

## Appendix 4 - Equality Impact Report

Title of proposal	<b>Bus Back Better engagement</b>
Date of implementation	<b>October 2021</b>
EIR completed by Name: Tel:	Jo Kenworthy
<b>1. Background</b>	
<p>Following the launch of the Bus Back Better bus strategy for England in March 2021, West Sussex County Council and local bus operators have committed to form an Enhanced Partnership from April 2022.</p> <p>The Partnership will deliver the West Sussex Bus Services Improvement Plan (BSIP) that outlines its ambitions to assist post pandemic recovery and thereafter improved bus services for West Sussex.</p> <p>An important part of drafting the BSIP has been engagement with bus operators and other key stakeholders, including bus users and non-users. A public engagement survey was carried out from 18 August to 14 September 2021 to understand how buses are used, barriers to use and other ways services could be improved. The survey received a total of 3,074 responses.</p> <p><b>Equality duty</b></p> <p>The Equality Act (2010) mandates a duty within public bodies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;</li> <li>• advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and</li> <li>• foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.</li> </ul> <p>To meet the equalities duty set by the Equality Act (2010), authorities are required to analyse the impact of proposed policies, strategies and action plans across all of the protected groups.</p> <p>In this Equality Impact Assessment, we evaluate the impact of our survey to anticipate and avoid any discriminatory or negative consequences for a particular group, on the grounds of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Disability</li> <li>• Gender reassignment</li> <li>• Marriage and civil partnership</li> <li>• Pregnancy and maternity</li> </ul>	

- Race (including ethnic origin, nationality)
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex/Gender
- Sexual orientation

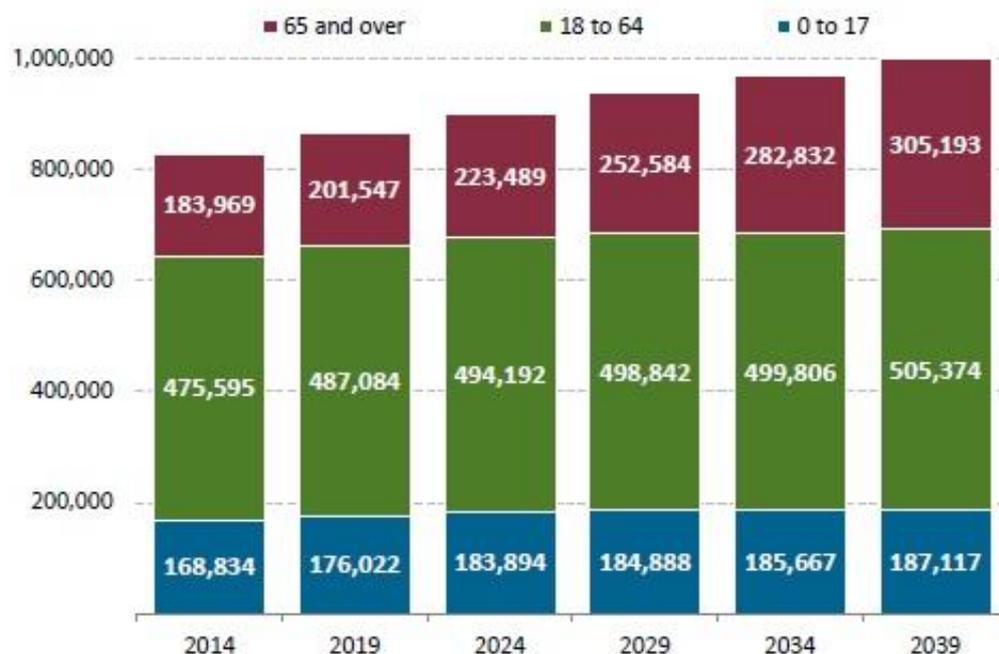
In accordance with the Equality Act, the Bus Back Better engagement survey included an equality monitoring section as part of the survey questionnaire. In addition to being online, the questionnaire was also available as a paper copy, in large print and an Easy Read translation for people with learning disabilities.

## Age

West Sussex has a disproportionate number of elderly residents – around 18.2% of the UK population are aged 65 years or over, compared to 22.3% of the local West Sussex population ([West Sussex Life 2017-19](#)).

The graph below shows how the 65 and over age group is expected to steadily increase in the years ahead.

West Sussex projected population by age group, 2014-2039



Source: ONS Sub-National Population Projections, Tables Z3-Z7

The [Future of Transport in an Ageing Society \(2015, Age UK\)](#) outlines a national overview of issues relating to perceived public transport failures in meeting the needs of elderly people. Access to services in rural areas is likely to become more difficult as the population ages and becomes more dependent on already strained rural public transport links. While the towns of West Sussex are generally well connected, some rural parts of the county remain relatively isolated from the main transport networks of the South East.

Old age is linked to a decrease in car usage and driving, reducing travel options and increasing reliance on public transport and/or special transport services (demand responsive or shared taxis). ([Mott MacDonald Ltd., \(2020\) FS13 Future of Transport - Equalities and access to opportunity](#))

All age groups completed the survey, with the highest response rate in the 65-74 age band, followed by 75-84. Of those answering the question, 45% respondents were aged 65 and older, 52% aged under 65, and 3% selected 'prefer not to say'.

However, compared to the figures above, for those who stated that they use buses 'frequently' there is a higher proportion of 65 & older (49%) and lower proportion of under-65s (48%).

The top three barriers to bus use among respondents aged 65 and older were:

- Infrequent
- Buses don't go where I want to
- Some of my buses could involve a change of bus, which doesn't work for me

The most cited factors that would encourage more bus among respondents aged 65 and older were:

- Buses on Sundays
- More direct services
- Buses earlier in the morning or later in the evening

In terms of accessing bus travel information, the survey results showed a clear preference for 'Timetable at bus stop' for respondents aged 65 and older as the most cited method used for their existing travel, compared to 'Bus company website' as the most popular answer for respondents aged under 65.

However, when asked about planning journeys to destinations not visited before, 'Bus company website' becomes the most common answer across all age groups.

'Real-time information – showing where my bus is, both while waiting and during my journey' is the most cited improvement to bus travel that respondents across all age groups would most like to see introduced in West Sussex.

### Young people

Younger people tend to have less disposable income (cost of car ownership is prohibitive for driving) so transport affordability and availability are key challenges for relying on public transport to access work, education and other activities. ([Mott MacDonald Ltd., \(2020\) FS13 Future of Transport - Equalities and access to opportunity](#))

The survey received 254 responses from young people aged under 25 (9% of all those who provided an answer to the age question), which is a higher rate than in previous surveys. The number one barrier to bus use was unsurprisingly 'Cost'. Accordingly, 'Lower fares' is the most cited factor that would encourage more bus use among the under 25s.

We know poverty and public transport are linked, see [Transport and poverty a Review of the Evidence UCL 2014](#). West Sussex data shows that we have several geographical areas of deprivation where there is perhaps a greater need for bus services for those who cannot afford cars.

[https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/3075/8\\_deprivation.pdf](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/3075/8_deprivation.pdf)

*(For further detail on responses from young people aged under 25, please see the Bus Back Better Survey results).*

## **Disability**

Disabled people are less likely to travel than other equalities groups, but of many of those that do are reliant on public transport. Predictability and capacity (e.g., wheelchair users) are often an issue for disabled people, along with finding one's way to a bus stop, parking/disembarking safely from courier vehicles, and then getting on the right bus can be an issue. Visually impaired people may find online booking/journey planning difficult. ([Mott MacDonald Ltd., \(2020\) FS13 Future of Transport - Equalities and access to opportunity](#))

Around 60% of disabled people have no access to a car and use the bus around 20% more than their non-disabled counterparts (DfT (2017): 'Disabled people's travel behaviour and attitudes to travel')

According to 2011 Census data, 17% of the population of West Sussex has day to day activities limited by a long-term health problem or disability, which is similar to the national average.

Our survey supports the national finding that disabled people use buses more often than non-disabled people. Disabled people are also more likely to be in a household without access to a car, and in households with access to a car they are less likely to be a driver. ([Department for Transport: Disability and Accessibility Statistics, England 2019/20](#))

Of those answering the question, 31% respondents considered themselves to have a disability or long-term illness. 62% of respondents did not consider themselves to have a disability, with a further 7% selecting 'Prefer not to say'.

However, compared to the figures above, for those who stated that they use buses 'frequently' there is a higher proportion of disabled users (36%) and lower proportion of non-disabled users (56%).

The table below shows the disabled/non-disabled split across the different journeys for which disabled and non-disabled people currently use the bus for, and those journeys they would like to use the bus for in the future:

Activity	Current journeys		Future journeys	
	Disabled	Non-disabled	Disabled	Non-disabled
Shopping	35%	59%	32%	61%
Leisure/social	29%	64%	29%	64%
Medical	49%	44%	41%	52%
Personal business e.g., banking	40%	53%	34%	59%
Work	23%	69%	23%	69%
Volunteering	37%	55%	30%	61%
School/pre-school	18%	73%	16%	77%
Faith activities	59%	49%	40%	52%
College or training	23%	69%	22%	69%
Youth activities not in school	25%	64%	16%	77%
Other	26%	62%	36%	55%

- Real-time information was the most popular bus improvement that people wanted to see introduced, with 55% of disabled respondents citing this option.
- A further 136 survey respondents cited the need for more audio-visual real-time information at stops and on routes, e.g., 'talking buses' for people with visual impairments.
- A total of 155 respondents cited 'More space for wheelchairs and buggies' as something that would most enable them to use buses more, of which 97 stated that they had a disability or long-term illness.

### **Gender reassignment**

The survey received 11 responses from people who stated that their gender was different to the one assigned to them at birth.

People in this category are often less willing to use public transport for fear of discrimination and fears for personal safety (victimisation, violent crime or harassment) are often a barrier. Opportunities: CCTV at public transport infrastructure and on transport services, and the improved visibility of staff in areas.

### **Marriage and civil partnership**

We did not collect specific data on this protected characteristic group for this survey. There is no evidence to suggest that this group might experience transport differently today.

## **Pregnancy and maternity**

We did not collect specific data on this protected characteristic group for this survey.

Parents with young children have been identified as a group that is particularly vulnerable to social isolation (Pettersson, G., (2009), 'Priorities for the use of bus transport by disabled people, older people and parents with young children in buggies', Association of European Transport).

key challenges currently experienced by expectant mothers or parents with young children can include the lack of availability of public transport, as well as limitations in transport choice when travelling with a young child. ([Mott MacDonald Ltd., \(2020\) FS13 Future of Transport - Equalities and access to opportunity](#))

A total of 155 respondents cited 'More space for wheelchairs and buggies' as something that would most enable them to use buses more, of which 36 were women under the age of 45.

## **Race (including, ethnic origin, nationality)**

Of those answering the survey question, most respondents described themselves as White, with 87% identifying as White British and 5% as White Other. 25 respondents defined their ethnicity as Mixed, 14 as Asian, 14 as Black, and five as Chinese. 17 people defined as Other. Almost 6% of respondents selected 'Prefer not to say'.

BAME groups are less likely to have access to private vehicles and be more reliant on public transport – the need is for regular, affordable, clean and efficient transport. ([Mott MacDonald Ltd., \(2020\) FS13 Future of Transport - Equalities and access to opportunity](#))

BAME groups in West Sussex are largely concentrated in Crawley and in coastal towns such as Bognor Regis, Littlehampton and Worthing which are all served by local buses.

However, BAME groups are more likely to be unemployed and on low incomes compared to White counterparts (House of Commons Library (2020): 'Unemployment by ethnic background') and to be concentrated in deprived areas (Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2014): 'How places influences employment outcomes for ethnic minorities'). Another issue highlighted by research is that frequency of travel is impacted by fears of racial attacks (Transport for London (2012): Understanding the travel needs of London's diverse communities: BAME)

## **Religion or Belief (including lack of belief)**

Of those providing an answer to the survey question, only 93 people (3%) stated that they followed a religion other than Christianity.

47% described their faith or religion as Christian (all Christian denominations). The next highest category was 'No Religion' with 35%. 18 people defined as Buddhist, 10 as Muslim, seven as Hindu and seven as Jewish. A further 51 people selected 'Any Other Religion' and 22 'Unknown'. Almost 14% of respondents selected 'Prefer not to say'.

Additionally, a response was made on behalf of the Gurjar Hindu Union based in Crawley, highlighting concerns around the removal of a local bus route.

Fears for personal safety, lack of English language and cost may be a barrier to journey planning and use for some religious groups. ([Mott MacDonald Ltd., \(2020\) FS13 Future of Transport - Equalities and access to opportunity](#))

We are also aware that a lack of Sunday bus services may impact on the ability of people belonging to certain religious groups to attend those services. Buses on Sundays was the third most cited factor that would most enable people to use buses more, and 42% of these respondents stated Christianity as their religion or belief.

### **Sex/Gender**

National statistics show that travel by public transport is highly gendered. In 2018 across England men made slightly more journeys by rail than women, but women made over a third more journeys by bus than men. ([2020 WBG Briefing: Public Transport and Gender](#)).

Additionally, women are more likely to be carers and be on lower incomes than men. Women who work flexibly may find monthly/weekly passes too expensive. Women often make multiple short journeys in a day to take children to school and shop which creates challenges if public transport is not frequently available. Opportunities include increasing affordability/flexibility of fares and transport connections to reduce travel times, plus lighting, CCTV, live feed journey planning. ([Mott MacDonald Ltd., \(2020\) FS13 Future of Transport - Equalities and access to opportunity](#))

Our survey supports the national finding that women appear to use the bus more often than men for almost all activities.

Of those providing an answer to the sex/gender question, the survey received a significantly higher number of female participants at 61%, with 35% male and 4% selecting 'Prefer not to say.'

Given that the number of survey respondents who identified as female was significantly higher than male, all things being equal we would expect to see the same or similar proportions in the survey responses.

We can see in our survey results that for the respondents who stated that they use buses 'frequently' there is a slightly higher proportion of female users (62%) and the same proportion of male users (35%).

The table below shows the gender split across the different journeys for which respondents currently use the bus for, and for those journeys they would like to use the bus for:

Activity	Current journeys		Future journeys	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Shopping	35%	61%	33%	63%
Leisure/social	40%	56%	37%	59%
Medical	36%	61%	33%	63%
Personal business e.g., banking	38%	59%	35%	61%
Work	35%	60%	33%	62%
Volunteering	31%	65%	30%	64%
School/pre-school	23%	68%	20%	72%
Faith activities	40%	55%	33%	63%
College or training	34%	30%	24%	68%
Youth activities not in school	17%	74%	18%	71%
Other	35%	62%	32%	65%

In 2017-2018 34% of women contacted as part of research on safety and security on behalf of Transport for London (TfL) reported being very or quite worried when using public transport, and 37% reported having experienced specific incidents when using public transport (Future Thinking, (2018), 'Attitudes to safety and security: annual report 2017-2018', TfL Compliance, Policing and on-street services).

Women are significantly more likely to have experienced unwanted sexual behaviour, especially in younger age groups (20% of women aged 16-34), compared to 10% across the general public (Future Thinking, (2018), 'Attitudes to safety and security: annual report 2017-2018', TfL Compliance, Policing and on-street services)

Of the 59 survey respondents who cited that bus travel in West Sussex was 'not safe', 46 were women (78%).

### **Sexual orientation**

Of those answering the survey question, 77% described themselves as Heterosexual/Straight. The second highest number of respondents (17%) selected 'Prefer not to say'. 76 people (2.7%) defined as Homosexual/Gay/Lesbian, 72 (2.5%) as Bisexual and 23 as Other.

The 2018 National LGBT survey points to transport as the most common place where cisgender LGB survey respondents reported avoiding being open about their sexual orientation as well as pointing to public transport as being considered an 'unsafe' space, that can be sometimes avoided altogether by this group.

However, in terms of barriers to using buses, just seven LBG survey respondents stated that that bus travel was 'not safe'. A total of 21 LGB respondents cited 'Nicer/politer drivers' as an improvement they would most like to see introduced to bus travel in West Sussex.

## **2. Describe any negative impact for customers or residents.**

It is recognised that buses are essential to contribute to economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic and to improve access to essential services. However, the ability to deliver the BSIP is dependent on the level of funding awarded by the Department for Transport.

In the event this is less than requested, the proposals will be reviewed and prioritised for delivery within the funding available. If the DfT doesn't provide the full amount of funding requested, each opportunity has been prioritised allowing for some schemes/improvements to be dropped or delayed in line with available funding. In this event, we will ensure that the needs of all users, included those with protected characteristics, are closely considered at every stage.

## **3. Describe any positive effects which may offset any negative impact.**

A key advantage of delivering the BSIP is that West Sussex County Council will engage closely with bus operators, other community services and key stakeholders. This will include actions on networks and services, fares and ticketing, passenger facilities and on-street bus priority measures, to allow all residents including those with protected characteristics an enhanced bus user experience.

## **4. Describe whether and how the proposal helps to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.**

The BSIP aims to support the needs of all bus users, outlining the Council's approach to delivering improved bus services that are equitable and accessible.

Our work with partners, through the delivery of the BSIP and sustainable local transport solutions, will allow us to promote travel alternatives for those residents who may experience reduced transport opportunities and barriers to use. We will actively support services and infrastructure that can be used by a wide variety of users including those who may have different needs.

Disability access groups, age organisations, community groups and other key stakeholders representing people with protected characteristics will be actively engaged throughout this process.

**5. Describe whether and how the proposal helps to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

As 4 above

**6. Describe whether and how the proposal helps to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

As 4 above

**7. What changes were made to the proposal as a result? If none, explain why.**

None

**8. Explain how the impact will be monitored to make sure it continues to meet the equality duty owed to customers and say who will be responsible for this.**

A project plan will be developed to follow up the actions arising from the implementation of the BSIP. As part of this, the Transport Co-ordination Group will ensure that all impacts are regularly monitored to ensure the equality duty is met accordingly.

**To be signed by an Executive Director or Director to confirm that they have read and approved the content.**

**Name**

**Date**

**Your position**

