



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Stage 1: Title and aims of the activity (“activity” is an umbrella term covering policies, procedures, guidance and decisions).	
Service	Infrastructure Service
Section	Transportation
Title of the activity etc.	Support to Passenger Transport

<p>Aims of the activity</p>	<p>The aim is to accommodate a Transportation budget reduction of £415k per annum whilst taking into account the impact on service users including those within the protected groups. It is proposed to reduce spend by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bus Shelter Repairs & Maintenance: Shelter Cleaning - £15k reduction in budget (Infrastructure budget) The bus shelter cleaning schedule is currently 4-weekly for urban areas and 6-weekly for rural. Cleaning targets are included in the Quality Partnership for Public Transport (a partnership of Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council, First, Stagecoach and Nestrans). It is proposed to reduce the regularity of routine cleaning and adapt a responsive approach to cleaning rather than following a rigid schedule – subject to approval by partners. 2. Bus Shelter Repairs & Maintenance: Bus Stop and Shelter Repairs - £15k reduction in budget (Infrastructure budget) The budget is consistently fully utilised or over-subscribed so the reduction in spend will have an impact on the condition of bus stops and shelters which could have a detrimental effect on the perception of public transport and the reputation of the Council. If implemented care will need to be taken to monitor any potential health and safety issues caused by disrepair. 3. Region-wide real time passenger information (RTPI) system - £10k income generation (Information budget) It is proposed to enter negotiations with First Aberdeen regarding the bus operator’s participation in RTPI at a charge of £10k per annum towards operational costs. If such an arrangement can be brokered it has the potential to derive efficiency savings for both parties. This proposal has no direct impact on protected groups but is subject to agreement by First Aberdeen. 4. Community Transport Support - £15k reduction (Local Bus Services Support budget) It is proposed to reduce the available budget for spend on community transport support which includes grant funding and ad-hoc funding, e.g. for training. 5. Local Bus Service Support - £80k reduction (Local Bus Services Support budget) It is proposed to reduce the available budget for spend on the support of registered local bus service routes/journeys. 6. TaxiCard Scheme - £280k reduction in Concessionary Related Initiatives budget This would be accommodated by withdrawing the TaxiCard Scheme which provides a discount on taxi and rail travel for elderly and disabled residents who have difficulty walking.
<p>Author(s) & Title(s)</p>	<p>Marion Mackay, Principal Officer (DRT, Fares & Ticketing) - acting as Transportation Equalities Champion</p>

Stage 2: List the evidence that has been used in this assessment.

<p>Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).</p>	<p>Minutes of Area Bus Forums – detailing feedback from residents within the six council Areas on bus services and related infrastructure and information provision. This includes requests, complaints, suggestions and general comments.</p> <p>Results of annual Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire – indicating satisfaction with bus services and related infrastructure and information provision. Provides a year on year comparison of satisfaction of bus users in Aberdeenshire, benchmarked against satisfaction in other parts of the UK.</p> <p>Of the number of passengers interviewed in 2016: 60% were female, 45% were aged 60+, 20% were aged 16-25 years.</p> <p>Public Transport Unit (PTU) records of public transport requests and complaints.</p> <p>Bus passenger survey data and ticket machine data – indicating that bus services tend to be used by women, older people, younger people and some people with disabilities.</p> <p>Six-monthly reports from Community Transport groups in receipt of grant funding.</p> <p>TaxiCard report regarding number of users by eligibility type from in-house database</p> <p>TaxiCard trip usage information collated from used vouchers</p> <p>TaxiCard holder customer satisfaction survey Dec 2015</p> <p>Results of the Council’s Budget Engagement Survey</p>
<p>Internal consultation with staff and other services affected.</p>	<p>The Public Transport Manager has been consulted.</p>
<p>External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils).</p>	<p>The potential withdrawal of the TaxiCard Scheme was included in the Council’s community engagement process in Dec 2016/Jan 2017. Otherwise due to the nature of the budget process there has been no opportunity for external consultation on the proposed budget reduction.</p>
<p>External data (census, available statistics).</p>	<p>Association of Transport Coordination Officers (ATCO) benchmarking statistics on spend and service provision for public transport and unconventional transport services, and associated information and infrastructure.</p> <p>Comparison with TaxiCard (or similar schemes) provided by other local authorities – eligibility & benefits</p>

Other (general information as appropriate).

