

Equality Impact Report

Title of proposal	Bus Strategy Review
Date of implementation	April 2018 - April 2019
EIR completed by:	Name: Bill Leath Tel: 03302 225438

1. Decide whether this report is needed and, if so, describe how you have assessed the impact of the proposal.

The County Council is currently reviewing its approach to supporting non-commercial bus services and community transport.

An 8-week consultation on the proposals for the new West Sussex Bus Strategy took place between 12 April 2018 and 6 June 2018. The vast majority of 1,302 respondents agreed with the aims and objectives of the Strategy and our vision for achieving them. 42% of respondents were aged 65 or older and 22% considered themselves to have a disability or long-term illness.

The summary report and findings analysis from this consultation can be viewed [here](#)

As a follow up to the Bus Strategy Consultation, a Bus User Survey was conducted for 6 weeks between 8 October 2018 and 18 November 2018 to ascertain how the supported routes are used, what the journeys are for, how often and what time of day they are made, and what the impacts would be if the route was not available.

Because this is an 'impact analysis' exercise, no proposals or decisions on the future of these routes were included at this stage.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the Bus User Survey included an equality monitoring section as part of the survey questionnaire. The information gathered will help us to ensure that people with protected characteristics are not disproportionately affected by any future decisions on bus services.

A total of 4,314 surveys were received. 62% of respondents were aged 65 or older and 32% considered themselves to have a disability or long-term illness.

Summary report and findings analysis from the Bus User Survey to follow.

2. Describe any negative impact for customers or residents.

Bus users – and those dependent or connected to them – could be negatively affected by changes to bus subsidies if these lead to a reduction or withdrawal of the service. This could have a particular impact on elderly people, people with disabilities and those living in rural communities.

However the nature of the deregulated bus market means that withdrawal of funding does not necessarily mean that all bus routes within the relevant contracts will be withdrawn. Alternative outcomes include: incumbent operators taking a long term view on recent growth and continuing to run the service; another operator taking on the route commercially; other

sources of funding becoming available; or other solutions being found e.g. community transport schemes.

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

In some cases operators may be able to provide commercial services that are financially sustainable and not reliant on County Council funding in the future.

If mitigation is necessary and can be put in place, e.g. increased community transport, some residents - particularly older and disabled people - could gain access to passenger transport that they did not have before.

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

Whilst carrying out both the Bus Strategy Consultation and Bus User Survey we have been mindful of the need to meet the diverse requirements and communication needs of our prospective participants.

As well as the online surveys, paper questionnaires were available to passengers without internet access and could be obtained at libraries, on request from our Contact Centre and other locations. For the Bus User Survey, paper questionnaires were also available on the affected bus routes and from drivers wherever possible.

The survey questionnaires were also available in alternative formats such as Easy Read, large print and other languages on request. Additionally, residents were also able to submit their feedback via letter, email, phone call or type talk.

Both surveys were widely publicised through local media, posters on buses and at libraries, and on our website and social media channels. Information was sent to a wide range of community groups and stakeholders, including organisations which represent people with protected characteristics as outlined by the Equality Act.

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.

The Bus Strategy Consultation and Bus User Survey have been effectively promoted to ensure that people with protected characteristics are reached as widely as possible. This has included targeting groups and organisations who can disseminate information directly to those individuals. Disability access groups, age organisations, community groups and other key stakeholders have all been engaged as part of this process.

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

The Bus Strategy Consultation and Bus User Survey were publicised and monitored throughout the consultation period to ensure that participation was as inclusive as possible.

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

Further information to follow.

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, and implement where possible, actions that may mitigate the effects of the decision.

Further information to follow.

To be signed by a Director or Head of Service to confirm that they have read and approved the content.

Name		Date	
Your position			