



North

Yorkshire County Council

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA): evidencing paying due regard to protected characteristics

Bus subsidy reduction
September 2015

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যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔



Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are public documents. EIAs accompanying reports going to County Councillors for decisions are published with the committee papers on our website and are available in hard copy at the relevant meeting. To help people to find completed EIAs we also publish them in the Equality and Diversity section of our website. This will help people to see for themselves how we have paid due regard in order to meet statutory requirements.

Name of Directorate and Service Area	Business and Environmental Services, Integrated Passenger Transport
Lead Officer and contact details	Richard Owens: Assistant Director (IPT)
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the EIA	Richard Owens: Assistant Director (IPT) Catherine Price – Transport Integration

	Manager John Laking – Policy Development Manager and IPT Equality lead Michael Douglas – BES Equality Lead Maria Hill – Legal and Democratic Services
How will you pay due regard? e.g. working group, individual officer	Internal Working Group
When did the due regard process start?	February 2015
Sign off by Assistant Director (or equivalent) and date	Richard Owens October 2015

Section 1. Please describe briefly what this EIA is about. (E.g. are you starting a new service, changing how you do something, stopping doing something?)

In January 2014 the Council's Executive considered a report proposing a reduction in bus subsidies by £2m per annum; this was agreed and implemented from April 2014. At the same time, The Executive asked the Corporate Director, Business & Environmental Services to prepare proposals which would reduce the budget for bus subsidies to £1.5m per annum.

This assessment looks at the impact of reducing expenditure on local bus services and the provision of alternatives, with particular reference to the impact on people with protected characteristics.

We launched a Public Consultation which ran between 15th May and 14th August 2015 and this EIA has been re-visited and amended following the analysis of the information that has come out of the Consultation process. A copy of the consultation information pack is included as Appendix 1. This provides details of the specific services that are affected, mitigation measures that we propose to introduce and the rationale for the selected services.

Section 2. Why is this being proposed? (E.g. to save money, meet increased demand, do things in a better way.)

The proposals are part of the Council's requirement to reduce expenditure by £75.9m between 2015 and 2019.

In managing a reduction in the budget for subsidised bus services over the past four years we have taken the approach that we will ensure people in communities have core daytime transport services that allow access to a town or village centre where the services and facilities they need are located.

In 2011/12 we withdrew subsidy from all evening and Sunday services to reduce the budget by £600k. This resulted in a limited impact for passengers as these services are deemed to be a lower priority and passenger's core day time access to travel was maintained.

In 2014/15 we reduced our budget by £2m:-

- By removing subsidy from town services which we believed could be (and in general were) provided commercially
- by reducing frequency to two hourly this maintained core access, but offered less choice
- by withdrawing subsidy from poorly performing contracts, i.e. where the subsidy per passenger is greater than £6 or where journeys carried fewer than 3 people. In these low use areas community transport (CT) is often a more suitable option and we ensured there was a CT opportunity for people without access to transport
- by reducing discretionary home to school transport or increasing the fares to a sustainable level. In many cases, schools provided their own discretionary transport for pupils.

We are now required to reduce our budget further to £1.5m and in developing proposals to do this, we have built on our previous experience and analysed all of our contracts with a view to our overall strategy. See section 3 below

Section 3. What will change? What will be different for customers and/or staff?

Our overall strategy is :-

- i) To use the budget allocation for support for bus services to ensure that as many communities as possible have transport services which contribute to alleviating isolation and loneliness and allow people to live independently.
- ii) To support the local economy by, where possible, maintaining access to the National Rail network and providing public transport links between key service centres.
- iii) To ensure that the services we subsidise give value for money

Listed below are the areas we have considered -

- **Commercial services.** When we reduced our subsidy budget in 2014, we worked successfully with operators to ensure that some services were retained on a commercial basis. Having had some further discussions with operators, we have identified further opportunities for services to be provided on a commercial basis. This will include contracted journeys which are "add ons" to what are otherwise commercial services – our proposal is to withdraw

our subsidy and allow operators to modify their commercial services accordingly.