The budget includes the following areas of service delivery:

Support for local bus services

Support for, and operation of, demand responsive transport services (A2B dial-a-bus)

Grant funding for community transport organisations.

Fares and ticketing initiatives, for example the U21 concessionary fare scheme for young people

TaxiCard Scheme providing discounted taxi fares for older people and people with disabilities

Concessionary travel for community transport dial-a-bus passengers

Support for THInC – transport advice service for people attending health or social care appointments

Bus service information

Bus stop and bus shelter maintenance

Consideration has been given to finding ways of making efficiency savings. An assessment has been made of the likely impact on residents of withdrawing funding from the above-listed range of services. It is considered that the proposals have a lesser direct effect than reducing budget on other aspects of Transportation service delivery.

Community Transport

The Council provides financial and other support to the community and voluntary transport sector for transport services such as dial-a-bus shopping services, volunteer car schemes and community minibus hires. Most dial-a-bus and volunteer car passengers are older and/or disabled people who benefit from the transport provided and also from the associated social interaction which helps to counteract loneliness and isolation. Some groups hire out minibuses to community groups to enable younger people and/or children to travel to activities at affordable prices.

Spend includes: ongoing grant funding to groups via the Aberdeenshire Community Transport Initiative (ACTI); small-scale ad-hoc financial support to groups e.g. for minibus driver training; and the administration of the Aberdeenshire Community Transport Forum which provides transport providers with networking opportunities and advice.

Local Bus Service Support

The Council provides support for approximately 50 local bus services ranging from weekly shopper bus services to the hourly Service 290/1 (Aberdeen – Methlick) service. These routes/journeys, which are not commercially viable, cater for a variety of needs including work, health, shopping and education. The services are open to the general public carrying people of all ages and abilities.

Should the budget be reduced the Council's Performance Management Framework model (PMF), which is used to rank the performance of local bus service contracts, will be used to assist in determining which contracts should be terminated or varied. Other factors, such as the

needs of passengers from the Protected Groups, will also be taken into account when determining which bus journeys to withdraw.

It should be noted that it is not possible to start implementing savings until part-way through the financial year. Proposals to withdraw or vary local bus services must be lodged with the Scottish Traffic Commissioner at least 6 weeks before implementation and the Council requires to receive details at least 10 weeks before implementation to allow for consultation. This means that cuts in excess of £90k per annum will need to be made. For example, if local bus services were withdrawn from 1 June, in order to make £80k savings in financial year 2017/18, an annualised cut of £96k would require to be made.

TaxiCard Scheme:

TaxiCard is not a transport scheme, it is a concessionary travel scheme providing individual with discounts on the cost of taxi and rail travel. The withdrawal of the scheme should not result in the withdrawal of the availability of transport.

The taxi fare concession is: for trips costing under £10 the discount is 50%; for trips costing £10+ the discount is £5. The discount is available for up to 52 single taxi trips in each 3-month period.

There is a 50% discount for local rail travel.

Full details of the current TaxiCard concessionary travel scheme, including eligibility criteria and benefits are available on the Council website.

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/public-transport/concessionary-travel/taxicard/>

The scheme aims to help disabled and elderly infirm people who are unable to benefit from the Scotland-wide free bus travel scheme by virtue of their lack of mobility and/or who cannot access other suitable transport such as dial-a-bus or volunteer car schemes. The scheme is available to those who can only walk very short distances or those who are registered as blind or visually impaired.

The TaxiCard scheme was originally introduced to help people unable to use "conventional" bus services. At the time there were no wheelchair-accessible bus services in the area. Since then the bus network has changed greatly with buses requiring to adhere to PSVAR regulations which stipulate requirements for vehicles and drivers to assist people with disabilities. Low-floor buses operate on many routes. Unfortunately however coaches used on some routes (e.g. the Buchan Express and the Coastrider), whilst providing wheelchair access, have steps which older people find difficult to climb/descend.

Since the introduction of TaxiCard, the Council has introduced door-to-door dial-a-bus services aimed to assist the less mobile in many parts of Aberdeenshire. Also the Council supports community transport groups providing door-to-door transport services for elderly and disabled people.

There are 2,179 TaxiCard holders. It is estimated that:

	<p>58% are irregular taxi users or never use their TaxiCard = 1,264 25% are occasional taxi users = 545 people 8% are regular taxi users = 174 people 9% are very regular taxi users = 196 people</p> <p>Based on customer surveys it is understood that over 90% of TaxiCard holders never use the rail discount.</p> <p>There are approximately 20 TaxiCard holders aged under 16. Given that the number is so small and that is likely that parents/carers will deal with finances, it is considered that the impact on younger people is neutral.</p>
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Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.	
<p>Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold?</p>	<p>With regards to TaxiCard we do not know whether all TaxiCard users can afford to pay full fare and we do not have detailed information for each individual on the availability of alternative transport (public or private).</p> <p>The reduction in Local Bus Services budget will require the withdrawal/reduction of local bus services. The methodology used in the Council's PMF is currently being reviewed so it is not yet known which services will be recommended for withdrawal/reduction.</p> <p>Otherwise there are no further gaps in information but detailed implementation of various aspects of the proposals are subject to discussion and agreement with partners. The proposals regarding bus stop/shelter maintenance and the region-wide real time passenger transport system require discussion with, and agreement of, partners.</p> <p>The cost of terminating local bus service contracts is known but officers can only estimate the cost of withdrawing parts of contracts. If applicable officers will require to enter into negotiation with bus service contract holders in order to determine the cost of varying contracts.</p>

Stage 4: Measures to fill the evidence gaps.		
<p>What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan at the back of this form.</p>	Measures:	Timescale:
	Should a decision be taken to withdraw the TaxiCard Scheme customers will be provided with information on alternative transport and will be given the opportunity to contact the Council if the availability of transport is a problem.	Feb/March 2017
	Discussions on the proposals regarding bus stop/shelter maintenance and the region-wide real time passenger transport system with partners (bus operators and local/regional authorities).	Feb/March 2017
	A revised methodology will be implemented for the Council's PMF following which recommendations will be made on which local bus service journeys should be withdrawn.	Feb/March 2017

Stage 5: Are there potential impacts on protected groups? Please complete for each protected group by inserting "yes" in the applicable box/boxes below.				
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Age – Younger		yes		
Age – Older		yes		

Disability		yes		
Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)			yes	
Religion or Belief			yes	
Gender – male/female		Yes, female		
Pregnancy and maternity			yes	
Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual)			yes	
Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)			yes	
Marriage and Civil Partnership			yes	

Stage 6: What are the positive and negative impacts?		
Impacts.	Positive (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)	Negative (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)

<p>Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts on those with protected characteristics you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and describe those affected.</p>		<p><u>Bus Shelters</u></p> <p>Age – younger; age – older; disability; gender – female. Statistically these groups are more likely to use public transport. The reduction in spend on bus shelter cleaning and maintenance is likely to result in shelters being in a poorer condition and offering a less pleasant waiting experience for passengers. Broken bus shelters can cause a health and safety hazard, e.g. due to broken glass. The chances of this happening could increase if the budget is reduced. A lack of glazing in shelters reduces their effectiveness to shelter passengers from the elements, thus affecting passenger comfort.</p> <p>Women pedestrians are more likely than men to express safety concerns. If bus shelter lighting remains damaged this could add to safety concerns.</p>
		<p><u>TaxiCard</u></p> <p>Age Older & Disability – 85% of TaxiCard holders are aged over 60 and all TaxiCard holders have mobility difficulties. The financial benefits provided to TaxiCard holders will be withdrawn resulting in people needing to pay more or travel less unless they can find alternative affordable transport.</p> <p>Gender (female) – 69% of TaxiCard holders are women so the scheme withdrawal will affect women more than men.</p>
		<p><u>Community Transport</u></p> <p>Age Older & Disability – Given that community transport services are usually not open to the general public, the majority of customers are older and/or disabled. Should the reduction in budget limit the development of community transport services less people will have the potential to be helped.</p>

		<p><u>Local Bus Services</u></p> <p>Age – younger; age – older; disability; gender – female. Statistically these groups are more likely to use public transport and will therefore be disproportionately affected by the withdrawal of local bus service journeys.</p>

Stage 7: Have any of the affected groups been consulted?	
<p>If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps?</p>	<p>In Dec 2016/Jan 2017, The Council invited the general public to have their say on a range of proposals to address budget pressures, including the potential withdrawal of the TaxiCard Scheme.</p> <p>The affected groups have not been directly consulted regarding the budget reduction proposals. Officers are aware of the likely impacts of implementing budget cuts on the various areas of service delivery listed in Stage 2 above. This has been taken into account when making the proposals.</p>

