

Reduction in Budget for Bus Subsidy and Concessionary Fares



Full Equality Impact Assessment Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Full Equality Impact Assessment Report looks at the issues, considerations and conclusions around the potential reduction in bus service provision in Bracknell Forest. The potential reduction in bus service provision is as a result of a proposed budget savings of £200,000 in this service area. The key groups affected have been identified as bus users, potential bus users and community groups.
- 1.2 Having conducted an Equalities Impact Screening in December 2012, attached at Appendix 1, it was decided that the potential reduction in bus service provision legally required a full equality impact assessment with a 12 week consultation period. A detailed consultation was carried out on the use of the current subsidised bus network and the impact of potential changes on all sectors of our community. The outcome of this equality impact assessment and the results of the consultation will inform the options for the reductions in bus service provision.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Bracknell Forest Council has faced a very difficult budget round for the financial year 2012/13, with savings of £5m being required, throughout the Council. To continue to meet the challenges of balancing the Council's budget, a £200,000 economy from the Bus Contracts and Concessionary Fares budgets has been put forward for consultation. This has prompted a review of services and the way we deliver support in order to maximise efficiency and effectiveness while providing the best outcomes for individuals.
- 2.2 The current bus services in the Borough are split into two groups: supported or subsidised services whereby the Council (and/or other partners) provide subsidies to run the service where it is not considered by the operator to be commercially viable; and, commercial services which the bus company run on a viable commercial basis without subsidy. Adding to the viability of services is the provision of concessionary fares whereby the Council passes on grant money provided by Government to the operators where a concession uses the bus for free. As 45% of all bus journeys in the Borough are concessions, this makes up a significant amount of the money which supports overall bus provision in the Borough.
- 2.3 Appendix 2 shows the extent of the commercial and subsidised services that run in the Borough (attached Map 1 and 2).

3.0 Methodology and Sources of Data

- 3.1 In order to understand the impact of the proposal, ensuring that the equalities impact on everyone affected is considered, a full 12 week consultation has been undertaken by JMP on behalf of the Council. A comprehensive consultation questionnaire was

developed and made available both in paper format and electronically via the Bracknell Forest Council website.

- 3.2 In addition to the questionnaire a number of interested parties were invited to contribute to the consultation, namely the Access Advisory Panel at their Special Meeting on 28th March 2012, the Older People's Partnership on 14th March 2012, the Over Fifty's Forum at it's AGM on 4th April 2012, and the Youth Services Manager on 22nd March 2012. Officers also met with the Federation of Community Groups on 18th April.
- 3.3 The Council's Executive also requested a Working Group of Overview and Scrutiny members be established to review the proposed savings in light of their work in helping to develop a Borough-wide Bus Strategy for 2013 and beyond. Their comments are found at Appendix 3.
- 3.4 Hard copies of the consultation and the link to the online questionnaire were distributed widely, and posters advertising the consultation were put up at various locations around the borough including on-board buses on affected routes. Notice of the consultation and copies of the questionnaire were distributed to community groups throughout the Borough via Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action to ensure we were getting to as many representative bodies as possible. It is understood from feedback from these groups, that they then further distributed these throughout their membership to encourage responses.
- 3.5 The consultation ran between Monday 16th January 2012 and Friday 30th March 2012.

4.0 Assessment of Impact on Equality strands

- 4.1 The Equality Impact Screening produced in December 2012 anticipated that most protected characteristics are not likely to be adversely or positively affected. The following characteristics were identified as receiving a neutral impact:

Racial Equality

No specific service or concession is available based on the race of the individual. The criteria are age or disability for concessions. No evidence to suggest a differential impact currently.

Gender Equality

In general there is no great difference between the amount of trips that men take compared to women, especially considering those over 60. At national level, in 2010, women made 5% more trips than men. However further information is required through the full equality impact assessment consultation to assess if women are more likely to be adversely affected.

Sexual Orientation Equality

No specific service or concession is available based on the sexual orientation of the individual. No evidence to suggest a differential impact currently.

Gender Re-assignment Equality

No specific service or concession is available based on the gender of the individual. The criteria are for age or disability for concessions. No evidence to suggest a differential impact currently.

Pregnancy and Maternity Equality

No specific service or concession is available based on grounds of the pregnancy or maternity status of the individual. The criteria are age or disability concessions. There are no specific services that serve only pregnant users. No evidence to suggest a differential impact currently.

Marriage and Civil Partnership Equality

No specific service or concession is available based on grounds of the marital status of the individual. The criteria are age or disability concessions. There are no specific services that serve only pregnant users. No evidence to suggest a differential impact currently.

- 4.2 Some adverse impacts were expected considering the scope of the consultation exercise. The following characteristics have been identified as potentially being adversely impacted by the proposals that were to be consulted upon:

Disability Equality

There may be an adverse impact on those with disabilities being able to access the level of frequency of bus services that is currently available. Of 15,605 bus passes in circulation, 575 qualify on disability grounds (4%).

Age Equality

There may be an adverse impact on older and younger people who tend, as groups, to use public transport more than other age groups. Nationally the proportion of trips made by bus is highest among those aged between 17-20. Bus use is higher for those aged 60+ than in middle age groups. Nationally the proportion of people aged 60+ who use a local bus at least once a week increased from 28% in 2005 to 40% in 2010. Over the same period the proportion of people in this age group who said they never use a bus less than once a year or never fell from 46% to 32%.

