

Equality Impact Assessment: Conversation Screening Tool

What is being reviewed?	Concessionary Fares Bus Operator Re-imburement
What changes are being made?	The proposal is to continue to maintain statutory concessionary travel reimbursement payments to local bus service operators at pre-COVID levels in line with government expectations. This is not a change to the current arrangements. The change would come if approval was not granted when there could be an impact on the numbers of services operated.
Service Unit:	Transport and Engineering
Participants in the conversation:	John McVey – Sustainable Transport Policy Manager Richard Barnes - Strategic Public Transport Manager Karen Fry - Senior Passenger Transport Co-ordinator
Conversation date/s:	07.10.2021; 12.10.2021; 26.10.2021
Do you know your current or potential client base? Who are the key stakeholders?	Bus passengers. Bus operators.
Do different groups have different needs or experiences?	<p>A reduction in bus services could result from a decision not to maintain concessionary fares reimbursement payments at the adjusted pre-Covid levels. This would affect the groups that the Equality Act is intended to protect based on the profile of bus passengers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age - Travel by bus is higher at both ends of the age categories (those aged 16-24 and those aged 65 and over). • Disability - People with a disability are significantly more likely to travel by bus regularly compared to those without a disability. • Race – people from ‘Other white backgrounds’ are significantly more likely to travel regularly by bus compared to white British people. • Sexual Orientation - travel by bus is significantly higher for ‘All other sexual orientations’ compared to heterosexuals. • Religion ‘All other religions’ travel by bus to a greater extent than Christians and people with no religion. • Deprivation - correlation between deprivation and frequent use of travel by bus with respondents living in the most deprived areas significantly more likely to frequently travel by bus compared to those in less deprived areas.
Will this change affect any service users?	Any reduction in bus services has potential to impact on all users of bus services.

What are the benefits or positive impacts of the change on current or potential users?	All bus users but in particular those in the groups listed above benefit from bus services being available. Buses provide access to essential services and facilities; education; employment; social contact and leisure.
What are the negative impacts of the change on current or potential users?	A reduction in bus services could result from a decision not to maintain concessionary fares reimbursement payments at the adjusted pre-Covid levels. All bus users, but in particular those in the groups listed above, benefit from bus services being available.
Will the change affect employees?	Employees who rely on local bus services could be impacted by any reductions. This could impact journeys to work if not working remotely as well as other journeys.
Will the change affect the wider community?	All people who use buses could be impacted.
What mitigating actions are planned or already in place for those negatively affected by this change?	The recommendation to Council is to continue to reimburse bus operators at adjusted pre-Covid levels in line with government guidance. This will still generate a financial saving against the agreed budget.
Summary of Equality Implications:	<p>If Council accepts the recommendation to continue to reimburse bus operators at an adjusted pre-Covid level in line with government guidance, then there is no impact on bus passengers. However, should the amount of reimbursement be significantly reduced, there is potential for the bus operators to withdraw services as they would no longer be commercially viable. This would impact on all bus passengers but particularly on older people, young people, people with a disability and those unable to afford a car.</p> <p>Any loss of bus services is likely to affect travel to work, education, retail, healthcare and leisure, involving businesses, schools, higher education, shops, hospitals and the hospitality industry. For residents that have the alternative of private vehicles an increase in car use will have adverse environmental impacts and increase congestion. Many residents in the BCP Council area do not have access to cars – in several of our Council wards almost 50% of households do not have a car available.</p> <p>Bus use is particularly common for younger people aged 17-20; older people aged over 70; for women and girls; and most ethnic minority groups and people on lower incomes (National Audit Office - Improving local bus services outside London, 2/10/20)</p>