Stage 8: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts?		
<p>These should be included in any action plan at the back of this form.</p>	<p>Mitigating Steps</p>	<p>Timescale</p>
	<p>The bus shelter cleaning procedures and processes will be reviewed to try to minimise the impact of the proposed budget reduction.</p>	<p>By 31 March 2017</p>
	<p>The bus stop and shelter maintenance procedures and processes will be reviewed to try to minimise the impact of the proposed budget reduction on passengers, particularly those from the protected groups.</p>	<p>By 31 March 2017</p>
	<p>In addition to using the PMF, a number of factors will be considered when deciding which bus services to withdraw or reduce, for example, the passengers' trip purpose(s) and the availability of suitable alternative transport (if any).</p>	<p>Feb/Mar 2017</p>
	<p>Write to all current TaxiCard holders with information on any dial-a-bus services, community transport etc that may be of help. Provide contact details for customers to provide feedback.</p>	<p>By early March 2017</p>
	<p>Promote THInC advice line – for advice on any alternative transport options for travel medical appointments; how to reclaim some transport costs to hospital appointments (if applicable) etc</p>	<p>Feb 2017 onwards</p>

	Use feedback from TaxiCard customers to inform decisions regarding future development of A2B dial-a-bus services and Council supported local bus services.	Feb 2017 onwards
	Where appropriate liaise with community and voluntary transport organisations regarding whether the feasibility of potential development of their transport services to accommodate the needs of TaxiCard customers – if this can be accommodated within the reduced available budget.	Feb 2017 onwards
	Continue to identify additional funding opportunities for providers of community transport or voluntary transport.	Ongoing
	Continue to offer operational assistance to community transport groups, e.g. by taking telephone calls to book transport	Ongoing

Stage 9: What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups?

These should be included in the action plan.	The budget reduction does not provide opportunities for promoting good relations between groups.
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Stage 10: How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?

The reduction in budget does not create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity.

Stage 11: What equality monitoring arrangements will be put in place?

These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires).

No formal equality monitoring arrangements will be put in place. Any equalities issues reported through Area Bus Forums or bus service surveys will be recorded.

Stage 12: What is the outcome of the Assessment?

Please complete the appropriate box/boxes	1	No negative impacts have been identified –please explain.
	2	Negative Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated - please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen.
	<p>Bus shelter cleaning – revised processes and procedures will be put in place to reduce the impact, e.g. targeting high profile locations, reviewing reporting systems.</p> <p>Bus stop/shelter maintenance – processes and procedures are already in place to deal with emergency actions or repairs required to address health and safety issues that are reported, e.g. broken glass. These will be reviewed. Consideration will be given to the practicalities of targeting repairs based on location, e.g. where passenger numbers are high or at locations used by disabled people.</p> <p>TaxiCard Scheme - mitigating steps can be taken as listed in Stage 8 above. Whilst every endeavour will be taken to assist as many TaxiCard holders as possible, it is assumed that mitigating steps will not be appropriate or applicable for every person.</p> <p>Community Transport – mitigated steps are listed in Stage 8.</p> <p>Local Bus Services – attempts will be made to reduce the impact on protected groups when choosing which local bus service journeys to recommend for withdrawal, For example, where possible a poorly operating service will be reduced rather than withdrawn. Local circumstances, e.g. the availability of dial-a-bus or volunteer car schemes, will be taken into account.</p>	

	3	The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully – please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen
	TaxiCard Scheme - it is assumed that alternative affordable transport will not be available for every TaxiCard holder and therefore some people will be financially disadvantaged.	

* Stage 13: Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact.

Whilst the proposals to reduce spend on bus stop/shelter cleaning and maintenance will have negative impacts on protected groups it is considered that these will be less than the impact of reducing the budget in other Transportation service delivery areas. If necessary and operationally achievable, processes and procedures will be put in place to target spend at locations likely to be used by people with disabilities.

The 2016 results of the Annual Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey indicated high levels of satisfaction: 95% were satisfied with the cleaning of bus shelters and 83% were satisfied with the condition of bus shelters. The results will be monitored in future to try to assess the impact of the budget reduction.

Reductions in the local bus services budget are likely to impact customers from one or more protected groups. Local circumstances and the likely impact on passengers will be taken into account when making a decision on which local bus services to withdraw/reduce.

Reductions in the concessionary travel budget cannot be made without affecting service users. All TaxiCard holders are in one or more protected groups. Mitigating steps will be put in place, as listed in Stage 8, which should alleviate immediate difficulties for some people and which will seek to identify difficulties experienced by other people so that appropriate solutions can, where possible, be sought.

Stage 14: Sign off and authorisation.

Sign off and authorisation.	1) Service and Team	Infrastructure Services – Public Transport Unit	
	2) Title of Policy/Activity	Support to Passenger Transport	
	3) Authors: I/We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Marion Mackay Position: Principal Officer Date: 13/01/17 Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:
		Name: Position: Date: Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:

4) Consultation with Service Manager	Name: Richard McKenzie Date: 13/01/17	
5) Authorisation by Director or Head of Service	Name: Ewan Wallace Position: Head of Transportation Date:	Name: Position: Date:
6) If the EIA relates to a matter that has to go before a Committee, Committee report author sends the Committee Report and this form, and any supporting assessment documents, to the Officers responsible for monitoring and the Committee Officer of the relevant Committee. E.g. Social Work and Housing Committee.		Date:
7) EIA author sends a copy of the finalised form to: eia@abdnshire		Date:
(Equalities team to complete) Has the completed form been published on the website? YES/NO		Date:

Action Plan					
Action	Start	Complete	Lead Officer	Expected Outcome	Resource Implications
Seek agreement with LABOF partners (Aberdeen City Council, Nestrans, First Aberdeen and Stagecoach) to revise Quality Partnership for Public Transport targets on bus shelter cleaning	February 2017	March 2017	Martin Hall	It will be known whether the proposed budget saving can be progressed.	Using existing staff resources.
The bus shelter cleaning procedures and processes will be reviewed.	February 2017	March 2017	Martin Hall	The impact on passengers of the proposed budget reduction will be minimised.	Using existing staff resources.
The bus stop and shelter maintenance procedures and processes will be reviewed.	December 2016	March 2017	Martin Hall	The impact on passengers, particularly those from the protected groups, will be minimised if possible.	Using existing staff resources.
Enter into negotiations with First Aberdeen regarding participation in RTPI.	February 2017	March 2017	Martin Hall	It will be known whether income can be generated.	Using existing staff resources.

<p>Write to all current TaxiCard holders with information on any dial-a-bus services, community transport etc that may be of help. Provide contact details for customers to provide feedback.</p>	<p>February 2017</p>	<p>March 2017</p>	<p>Marion Mackay</p>	<p>Customers will be better informed of alternative transport opportunities.</p>	<p>Within existing staff resources.</p>
<p>Promote THInC advice line – for advice on any alternative transport options for travel medical appointments; how to reclaim some transport costs to hospital appointments (if applicable) etc</p>	<p>February 2017</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>Marion Mackay</p>	<p>Customers will be better informed of alternative transport opportunities.</p>	<p>Within existing staff resources.</p>
<p>Use feedback from TaxiCard customers to inform decisions regarding future development of A2B dial-a-bus services and Council supported local bus services</p>	<p>February 2017</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>Marion Mackay</p>	<p>Opportunities will be identified where A2B dial-a-bus services or Council-supported local bus services can provide assistance with transport, subject to available budget.</p>	<p>Within existing staff resources.</p>

Where appropriate liaise with community and voluntary transport organisations regarding the potential development of their transport services to accommodate the needs of TaxiCard customers.	February 2017	ongoing	Marion Mackay	Where possible opportunities will be identified where the community transport sector can provide assistance with transport.	Within existing staff resources.
A revised methodology will be implemented for the Council's PMF following which recommendations will be made on which local bus service journeys should be withdrawn	February 2017	March 2017	Neil Stewart	A list of recommended bus service withdrawals/reductions will be available for consideration.	Within existing staff resources.
If appropriate negotiations will be held with bus service contractors in order to establish the value of potential savings to be incurred from varying contracts.	March 2017	March 2017	Neil Stewart	The actual costs of varying contracts, to withdrawn journeys, will be known.	Within existing staff resources.