Religion and Belief Equality

The reduction in frequency and/or route/times of a service could impact the ability for some to access their centres of faith. No specific service or concession is available based on the grounds of religion or belief of the individual. No evidence to suggest a differential impact currently.

- 4.3 Having made this initial assessment of the equality impact of the proposals based on our existing knowledge and national data, it informed the Council to ensure that the 12 week consultation process particularly targeted the views of older people, younger people, faith communities and people with disabilities, as well as plugging gaps in our knowledge with regard to the detailed demographic profile of the users of particular bus services.

5.0 Consultation & Engagement

- 5.1 The consultation with all users, potential users of bus services and community groups was undertaken to fully understand the impact of the potential changes to bus services, and to inform the difficult budget decisions.

Methodology

- 5.2 The consultation took the form of a questionnaire that was publicly available both online and in hard-copy. The methodology was designed to target as many interested parties as possible in the most efficient and effective way to maximise results within

the timeframe. The consultation was particularly aimed at older people, young people and people with disabilities as these were the groups identified by the Equality Screening which the proposals could have the most potential adverse impact upon.

- 5.3 The hard copy questionnaire was fronted by wording that outlined the background to the consultation, the Council's position, proposed changes and contact details for responses. Online, a dedicated webpage was set-up linking to the survey.
- 5.4 Given the scope of the brief and to best inform the future decision making process it was decided early in the design phase that the consultation should consider all supported bus services within the borough.

Timeframes

- 5.5 The consultation ran from 16th January 2012 to 30th March 2012. The online questionnaire and corresponding webpage was available throughout this time and posters and hardcopy questionnaires were delivered within the first week of the consultation.

Questionnaire Design

- 5.6 The questionnaire identified two possible options which could be considered, which if implemented would contribute making the savings required. These options were:

Option 1:

- Withdraw service 151 (Bracknell – Binfield – Wokingham);
- Halve the frequency of service 53/ 153 (Bracknell – Binfield);
- Halve the frequency of service 152 (Bracknell – Winkfield);
- Halve the frequency of service 162 (Bracknell – Ascot High Street);

Option 2:

- Withdraw service 156 (The Parks);
- Withdraw services 171/172, 153, 194;
- Withdraw service 153/154 (Binfield – Bracknell – Bullbrook);
- Withdraw service 598 (Little Sandhurst - Camberley);

- 5.7 The questionnaire itself consists of three sections:
- Section one: 'About yourself' which gives an overall picture of the personal profile of the respondents including equality monitoring questions
 - Section two: 'Bus Travel' identifies which bus services residents are currently using to travel in Bracknell, how often they use these services and their main reasons for travelling
 - Section Three: 'Impact of Change' identifies what changes to their travel residents would make if their current bus services were either reduced or withdrawn.
- 5.8 Respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire for each bus service that they used, encouraging specific responses rather than a general view on bus services in Bracknell. When a resident regularly used more than one service they were asked to submit a questionnaire for each service. In total 1,013 surveys were completed, by at

least 637 individual residents. Alternative formats for the questionnaire were offered on request

- 5.9 In both sections two and three the survey contained quantitative and qualitative questions allowing users to add to the standard 'tick box' questions with comments on their own situation.
- 5.10 When stakeholders completed the questionnaire online, responses were automatically captured and collated. When a paper copy was completed respondents were encouraged to post back the questionnaire using a free post envelope that was attached to each hardcopy. In total, 329 questionnaires were completed online and 684 sent in via the post.

Publicity and Promotion

- 5.11 The consultation was promoted through a poster campaign on all subsidised bus services, at key public transport hubs and bus stops in the Borough, at publicly accessed council buildings (such as libraries and council offices), and at Town/Parish council offices. The online questionnaire was promoted through Bracknell Forest's social media links including twitter and Facebook, as well as on the main council webpage. Internally, the consultation was promoted heavily on the intranet as well as with each Head of Service.
- 5.12 In addition to the above posters, questionnaires and information were sent to Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action, which acted as a conduit to contact all voluntary and community groups.

Other consultation

- 5.13 As well as responses from individual residents, the Council was also keen to hear from groups who may be particularly impacted on by the proposals identified in the equality screening, including older people, young people and people with disabilities, internal departments who work with these groups, operators and other stakeholders. Rather than complete a questionnaire, these groups were invited to comment more generally either via written correspondence or through face-to-face meetings. Stakeholders that were consulted with include:

- The Access Advisory Panel
- The Older People's Partnership (Minutes given in Appendix 3)
- The Over 50s Forum
- Youth Services
- Federation of Community Groups
- Overview and Scrutiny Working Group (Notes given in Appendix 3)

6.0 Summary of all Responses

Section 1: About You

- 6.1 In total, Bracknell Forest Borough Council has received 1,013 questionnaire responses to the bus services consultation from at least 637 individuals.
- 6.2 29.2% of responses were from male bus users, 57.4% from female, with the remainder choosing not to state their gender. The high proportion of female respondents is not reflective of Bracknell's 2001 Census gender profile, in which 49.9% of the population are female. However, the 2010 National Travel Survey indicated that women use buses more often than men do, which may account for the higher response rate. The ratio of gender for each individual service was roughly in line with the general pattern, with the response rate for females greater than males.
- 6.3 84% of the respondents stated that they were 'White British' with less than 2% of the respondents being from other backgrounds, and the remainder choosing not to state. This high proportion of 'White British' respondents is in line with 2001 Census data which records 90% of Bracknell Forest's population as white British and 9.4% of ethnic minority groups. This is considerably lower than the National Average. However, data from the 2011 Schools Census shows that 16% of pupils are BME including 'white other'. There is no correlation between ethnicity and the specific bus services referred to in the survey.
- 6.4 63% of respondents were Christian (all denominations), 2% were from other faith groups and 13% had no religious beliefs; 21% did not state their religion. These results are broadly in line with census data with 72% stating themselves as Christian, 2.6% of other faiths and the 18% stating they had no religious beliefs. Despite some initial concern in the screening stage, there is no evidence of a correlation between religious belief and specific services.
- 6.5 Of those that chose to state their ability status, 50% classed themselves as having disabilities or health problems which were expected to last, at least 12 months. In the 2001 census data 18% of the population were classed as having a limiting long-term illness. The high response rate by those with disabilities may reflect the important role that public transport plays for this group.
- 6.6 The highest number of responses came from residents within the 65-79 year old category and the 80+ category, 38% and 19% of responses respectively. These residents are eligible to travel free on all local bus services in Bracknell Forest (the concession is available to those with certain disabilities and some aged between 60 and 65 as well). 63% of all trips on the subsidised bus network are undertaken by concessionary pass holders. Over 65s tend to travel more on buses than any other age category and are more dependent on public transport due to lower car ownership and accessibility issues; this may go some way to explain why there was a higher response rate from this age category. 47% of 80+ year old stated they would not travel if their services were removed and 53% of 65-79 year olds stated they would not know how they would travel or would not travel at all if the service was removed.

- 6.7 Generally, the respondents from this age group relied on the current bus services to travel to and from the town centre to go shopping on the high street and at the supermarket. Many of the respondents from this group said they relied on the bus to buy their groceries, socialise and live an active life.
- 6.8 Services 162, 598, 1, and 4c had the highest proportions of over 65s travelling on them.
- 6.9 The evidence from the open consultation and stakeholders meetings echoed many of the points raised through the questionnaire; most predominant was the observation that public transport plays an important role in allowing older people or vulnerable to access key facilities and with any reduction in service level leading to a reduction in quality of life.
- 6.10 Looking at each service specifically the table below summarises the key statistics for each service in question:

| Service No. | No. of responses | % of responses over 65 | % travelling weekly or more | If Service is reduced | | If Service is removed | |
|-------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | | | % who would not travel | % who would travel by Car | % who would not travel | % who would travel by Car |
| 1 | 7 | 86% | 83% | 0% | 47% | 25% | 0% |
| 4c | 7 | 71% | 72% | 17% | 17% | 17% | 17% |
| 53 | 210 | 55% | 81% | 17% | 18% | 36% | 25% |
| 108 | 78 | 29% | 92% | 17% | 16% | 20% | 21% |
| 151 | 77 | 42% | 73% | 21% | 23% | 21% | 32% |
| 152 | 42 | 33% | 87% | 18% | 44% | 21% | 52% |
| 153 | 96 | 69% | 92% | 15% | 20% | 35% | 26% |
| 156 | 53 | 38% | 90% | 15% | 16% | 26% | 25% |
| 162 | 58 | 83% | 90% | 17% | 13% | 27% | 9% |
| 171/172 | 84 | 51% | 97% | 26% | 13% | 42% | 15% |
| 194 | 63 | 63% | 88% | 30% | 14% | 46% | 17% |
| 199 | 59 | 54% | 77% | 20% | 13% | 30% | 18% |
| 598 | 63 | 78% | 83% | 39% | 8% | 34% | 23% |

Section 2: Bus Services Summary

- 6.12 The survey respondents stated which bus services they currently used. The highest number of respondents (210 respondents, 20.7% of total) stated that they travelled on the Thames Travel service no.53 and the second highest number of survey responses was for the Thames Travel no.153.
- 6.13 Over half of the respondents surveyed stated that they either travelled daily or 2-3 times a week.
- 6.14 Focusing on the two services with the most responses, 35% of users of the no.53 stated they used the service daily and 34% said they used it 2-3 times a week. For

the no.153 service, 35% stated they used the service daily and 44% said they used the service 2-3 times a week.

Section 3: Changes to Bus Services Summary

Service Changes

6.15 The two possible options which were considered as part of the consultation were given in section 5.6 of this report.

Option 1

6.16 The tables below summarise the responses from the equality groups relating to services 151, 152 and 162 which form option 1 of the consultation.

| Service 151 | Over 65 | Disability or Limiting illness | Male | Female | Ethnicity (White British) | Ethnicity (BME) | Belief (Christian) | Belief (None) |
|--|---------|--------------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| % responses | 44.16% | 27.27% | 31.17% | 58.44% | 79.22% | 5.19% | 59.74% | 15.58% |
| If service reduced % would not travel | 38.24% | 28.57% | 25.00% | 31.11% | 34.43% | 0.00% | 30.43% | 16.67% |
| If service reduced % would use car | 20.59% | 9.52% | 29.17% | 37.78% | 31.15% | 25.00% | 32.61% | 25.00% |
| If service reduced % would use other bus | 17.65% | 14.29% | 16.67% | 6.67% | 11.48% | 25.00% | 10.87% | 25.00% |

6.17 In total 77 questionnaires were completed by users of service 151. The majority of respondents were female on this service (58.44%). In each demographic group, respondents were most likely not to travel at all on the service if it was reduced in frequency, then travel by car and finally use another bus service. Only 10% of those with a disability or limiting illness would travel by car if the 151 service was reduced, 29% (percentage) would not travel and 14% would use another bus.

| Service 152 | Over 65 | Disability or Limiting illness | Male | Female | Ethnicity (White British) | Ethnicity (BME) | Belief (Christian) | Belief (None) |
|--|---------|--------------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| % responses | 33.33% | 11.90% | 43.67% | 45.24% | 57.14% | 42.86% | 7.14% | 2.38% |
| If service reduced % would not travel | 28.57% | 20.00% | 28.57% | 21.05% | 20.83% | 16.67% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| If service reduced % would use car | 35.71% | 20.00% | 42.86% | 26.32% | 29.17% | 27.78% | 66.67% | 0.00% |
| If service reduced % would use other bus | 28.57% | 0.00% | 14.29% | 10.53% | 12.50% | 16.67% | 33.33% | 0.00% |

6.18 In total 42 questionnaires were completed by users of service 152. Compared to other services a relatively low proportion of over 65's returned questionnaires (33%). There was a roughly equal split between male and female responses; many of the males stated they would travel by car if the service was removed (43%); however, a lower proportion of females stated they would (26%). Twenty-nine percent of males stated they would not travel compared to 21% of females. In all demographics the majority of respondents would use their car if the service was reduced.

| Service 162 | Over 65 | Disability or Limiting illness | Male | Female | Ethnicity (White British) | Ethnicity (BME) | Belief (Christian) | Belief (None) |
|--|---------|--------------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| % responses | 82.76% | 53.45% | 22.41% | 75.86% | 94.83% | 1.72% | 86.21% | 8.62% |
| If service reduced % would not travel | 20.83% | 22.58% | 38.46% | 20.45% | 25.45% | 0.00% | 22.00% | 40.00% |
| If service reduced % would use car | 8.33% | 6.45% | 15.38% | 15.94% | 14.55% | 0.00% | 10.00% | 20.00% |
| If service reduced % would use other bus | 10.42% | 9.68% | 15.38% | 9.09% | 10.91% | 100.00% | 10.00% | 20.00% |

6.19 In total 58 questionnaires were completed by users of service 162. A high proportion of over 65's responded to the 162 service (83%). The majority of respondents in each demographic category stated that they would travel if the service was reduced.

6.20 The tables below summarise the responses from the equality groups relating to services 156, 171/172 and 153 and 598 which form part of option 2 of the consultation.

Option 2

Service 156 - Total 53 Responses

Gender

| | Over 65 | Disability or Limiting Illness | Male | Female | Ethnicity (White British) | Ethnicity (Other British) | Belief (Christian) | Belief (None) |
|--|---------|--------------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| % of responses | 37.74% | 22.64% | 37.74% | 39.62% | 64.15% | 3.77% | 58.49% | 11.32% |
| If service removed % would not travel | 25.00% | 50.00% | 35.00% | 28.57% | 32.35% | 50.00% | 29.03% | 33.33% |
| If service removed % would use car | 35.00% | 16.67% | 35.00% | 23.81% | 23.53% | 50.00% | 25.81% | 16.67% |
| If service removed % would use other bus | 5.00% | 8.33% | 15.00% | 9.52% | 17.65% | 0.00% | 9.68% | 33.33% |

6.21 In total 53 questionnaires were completed by users of service 156. The gender split of respondents was fairly even (38% male and 40% female). In each demographic group, respondents were most likely to not travel at all on the service if it was removed in frequency, then travel by car and finally use another bus service. Half of those with a disability or limiting illness would no longer make the journey if the 156 service was removed, 17% would choose to travel by car and 8% would use another bus.

Service 171/172 Sunday Services - Total 49 Responses

Gender

| | Over 65 | Disability or Limiting Illness | Male | Female | Ethnicity (White British) | Ethnicity (Other British) | Belief (Christian) | Belief (None) |
|--|---------|--------------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| % of responses | 44.90% | 51.02% | 30.61% | 61.22% | 81.63% | 2.04% | 63.27% | 14.29% |
| If service removed % would not travel | 54.55% | 48.00% | 33.33% | 46.67% | 40.00% | 100.00% | 38.71% | 0.00% |
| If service removed % would use car | 40.91% | 24.00% | 26.67% | 26.67% | 25.00% | 100.00% | 32.26% | 28.57% |
| If service removed % would use other bus | 0.00% | 8.00% | 6.67% | 10.00% | 12.50% | 0.00% | 9.68% | 14.29% |

6.22 In total 49 questionnaires were completed by users of 171 /172 service on a Sunday. The majority of respondents were female on this service (61%). In each demographic group, respondents were most likely to not travel at all on the service if it was removed in frequency, then travel by car and finally use another bus service. Just under half of the respondents with a disability or limiting illness would no longer travel if the 171 / 172 Sunday service was withdrawn, 24% would travel by private car and 8% would use another bus service.

Service 171/172 Mon-Sat Evening Services - Total 47 Responses

Gender

| | Over 65 | Disability or Limiting Illness | Male | Female | Ethnicity (White British) | Ethnicity (Other British) | Belief (Christian) | Belief (None) | Belief (Other) |
|--|---------|--------------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| % of responses | 36.17% | 42.55% | 38.30% | 53.19% | 89.36% | 2.13% | 53.19% | 17.02% | 2.13% |
| If service removed % would not travel | 58.82% | 60.00% | 55.56% | 40.00% | 50.00% | 100.00% | 44.00% | 25.00% | 0.00% |
| If service removed % would use car | 23.53% | 20.00% | 27.78% | 8.00% | 11.90% | 100.00% | 12.00% | 25.00% | 100.00% |
| If service removed % would use other bus | 5.88% | 5.00% | 22.22% | 12.00% | 7.14% | 0.00% | 12.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |

6.23 In total 47 questionnaires were completed by users of the 171 / 172 service during the evening Monday to Saturday. The majority of respondents were female on this service (53%). In each demographic group, respondents were most likely to not travel at all on the service if it was removed in frequency, then travel by car and finally use another bus service. Only 20% of those with a disability or limiting illness would travel by car if the evening 171/172 services were withdrawn, 60% would not travel and only 5% would use another bus service.

Service 153 - Total 96 Responses

Gender

| | Over 65 | Disability or Limiting Illness | Male | Female | Ethnicity (White British) | Ethnicity (Other British) | Belief (Christian) | Belief (None) | Belief (Other) |
|--|---------|--------------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| % of responses | 68.75% | 54.17% | 27.08% | 62.50% | 86.46% | 4.17% | 67.71% | 16.67% | 2.08% |
| If service removed % would not travel | 30.30% | 32.69% | 34.62% | 30.00% | 32.53% | 0.00% | 29.23% | 25.00% | 0.00% |
| If service removed % would use car | 12.12% | 11.54% | 23.08% | 13.33% | 15.66% | 25.00% | 16.92% | 12.50% | 0.00% |
| If service removed % would use other bus | 1.52% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 1.67% | 1.20% | 0.00% | 1.54% | 0.00% | 0.00% |

6.24 In total 96 questionnaires were completed by users of service 153. The majority of respondents were female on this service (62.5%). In each demographic group, respondents were most likely to not travel at all on the service if it was removed in frequency, then travel by car and finally use another bus service. 23% of those with a disability or limiting illness would travel by car if the 153 service was removed, 33% would not travel and none said they would use another bus service

Service 598 - Total 63 Responses

Gender

| | Over 65 | Disability or Limiting Illness | Male | Female | Ethnicity (White British) | Ethnicity (Other British) | Belief (Christian) | Belief (None) | Belief (Other) |
|--|---------|--------------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| % of responses | 28.10% | 25.64% | 37.18% | 42.31% | 64.10% | 5.13% | 47.44% | 20.51% | 3.85% |
| If service removed % would not travel | 31.82% | 45.00% | 31.03% | 45.45% | 36.00% | 75.00% | 29.73% | 37.50% | 33.33% |
| If service removed % would use car | 22.73% | 25.00% | 27.59% | 27.27% | 28.00% | 50.00% | 29.73% | 37.50% | 0.00% |
| If service removed % would use other bus | 4.55% | 5.00% | 3.45% | 9.09% | 4.00% | 50.00% | 8.11% | 6.25% | 0.00% |

6.25 In total 63 questionnaires were completed by users of service 598. The majority of respondents were female on this service (42%). In each demographic group, respondents were most likely to not travel at all on the service if it was removed in frequency, then travel by car and finally use another bus service. 25% of those with a disability or limiting illness would travel by car if the 598 service was removed, 45% would not travel and only 5% would use another bus.

6.26 The following table relates to service 4c which also formed part of the consultation.

| Service 4c | Over 65 | Disability or limiting illness | Male | Female | Ethnicity (White British) | Belief (Christian) | Belief (None) |
|--|---------|--------------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| % of responses | 71.43% | 71.43% | 57.14% | 28.57% | 85.71% | 71.43% | 14.29% |
| If service removed % would not travel | 0.00% | 0.00% | 25.00% | 0.00% | 16.67% | 20.00% | |
| If service removed % would use car | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | |
| If service removed % would use other bus | 40.00% | 40.00% | 25.00% | 25.00% | 33.33% | 20.00% | 100.00% |

6.27 In total, 7 questionnaires were completed by users of service 4C. Although the small number of responses do not allow for statistically significant analysis, many respondents from each demographic group stated that if the 4c was removed they would use another bus service. No one stated that they would use the car if the service was removed. Twenty-five percent of males would not travel at all if the service was removed. Eighty-six percent of respondents were White British, the other respondents chose not to state their ethnicity. A significant majority of those responding, 71.43% are over 65 and have a disability; although based on a small sample of 7 respondents. Therefore, there would be a negative impact on those users; however, the cost per trip is 10 to 20 times that of most of the Council's supported services.

Summary of Options Analysis

Option 1

The majority of respondents stated that they would either not travel or travel by car if these services were changed as stated. If the 151,152 and 162 were reduced in frequency users in each demographic group would either not travel (most common for the 162) or travel by car instead (the overwhelming response for if the 152 was reduced).

Focusing on ethnicity, most respondents from a white, British background said they would either no longer travel or would travel by car. Respondents from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds stated that they would travel by private car or would use other bus services. Those with non-religious or other beliefs stated they would travel by car or not make the journey at all.

Option 2

When presented with this option the majority of respondents stated that they would no longer make their journeys if the services were withdrawn. The majority of respondents over the age of 65 stated that they would no longer make their journey. Disabled respondents stated they would no longer make their journey if the above services were withdrawn. On the 53 service, in all demographic categories the highest % of responses stated they would not travel if the service was removed with the exception of the over 65's for whom 35% would travel by car and 25% would not travel.

If both the town evening and Sunday services were removed the overwhelming majority would no longer make these journeys.

Focusing on ethnicity, all respondents from a white, British background said they would no longer travel if the services were withdrawn. All of the respondents from BME backgrounds stated that they would travel by private car or would not make the journey at all. All respondents with either a Christian belief, other religion or no religion all stated that if their bus services were withdrawn they would either no longer make their journey or would only do so by private car.

The results show that

- Option 2 would lead to a higher % of users not making journeys at all, where as more respondents would use another bus if option 1 was implemented
- The advantage of Option 1 over Option 2 is clear as services 151,152 and 162 would only be reduced in frequency - so journeys could still be made
- Option 2 proposes to remove services entirely and so has a higher proportion of respondents who would no longer travel compared to Option 1.

Section 4: Summary of Other Consultation responses

- 6.28 A number of forums and community groups were consulted, and their comments are summarised below:

The Access Advisory Panel

The Access Advisory Panel meeting was attended on the 28th March 2012. Key points raised were the following:

- The Panel wanted to know what the decision criteria were for service changes;
- The Panel felt that links to the Council and Central Government objectives need to be made;
- There was a range of comments on services already modified as well as the need for a good bus network as the population ages and new developments are created;
- The Panel thought that the link to the hospital is key to certain sections of the community;
- The proposed changes would have a significant impact on personal choice to access a wide range of services.

The Older People's Partnership

The Older People's Partnership meeting was attended on the 14th March 2012.

Key points raised were as follows:

- The Partnership highlighted the importance of evening services in Bracknell; and the reduction or withdrawal of these services would limit the activities that older people attend;
- There was a heavy emphasis on the important role that public transport plays in allowing older people to access key services when without a car.

The Over 50s Forum

The AGM of the Over Fifties Forum was attended on the 4th April 2012. Key points raised were as follows:

- The forum felt that those that are most vulnerable would be hardest hit by the potential changes to services;
- The 598 and 108 were singled out as particularly important services.

Youth Services

The Youth Services Manager was met on the 22nd March 2012. The 151, 53/153, 152 and 162 were identified as services that, if reduced, would limit young people's access to youth centres. Access in the evenings was identified as being very important for independence and well being.

Federation of Community Groups

Key points raised were as follows:

- The reduction of the bus services offered will have an impact on vulnerable groups, particularly older persons;

- Whilst most people in the Borough have an alternative mode of transport, those that do not will be hit hardest;
- Jennett's Park needs to have bus services to link the new community to the facilities it does not have within the development (e.g. shops); and
- It was queried whether the Council had considered implementing a partial charge for concessionary fares. It was clarified that this was a National scheme and that we had a legal obligation to provide free off peak travel for those eligible for such travel. Most of the participants at the meeting did not consider a partial charge to be a desirable option.

Overview and Scrutiny Working Group

- In general, the Group expressed concerns over the reductions at three meetings where the proposals were discussed. While they understood budget decisions had to be taken, on reflection and consideration of the EqIA consultation, they felt that this incremental approach to the reductions was not as robust as it could be if considered as part of a wider Bus Strategy. They felt options for the savings to be achieved this year should be presented to the Executive, including an option which achieved some savings this year with any further decisions deferred until a comprehensive Bus Strategy is completed.

6.29 A petition was received by the Council on 12th March 2012. The petition opposes cuts to the 152/153 services and appears to originate from The High Pines area which is served currently by routes 152 and 153. The petition contains 62 signatures and a copy of correspondence from the Council to a resident of High Pines in August 2008 discussing a previous review of bus services across the Borough.

6.30 The full consultants report is provided in Appendix 4.

7.0 Next Steps

7.1 Taking this full equality impact assessment and its consultation results into account, options for making the £200,000 savings will be presented to the Council's Executive on 22nd May 2012.

7.2 This EIA report will be a key consideration in determining whether to take the £200,000 savings as proposed as a whole, in part or at all. Dependant on the extent of the cuts taken, monitoring of impact will be required alongside further negotiations with bus service providers.

7.3 The options being put to the Executive for their decision are:

7.3.1 Option A

Do not cut any supported bus services but reduce the overall available concessionary fares budget by £130,000.

Total annual savings £130,000 (£130,000 in 2012/13);

7.3.2 Option B

Option 1 plus only remove those services where it can be demonstrated that no adverse impact would result, where a commercial alternative is available, **or** where the cost of the existing service per passenger is excessively high and unjustified (i.e. the 4C service which only carried 124 passenger trips per year at a cost of over £52 per trip).

Total annual savings £136,494 (approximately £133,000 in 2012/13).

7.3.3 Option C

Option A above, plus the Option 1 cuts which were consulted on publicly. This includes a reduction in service along Route 151 (Bracknell – Binfield Village – Wokingham), Route 152 (Bracknell – Winkfield Row – Winkfield Village) and Route 162 (Bracknell – Winkfield Row – Ascot High Street).

Total annual savings £200,000 (approximately £160,000 in 2012/13).

Impacts of Each Option

Option A

- 7.4 The current concessionary fares budget is higher than is currently necessary. We have declared this money as unspent in 2011/12 and officers feel this level of savings in future years is a reasonable projection of future demand based on current circumstances and the current scheme. However, as the population increases and ages, along with new growth coming on stream and particularly with the new town centre being delivered, officers expect demand to rise further. At that time, a budget pressure would arise and need to be accommodated as we have a statutory duty to provide concessionary travel.

Option B

- 7.5 The same as Option A, plus the impact on those few users of the 4C service. Service 4C was introduced as an effort to compliment the commercial services operated during term time. While this is a low number of overall users, we do know that service is used by 100% concessions and there are no public transport alternatives for that route at certain times. Further consultation with those users will help officers to understand if alternative provision may be available. However, if no alternative is found, the impact of the reduction will not be able to be mitigated.

Option C

- 7.6 The same as Option B, plus the impact of reduced services to Winkfield and no services to Binfield Village. The cost reductions would result in fewer buses being used and this is key in delivering the savings. The reduction to Winkfield services would be down to one bus every 2 hours a day for a total of only 4 or 5 buses a day. We should expect the loss of the Binfield Village service would effect those travelling to and from Wokingham; there would however, still be a regular service (albeit a reduced frequency service), which runs between the village and Bracknell town centre. The consultation results confirm this would impact particularly on older people travelling to and from Binfield to Wokingham, as well as students who travel from the village to St Crispins Secondary School in Wokingham.
- 7.7 It should be noted that it is very difficult to predict the total savings that will result from Option C. The contracts will need to be re-negotiated in line with the emerging Council bus strategy. Through this process we may find that since the last negotiation, costs of running services will have most certainly gone up which could increase cost of a service, commercial opportunities may have increased or decreased depending on many factors (health of the economy, price of fuel to motorists and operators, reduction in Government's subsidy to operators for fuel costs, new development areas coming on stream, end of some existing s.106 supported services).

8.0 Publication of Equality Impact Assessment

- 8.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 aims to make public authorities more transparent, accountable and increase public debate and involvement. Under the Act the Council makes available to the public a vast amount of information via its Publication Scheme. All completed EIA's are published. The EIA's are published to <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/your-council/yc-community-cohesion/yc-equality-impact-assessments.htm>.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 It is clear from the respondents, most of which are older people and people with disabilities (identified as being potentially adversely impacted through the Equalities Impact Assessment screening stage), that they feel they will be adversely affected by the proposed reduction in supported bus services. Many of the respondents stated that these services are essential to their daily life and that they would struggle if they were reduced or withdrawn from service and hope that no major changes will take place in the future. Indeed many feel that they would be left without any other option for travel which could lead to social isolation and also have an impact on health and well being.
- 9.2 To avoid or mitigate the adverse impact on these groups, the Executive in making its decision about budget reductions should consider the options presented at paragraph 7.3 of this report. If budget reductions are chosen, the Council will need to monitor impact of such reductions and mitigate this impact.

10.0 Monitoring Arrangements

- 10.1 Taking this full equality impact assessment and the consultation results into account, the options for making the £200,000 savings outlined above will be presented to the Council's Executive.
- 10.2 The options will be presented to the Executive on 22nd May 2012, when a decision will be made regarding the £200,000 savings proposed.
- 10.3 Should the Executive decide to choose either Option B or Option C, the impact on bus passengers will need to be monitored once the cuts have been made. This would likely take the form of surveys and possible "one to one", or "one too many" interviews to fully appreciate any impact that may be arising as a direct or indirect result of service reduction. Further engagement with community groups will also be necessary. This should be done alongside development of the Council's new Bus Strategy.

