with disabilities. In addition, engagement with representative groups is likely to identify specific needs and allow services to be redesigned around these needs.
Socio-economics	The proposal is likely to have an impact on some socio-economic groups, especially low paid, unemployed, pensioners and large families who are more likely to be users of public transport.	No	Medium	
Is this project due to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors? If yes, please indicate how you have ensured that the partner organisation complies with equality legislation (e.g. tendering, awards process, contract, monitoring and performance measures)				

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Section 4: Review and conclusion

Summary: provide a brief overview including impact, changes, improvement, any gaps in evidence and additional data that is needed			
<p>The impact on older people, disabled people and low income families may prevent access to work and key services – even with mitigation. The full impact of the proposed budget reductions will be determined as a result of detailed consultation. The Council will continue to work with specific groups and focus groups to monitor the impact of the withdrawal of support for certain bus services</p>			
Specific actions to be taken to reduce, justify or remove any adverse impacts	How will this be monitored?	Officer responsible	Target date
Discussions with operators for opportunities for supported services to become commercial, hence no or reduced impact on bus users	Routes where support is no longer offered will be brought to the notice of the public transport sector; registrations received	Chris Williams	1 January 2013
Engagement with groups representative of older and disabled people to inform design and operation of demand responsive transport	Ongoing	Jenny Marston	Ongoing
Procurement of revised flexible demand-responsive transport service	Senior Management monthly team meetings	Chris Williams	31 March 2013
Support for local community transport schemes including flexible transport and voluntary cars	Discussions with users, providers etc.	Neil Roberts	Ongoing
When will this assessment be reviewed?	31 March 2013		
Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?	No		

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Lead officer signoff	Chris Williams	Date	3 September 2012
Head of service signoff		Date	