

Shropshire Council Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA)

Part One Screening Record

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change

Please use this box for the full formal name of the proposed service change, whether it is a policy, a procedure, a function, a project, an update of a strategy, etc. The term "service change" is used in this form as shorthand for whatever form the changes may take.

Proposed reductions to Local Bus Service Provision and Park and Ride Shrewsbury

Name of lead officer carrying out the screening

Kelly Kovacs, Specialist Travel Team Manager

Decision, review and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Part One ESIIA Only?	x	
Proceed to Part Two Full Report?		X

If completion of a Part One assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes below and sign off as indicated. If a Part Two report is required, please move on to separate full report stage.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations

The consultation into the proposed reductions in local bus provision set out to gain as many views as possible from as wide ranging an audience as possible.

At present, and with particular regard to the consultation feedback, the impact in equality terms is identified as medium negative for Social Inclusion and for Age, with particular attention around rural isolation.

This correlates with the initial service area view ahead of the consultation that the likely impact for people in the groupings covering rural isolation and covering age would be medium negative.

Older people are generally more reliant on public transport to access essential services and facilities than those of working age. Older people also tend to require greater access to health services. This can be particularly problematic in remote rural areas such as Shropshire where there may be limited or no public transport coverage. These issues can be further compounded by a lack of awareness in availability of transport schemes, such as community transport and dial-a-ride schemes. Older people can also encounter physical barriers, such as trip hazards from uneven surfaces, crossing busy roads, and difficulties boarding and alighting buses and using steps at railway station. In this regard, there are also potential medium negative impacts for people with disabilities as well.

Young people are also often reliant on public transport to access education, employment, and training opportunities, as well as for social and leisure activities.

To mitigate the risks identified the amended proposals that Shropshire Council are making ensure that services are not removed but reduced where there is an alternative available.

To do this we propose to explore alternative ways of reducing the public transport budget through efficiencies, in partnership with operators and stakeholders.

- Ensuring that any changes have minimal impact on the travelling public, especially where limited or no alternative travel options are available.
- Any subsequent changes would be introduced with effect from January 2020 and subject to a consultation on any individual services affected.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations

Links will need to be drawn with other Council policy including the Local Transport Plan and the Economic Growth Strategy. This will help to mitigate against the risk that any decisions are seen to be made on financial grounds alone.

Additionally, any further consultation will seek to include questions around age and any disability, and location of respondents, in order to help to assess need in relation to people in these groupings.

The second action would be to continue to liaise with and share approaches towards passenger transport and school and college transport with other local authorities, particularly those with whom the Council shares commonalities in terms of geographical size and sparsity of the population, and similar challenges in regards of costs for service delivery to be balanced with environmental and social inclusion considerations.

A further action that could assist in reviewing and monitoring the impact of the service change would be the development and implementation of a communications plan, for the Council and the service area, involving timely press releases fronted by the portfolio holder, and shared with all Shropshire Council councillors and town and parish councils, and the voluntary and community sector.

Associated ESIIAs

Please use this section to note any associated ESIIAs and timelines. For example, this may be the second screening ESIIA carried out at the end of a period of consultation: it will be helpful for the public to be able to refer to the initial ESIIA. This will also serve to demonstrate ongoing approaches to continuous engagement with Protected Characteristic groupings.

It will be helpful to the public to show how a proposed service change fits into the policy approach of a service area, eg the Highways service area has carried out related ESIIAs into winter service policy planning and risk-based approaches to highways safety inspections.

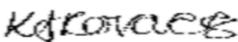
Nursery and Post 16 Discretionary Transport

Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of any other considerations

Any reduction in numbers of vehicles on the road could be said to contribute towards lowering emissions and therefore improving air quality. Against this would need to be set the wider societal implications for communities, particularly in rural areas, that are no longer as physically able to access public transport as they were before the reductions in service. From a societal angle, a mitigating action could be continued efforts with health and social care providers and with Government departments and agencies to look at technological solutions such as telecare that may be provided within people's homes or neighbourhoods, obviating or reducing the need to travel for this purpose. This links with the Government's Grand Challenges around Mobility and around an Ageing Society

From an economic growth perspective, there will be a saving to the Council, but there may be negative impacts if people are no longer able to travel to other locations from their neighbourhoods for a variety of reasons including access to health and social care, educational, employment, and leisure and shopping opportunities. Against this may potentially be set the efforts being made to encourage people into making use of such opportunities in Shrewsbury, as part of the Big Town Plan policies, and other larger market towns, with focus upon continued public transport provision to these places.

Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
Lead officer carrying out the screening		17 th May 2019
Any internal support*		
Any external support** Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist		17 th May 2019

**This refers to other officers within the service area*

***This refers either to support external to the service but within the Council, eg from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, or support external to the Council, eg from a peer authority*

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
Lead officer's name		
Accountable officer's name* James Willocks, Transport Commissioning Group Manager		17 th May 2019

**This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer*

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description

The Council's financial strategy for 2019/20 includes a budget reduction of £405,000 in public transport and £50,000 for Shrewsbury Park & Ride. Shropshire Council launched a six-week consultation into proposed reductions to its public transport budget, which would see a reduction in the number and frequency of bus services subsidised by the Council.

Many of the people who use public transport in Shropshire are reliant upon local bus services to be able to get out and live their daily lives. Lack of transport especially in rural areas contributes to social exclusion. This is particularly true of people who are elderly, young or people who are on low incomes. Transport is crucial to life opportunities and poor links can compound isolation and loneliness. People of all ages must have the means to travel to services, jobs, and for social purposes

We are aware that rural communities may experience difficulties in accessing health and support services with poor transport links and sectoral recruitment issues creating barriers to access, as well as contributing to isolation. Young people from rural areas may experience difficulties travelling to Further Education colleges or sixth forms, curtailing their opportunities

Shropshire Council requested that all our bus operators providing Local Bus Services on behalf of the Council, provide details of the level of service that they could provide on each of these services with a reduction in funding.

Following the consultation, the following has been proposed:

- a) A reduction in the frequency of services

For Shrewsbury Park and Ride the following has been proposed:

- b) To remove the concessionary fare discount that allows passengers on presentation of their concessionary card to travel for a 50% discount, this discount is currently provided at the Council's discretion.
- c) To increase the return fare for the service from its current level of £1.60 to £2.00.
- d) To remove the Group ticket from Park & Ride which allows for up to 5 passengers to travel for the price of £2.50.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

The intended audience and target groups/stakeholders were:

- The whole community
- All elected members
- Bus Users Shropshire
- Shrewsbury BID
- Transport Operators
- Licensed Taxi providers

- Marches LEP
- West Midlands Combined Authority
- Voluntary and Community Sector
- Town and Parish Councils
- Local Members of Parliament

This list is not intended to be exhaustive

Evidence used for screening of the service change

The Council has undertaken a six-week consultation about the proposals within the report during March, April and May 2019 with various stakeholders including elected members, Town & Parish Councils, schools and colleges, voluntary and community sectors, Transport operators and Bus User Group, representing a large proportion of people who currently use public transport and help to promote bus services within the county.

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

The Council received a total of 955 responses to the consultation with the majority received through e-mail, however, a sizeable proportion of respondents did forward their thoughts to the Council via letter.

We did receive responses specifically from protected characteristics groupings, including the elderly, disabled and the young.

With regards to rural isolation we were able to identify that we received a large number from the Bridgnorth and Bishops Castle areas, 124 and 101 respectively.

38 responses were received from Town and Parish Councils.

Initial assessment for each group

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through inserting a tick in the relevant column. Please add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groups and other groups in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two ESIIA required</i>	High positive impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Medium positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Low positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>
Age (please include children, young people, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group eg child for whom there are safeguarding concerns eg older person with disability)			Medium Negative	
Disability (please include: mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)			Medium Negative	

Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Low negative
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Low negative
Pregnancy & Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Low negative
Race (please include: ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, gypsy, traveller)				Low negative
Religion and belief (please include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Non conformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				Low negative
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Low negative
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				Low negative
Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable)			Medium Negative	

Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations

The consultation highlighted that buses provide a vital service and play a very important role in reducing traffic congestion, the numbers of vehicles on our roads and pollution, supporting local businesses and tackling the increasing problems of loneliness and isolation.