Appendix 1 Equalities Screening Record Form

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Date of Screening: 28 October 2011 | Directorate: ECC | Section: Planning & Transport: Development Management | |
| 1. Activity to be assessed | 2012/13 Budget Proposals – Reduction in Budget for Public Transport (Buses), including Concessionary fares £200,000 | | |
| 2. What is the activity? | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy/strategy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Function/procedure <input type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change | | |
| 3. Is it a new or existing activity? | <input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Existing | | |
| 4. Officer responsible for the screening | Bev Hindle | | |
| 5. Who are the members of the EIA team? | Bev Hindle, Roger Cook, Sue Cuthbert, Jane Eaton | | |
| 6. What is the purpose of the activity? | <p>To meet corporate savings targets, the proposal is to reduce our overall budget commitment for public transport (including concessionary fares) by £200,000. Residents over the statutory age of retirement or with certain disabilities can qualify for a concessionary fares pass. Bracknell Council has 15,605 bus passes in circulation, of which 15,030 are on age grounds.</p> <p>It is estimated that in 2011/12 810,000 concessionary Journeys will be made, over 300,000 of these on Contracted services. Total concessions cost for 2011/12 is estimated between £830,000-£850,000.</p> <p>Bracknell manage 14 local bus contracts (covering 11 services), and contribute to 2 other services at a net cost to the council of over £366,000.</p> <p>Roughly 490,000 passengers travel on supported services a year, 300,000 are concessionary journeys that begin within Bracknell (63%).</p> | | |
| 7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target? | The objective is to realise financial savings to meet our projected shortfall. In this case, the intent is to minimise the impact such a cut would have on the public. | | |
| Protected Characteristics | Please tick yes or no | Is there an impact? What kind of equality impact may there be? Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral please give a reason. | What evidence do you have to support this? E.g equality monitoring data, consultation results, customer satisfaction information etc Please add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform members decision making, include consultation results/satisfaction |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| | | | information/equality monitoring data |
| 8. Disability Equality | Y | There may be an impact on those with disabilities being able to access the level or frequency of bus services as currently available. | Of the 15,605 bus passes in circulation, 575 qualify on disability grounds (4%). |
| 9. Racial equality | N | | No specific service or concession is available based on the race of the individual – the criteria are age or disability for concessions, the bus services are open to any member of the public |
| 10. Gender equality | N | In general, there is no great difference between the amount of trips that men make compared to female, especially when considering those over the age of 60. | At a national level, in 2010, females made 5% more trips than males. |
| 11. Sexual orientation equality | N | | No specific service or concession is available based on the sexual orientation of the individual – the criteria are age or disability for concessions, the bus services are open to any member of the public |
| 12. Gender re-assignment | N | | No specific service or concession is available based on gender of the individual – the criteria are age or disability for concessions, the bus services are open to any member of the public |
| 13. Age equality | Y | There may be an impact on older persons and younger persons who tend as groups, to use public transport more than other age cohorts. | Nationally the proportion of trips made by bus was highest among those aged 17-20, Bus use was higher for those aged 60+ than in middle age groups, Nationally the proportion of people aged 60+ who use a local bus at least once a week increased from 28% in 2005 to 40% in 2010. Over the same period the proportion of people in this age group who said they use a bus less than once a year or never fell from 46% to 32%. 1 |
| 14. Religion and belief equality | Y | Reduction in frequency and/or routes/times of service could impact the ability for some to access their centres of faith. | No specific service or concession is available based on grounds of religion or belief of the individual – the criteria are age or disability for concessions; there are no specific services that serve only centres of |

¹ <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/national-travel-survey-2010/nts2010-06.pdf>

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| | | | faith and all bus services are open to any member of the public |
| 15. Pregnancy and maternity equality | | N | No specific service or concession is available based on grounds of pregnancy and maternity status of the individual – the criteria are age or disability for concessions; there are no specific services that serve only pregnant users and all bus services are open to any member of the public |
| 16. Marriage and civil partnership equality | | N | No specific service or concession is available based on grounds of marital status of the individual – the criteria are age or disability for concessions; there are no specific services that serve only married or not-married individuals and all bus services are open to any member of the public |
| 17. Please give details of any other potential impacts on any other group (e.g. those on lower incomes/carer's/ex-offenders) and on promoting good community relations. | The changes to service or frequency levels could impact on those with lower incomes who have less ability to travel by the car or other means. The reductions could also affect workers who are rely on services to get to work if, for example, they do not have access to a car or are close enough to walk or cycle. | | |
| 18. If an adverse/negative impact has been identified can it be justified on grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or for any other reason? | No. | | |
| 19. If there is any difference in the impact of the activity when considered for each of the equality groups listed in 8 – 14 above; how significant is the difference in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected? | It will depend on what level of reduction in service results which is not fully understood at this time and is subject to more review and to a certain extent, on future contract tendering not yet started. Alternatives will be looked at which try to minimise the impact of such changes, particularly to the identified groups above. | | |
| 20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties? | | N | |
| 21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained? | Officers are working on the analysis of data on bus users and trips, and will augment that with additional surveys so as to better understand the potential impact on service when developing the options for consideration | | |
| 22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required? | Y | | Because there is likely to be impact which cannot be avoided or mitigated through these proposals, it is recommended a full assessment is carried out with further consultation to help us to minimise the impact of such proposals should they be implemented. |

| 23. If a full impact assessment is not required; what actions will you take to reduce or remove any potential differential/adverse impact, to further promote equality of opportunity through this activity or to obtain further information or data? Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed. | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Action | Times cale | Person Responsible | Milestone/Success Criteria |
| Consultation on Budget reduction Proopsals | Dec 2011 - Jan 2012 | Roger Cook, Sue Cuthbert | Consultation Complete by 01/02/2012 |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| 24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in? | Transport Development | | |
| 25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening? | | | |
| 26. Chief Officers signature. | Signature: Date: 23 November 2011 | | |
| 27. Which PMR will this screening be reported in? | Q4 ECC PMR 2011/12 | | |

When complete please send to abby.thomas@bracknell-forest.gov.uk for publication the Council's website.

Appendix 2 – Borough Bus Routes

Appendix 3 – Minutes of Meetings Will consist of the following

Appendix 3(a) - Public Transport and Concessionary Fares Overview and Scrutiny Working Group

Appendix 3(b) Minutes from the Older People's Partnership

Appendix 4- Consultants Report