- **Tackling our remaining high cost contracts (£100k+ pa):** Analysis of our contracts showed that it would not be possible to achieve our saving target without reducing the cost of these high value contracts. We have calculated the cost to provide a service using our own fleet and will invite operators to provide a service for the reduced level of subsidy. Where operators fail to offer a service for the funding available, or where the community feel the level of service is insufficient for their needs, we will provide a core day time service using our own fleet. **Providing services using the Council's fleet.** The Council already provides local bus services in Skipton, Harrogate and Scarborough. In a number of cases we can significantly reduce the amount of subsidy required by operating the services ourselves. **Making sure we get value for money.** There are some services where we can make changes to reduce the number of vehicles and drivers required to provide the service and make a significant saving.
- **Making best use of community transport.** We have a number of subsidised services which could be provided more cost effectively by the community transport sector utilising volunteer drivers. We will explore these opportunities with the community transport operators. We would not expect a significant change in the level of service provided if the community transport operators provide the service, but passengers may need to book their trip. We would continue to allow concessionary pass holders to travel free on any replacement service.

In order to identify areas for possible savings we have reviewed all our existing contracts and proposed individual actions for each of them. The detailed proposals for each area/service are contained in the Consultation document at Appendix 1

Section 4. What impact will this proposal have on council resources (budgets)?

Cost neutral? Y/N

Increased cost? Y/N

Reduced cost? Y / N

Please explain briefly why this will be the result.

Withdrawing subsidy as we propose would result in a reduced budget of £1.5m to spend on subsidised bus services in North Yorkshire.

Section 5. Will	No	Make	Make	Why will it have this effect? State
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this proposal affect people with protected characteristics?	impact	things better	things worse	any evidence you have for your thinking.
We gathered the information below from the previous bus subsidy consultation exercise that we undertook in 2013/14. This has been updated where applicable with data from the Consultation undertaken in summer 2015.				
Age			✓	We know that older people are proportionally more likely to use buses than younger people. From analysis of local bus subsidy reductions survey in 2013 we saw that 54% of people who responded were aged 65+, from the 2015 data, the figure is similar at 53%. When looking at our bus survey work of people who use our subsidised services, we see that over 80% are concessionary pass holders. Older people are less likely to make alternative arrangements. Some young people of school age may be affected by the decisions taken on those who pay a fare to use the transport network to access school.
Disability			✓	During this Consultation 18% of those that responded reported themselves as having a limiting illness or disability. It is recognised that disabled people may be less able to make alternative transport arrangements. In our Consultation in 2013 40% of respondents reported having a limiting condition or disability.
Sex (Gender)			✓	In this Consultation we found that 60% of respondents were women. This suggests that women may be more adversely affected by the change to our subsidised services than men.
Race	✓			We have no evidence of an impact in relation to Race

Gender reassignment	✓			We have no evidence of an impact in relation to Gender reassignment
Sexual orientation	✓			We have no evidence of an impact in relation to sexual orientation
Religion or belief	✓			We have no evidence of an impact in relation to religion or belief.
Pregnancy or maternity			✓	Potentially if the pregnancy or maternity makes driving not possible
Marriage or civil partnership	✓			We have no evidence of an impact in relation to marriage or civil partnership
Section 6. Would this proposal affect people for the following reasons?	No impact	Make things better	Make things worse	Why will it have this effect? Give any evidence you have.
Live in a rural area			✓	There are fewer facilities within walking distance and so the need to travel is greater. Fewer local bus services will mean less opportunity to travel. The cost of travel for all ages, particularly young people is generally higher in rural areas than urban (on average £58.80 per week is spent on transport in urban areas, compared to £77.40 for rural areas) ONS Feb 2013: Weekly household expenditure,
Have a low income			✓	People with lower income are less likely to have access to private transport and are less able to make alternative arrangements.

Section 7. Will the proposal affect anyone more because of a combination of protected characteristics? (E.g. older women or young gay men?) State where this is likely to happen and explain what you think the effect will be and why giving any evidence you have.

The combination of age and or living in a rural area with one of the protected characteristics would make the impact greater.

Section 8. Only complete this section if the proposal will make things worse for some people. Remember that we have an anticipatory duty to make reasonable

adjustments so that disabled people can access services and work for us.

Can we change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts?

In general our proposals will maintain an adequate level of service to enable people to travel at least to their nearest market town/service centre. We have considered whether any additional bus or community transport services are required through the analysis of the Consultation returns and any changes we are proposing as a result of the comments we received are included in the Transport Scrutiny Committee Report . Our aim has been to ensure that no citizen will be completely isolated by ensuring there is always at least community transport offer available. In particular in the areas where we proposed a 5 day community transport solution, the view from the public meetings and from Consultation responses was that CT isn't seen as a viable solution, and people want a conventional service that operates to a published timetable, that they don't need to book.

Can we achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people?

The Council could choose not to make a contribution to funding shortfall from support for local bus services budget; however this would mean greater reductions for other Council services.

We could generate more revenue to lower the cost of the subsidy, however the majority of passengers (70% over 70) using subsidised services have a concessionary bus pass and therefore are entitled to travel free. Whilst some passengers have indicated a willingness to pay in the past, current legislation prevents us charging concessionary pass holders a fare on registered local bus services, however citizens could contribute to these services by Parish Councils levying a small precept to contribute to the subsidy for the service. As part of the consultation questionnaire we asked Parish Councils and other organisations whether they would consider providing additional funding to enhance transport services; just over 3% of those responding on behalf of a Parish Council or other organisation said they would consider providing some funding.

We can help to promote public and community transport to ensure more people are aware of the transport options that are available to them. In this regard we are working with commercial and community operators to promote services through a series of local radio campaigns.

We are working with voluntary sector contacts to develop volunteer recruitment events to ensure more transport can be provided by the Community Transport sector.

We have developed proposals for the expansion of the volunteer car scheme in the Harrogate Borough and Craven District areas.

If we need to achieve our aim and can't remove or reduce the adverse impacts get advice from legal services. Summarise the advice here. Make sure the advice is passed on to decision makers if the proposal proceeds.

Legal and Democratic Services advice is that whilst the Council has a duty to secure the provision of appropriate services to meet public transport requirements, within the

county, which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose, the duty is limited to securing the provision it considers appropriate to secure. The Council would therefore be acting legally in taking the proposed action. Changes to the network may affect some pupils who are not entitled to free home to school transport under the Council's policy but will not affect the Council's statutory duty to provide home to school transport.

Section 9. If the proposal is implemented how will you find out how it is really affecting people? (How will you monitor and review the changes?)

We recognise the importance of monitoring the impact of any changes post implementation and will:-

- monitor correspondence and complaints following the introduction of any changes
- monitor the usage of mitigation measures that are put in place
- where subsidised services are proposed to be delivered on a commercial basis we will work with operators to provide whatever support we can to ensure the service is well used and remains viable. Activities will include promoting services through local radio and social media campaigns, providing capital funding for real time passenger information and supporting electric vehicle infrastructure to encourage the take up of electric buses
- Work with the HAS Prevention team and local agencies to identify and address any issues which arise. Liaison will be progressed at senior management level through regular cross directorate Transport Board meetings and at an operational level through attendance at appropriate Prevention Team officer meetings.

Section 10. List any actions you need to take which have been identified in this EIA

Action	Lead	By when	Progress
Carry out a 12 week public consultation	CP	From 15 May 2015	Consultation pack prepared and ready to be launched. Consultation completed and questionnaire results from 1200 respondents has been recorded and analysed. The information received through the consultation has informed the revised proposals and recommendations. A summary of the responses received is included in the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 14 th October at Appendix 5 and Appendix 6 shows graphs

			illustrating the number of responses to the consultation questions.
Maintain internal stakeholder working group	RO	On-going	Initial meetings with HAS and CYPS to discuss proposals and impacts; proposals have been presented to Management Board – 2020 Programme Board
Carry out drop in sessions to inform communities of the options available and hear views. Details of the times and venues for these sessions are in the consultation pack.	RO	From May 2015	Drop in sessions and public events were held at 9 venues across the county where more far reaching service changes were proposed. These sessions gave people the opportunity to voice a collective opinion and to engage individually to seek answers to their particular concerns. The events were generally well attended and the views expressed have been incorporated into the revised proposals and recommendation. A summary of the key points is included as Appendix 2 to the Transport Scrutiny Report. Officers attended the North Yorkshire Partnership, Disability Forum meeting during the Consultation to raise awareness of the proposals and to ask members to contribute to the Consultation process.
Raise awareness of Car and CT Schemes and ensure people know how to book these services	JL	January 2017	
Work with the HAS Prevention Team and local agencies to identify and address any issues which arise	CAP/JL	April 2016 onwards	
Work with operators of commercial services to provide whatever support we can to ensure	CAP	April 2016 onwards	

the service is well used and remains viable			
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10.1 Conclusion:

The information we have gathered through both the Consultation and public engagement sessions along with this Equality Impact Assessment has highlighted the importance that people place on the ability to access services and remain active and independent in their communities

It has highlighted a number of areas where our original proposals were not felt to provide a suitable level of access and where these should be changed or refined. It is felt however, that whilst an adverse impact may be felt in communities affected, the impact has been suitably mitigated by the revised proposals or the delivery of transport designed and delivered by the community.