Guidance Notes

1. Corporate and Service Area Policy and Practice on Equality and Social inclusion

This involves taking an equality and social inclusion approach in planning changes to services, policies or procedures, including those that may be required by Government.

The decisions that you make when you are planning a service change need to be recorded, to demonstrate that you have thought about the possible equality impacts on communities and to show openness and transparency in your decision making processes.

This is where Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessments (ESIAs) come in. Where you carry out an ESIA in your service area, this provides an opportunity to show:

- What evidence you have drawn upon to help you to recommend a strategy or policy or a course of action to Cabinet;
- What target groups and audiences you have worked with to date;
- What actions you will take in order to mitigate any likely negative impact upon a group or groupings, and enhance any positive effects for a group or groupings; and
- What actions you are planning to review the impact of your planned service change.

The formal template is there not only to help the service area but also to act as a stand alone for a member of the public to read.

The approach helps to identify whether or not any new or significant changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions or projects, may have an adverse impact on a particular group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected.

This assessment encompasses consideration of social inclusion. This is so that we are thinking as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities, including people in rural areas and people we may describe as vulnerable, for example due to low income or to safeguarding concerns, as well as people in what are described as the nine 'protected characteristics' of groups of people in our population, eg Age. We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging or delivering services.

When you are not carrying out an ESIA, you still need to demonstrate that you have considered equality in your decision-making processes. It is up to you what format you choose.-You could use a checklist, an explanatory note, or a document setting out our expectations of standards of behaviour, for contractors to read and sign. It may well not be something that is in the public domain like an ESIA, but you should still be ready for it to be made available.

Both the approaches sit with a manager, and the manager has to make the call, and record the decision made on behalf of the Council. Help and guidance is also available via the Commissioning Support Team, either for data, or for policy advice from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist. Here are some examples to get you thinking.

Carry out an ESIA:

- If you are building or reconfiguring a building;
- If you are planning to reduce or remove a service;
- If you are consulting on a policy or a strategy;

- If you are bringing in a change to a process or procedure that involves other stakeholders and the wider community as well as particular groupings

For example, there may be a planned change to a leisure facility. This gives you the chance to look at things like flexible changing room provision, which will maximise positive impacts for everyone. A specific grouping that would benefit would be people undergoing gender reassignment

Carry out an equality and social inclusion approach:

- If you are setting out how you expect a contractor to behave with regard to equality, where you are commissioning a service or product from them;
- If you are setting out the standards of behaviour we expect from people who work with vulnerable groupings, such as taxi drivers that we license;
- If you are planning consultation and engagement activity, where we need to collect equality data in ways that will be proportionate and non-intrusive as well as meaningful for the purposes of the consultation itself;
- If you are looking at services provided by others that help the community, where we need to demonstrate a community leadership approach

For example, you may be involved in commissioning a production to tour schools or appear at a local venue, whether a community hall or somewhere like Theatre Severn. The production company should be made aware of our equality policies and our expectation that they will seek to avoid promotion of potentially negative stereotypes. Specific groupings that could be affected include: Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, and Sexual Orientation. There is positive impact to be gained from positive portrayals and use of appropriate and respectful language in regard to these groupings in particular.

2. Legal Context

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take. Carrying out ESIIAs helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three equality aims are integral to our decision making processes. These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

Service areas would ordinarily carry out a screening assessment, or Part One equality impact assessment. This enables energies to be focussed on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection about the positive or negative impacts of a service change upon groupings in the community, and for any adjustments to be considered and made accordingly.

If the screening indicates that there are likely to be significant negative impacts for groupings within the community, the service area would need to carry out a full report, or Part Two assessment. This will enable more evidence to be collected that will help the service area to

reach an informed opinion. Please contact the equality policy lead within the Council for more advice and guidance in this regard, as per details below.

For further information on the use of ESIIAs: please contact your head of service or contact Mrs Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist and Council policy support on equality, via telephone 01743 258528, or email lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk.