



Appendix A Reduction in Budget for Community Transport

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 Community Transport provision in Bracknell Forest. The potential reduction in Community Transport provision is as a result of a proposed budget savings of £50,000 in this service area. The key groups affected have been identified as community transport users, potential community transport users and community groups.
- 1.2 Having conducted an Equalities Impact Screening in November 2011, attached at Appendix 1, it was decided that the potential reduction in community transport 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 community transport provision 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 community transport 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 £50,000 economy from the Community Transport budget has been put forward for consultation.
- 2.2 Community Transport services in Bracknell Forest are currently provided by Keep Mobile. Services subsidised by Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) are Dial-A-Ride, Voluntary Group Transport and scheduled excursions. Services are provided for older people (over 70) and people with disabilities. The payment by BFC is a fixed sum and is currently £11,500 per month. Half of the payment is intended to support Dial-A-Ride services, with the rest originally intended for voluntary group transport and scheduled shopping trips. More recently the popularity of the excursions led to an agreement that funds originally intended for shopping trips should all be diverted to excursions.

- 2.3 In addition to the Council payment, Keep Mobile charges passengers. Charges are per mile for Dial-A-Ride, on quotation for voluntary group transport and per trip for scheduled excursions. Keep Mobile also provides monthly statistics of journeys and mileage by service. No analysis is available of who uses the services.
- 2.4 A Review of Social Care and Community Transport was undertaken by QA Research in February 2009 and was the subject of a report to the CMT by the Head of Transport Provision in April 2009. It was reported that the outsourced Community Transport service provided by Keep Mobile was 'well regarded by users', but was 'underutilised, poorly publicised, and expensive'. Since then, both the Council and Keep Mobile have publicised the service more widely.
- 2.5 The current Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Keep Mobile was recently extended until 30th June 2012 to cover the period needed for the Equalities Impact Assessment and consultation

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 the Council. A comprehensive consultation questionnaire was developed and made available in paper format. It was also made available to download from the Council's website. Discussions on the budget proposals were also held with representative groups such as the Access Advisory Panel and the Federation of Community Groups, as well as with the operator.
- 3.2 Hard copies of the consultation were distributed widely, and posters advertising the consultation were put up at various locations around the borough. 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. Questionnaires were also given to Keep Mobile to distribute to its members.

4.0 Assessment of Impact on Equality strands

- 4.1 The Equality Impact Screening produced in November 2011 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

We have no evidence at this time to suggest a disproportionate affect on people of different races.

Sexual Orientation Equality

We have no evidence at this time to suggest a disproportionate affect on people with any particular sexual orientation.

Gender Re-assignment Equality

We have no evidence at this time to suggest a disproportionate affect on people who have had, are planning or are undergoing gender reassignment.

Religion and belief equality

We have no evidence at this time to suggest a disproportionate affect on this group.

Pregnancy and Maternity Equality

We have no evidence at this time to suggest a disproportionate affect on this group of women.

Marriage and Civil Partnership Equality

We have no evidence at this time to suggest a disproportionate affect on people who are married or in a civil partnership.

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

Disability Equality

There could be an adverse impact as those with disabilities may not have access to as much subsidised community transport in future. The membership system that allows access to the community transport service is restricted by age and disability.

Gender Equality

There could be an adverse impact on females as there is a larger proportion of users who are female.

Age Equality

There could be an adverse impact on older people as they make up the majority of members in this scheme.

- 4.3 Having made this initial assessment of the equality impact of the proposals based on our existing knowledge, it informed the Council to ensure that the 12 week consultation process particularly targeted the views of older people, women, and people with disabilities, as well as plugging gaps in our knowledge with regard to the detailed demographic profile of the users of the community transport service.

5.0 Consultation & Engagement

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

Methodology

- 5.2 The consultation took the form of a questionnaire that was publicly available in hard-copy. The consultation 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 those groups most likely to be affected as listed in paragraph 4.2.
- 5.3 The 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 providing the opportunity to download a questionnaire directly.

Timeframes

- 5.4 The consultation ran from 20th February 2012 to 11th May 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

- 5.5 It was stated on the questionnaire that the Council's current thinking was that the reduced spending could result in the reduction of the excursions beyond the Borough rather than local trips.
- 5.7 The questionnaire itself consists of two sections. The first section categorised respondents into users and non-users. Users were asked which elements of community transport they used, how often they used those services, when they used those services, why they used the services and asked the respondents to score how satisfied they were with the service. Non-users, who were eligible to use the service were asked why they didn't use the it.
- 5.8 The second section gives an overall picture of the personal profile of the respondents, including equality monitoring questions.
- 5.9 In total 204 questionnaires were completed and returned. Of these, 96 respondents stated that they regularly used Community Transport. Data received from Keep Mobile indicates that around 450 trips per month took place on elements that Bracknell Forest

Council fund. In total there are around 2,050 people registered for the services. This equates to approximately a 10% response rate assuming non-users could potentially represent existing users or could be users themselves in time.

- 5.10 Section one of the survey contained quantitative and qualitative questions allowing users to add to the standard 'tick box' questions with comments on their own situation.

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 interested groups and other stakeholders on Community Transport in Bracknell Forest. 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
- The Over Fifties Forum
- Federation of Community Groups

A common theme from these groups was the important role that Community Transport plays in allowing those who cannot access the bus network to access amenities and living a full and active life. Both the Over Fifties Forum and the Older People's Partnership raised concerns that the current arrangements were too expensive. Competition to book and use wheel chair accessible vehicles was also highlighted as an issue.

All groups consulted commented on the need for personal choice and that this was one of the benefits of Community Transport versus Public Transport. They also noted that there could be greater personal choice in future.

- 5.14 Officers also met with the operator who raised concerns with reduction of budgets, not only potentially from this Council, but also from other supporters (i.e. parish councils). This coupled with higher transport costs was putting real pressure on their ability to run effective services.
- 5.15 The operator also commented how passengers appreciated the excursion element of the service.

6.0 Summary of all Responses

General overview

- 6.1 A total of 96 responses stated that they regularly used Community Transport (CT) in Bracknell.
- 6.2 Across all demographic groups the most common reason to use CT was to access either the hospital or other health appointments. 55% of all users stated they used CT for this reason. 47% of users stated they used CT to access shopping and leisure facilities.
- 6.3 CT users were most satisfied with the driver friendliness and helpfulness on the service (average score 9.51/10), users were least satisfied with variety of trips and destinations on offer (7.94/10), cost of the service (8.19/10) and the ability to book a journey at a time requested (8.13/10). Over all satisfaction measured 9.10/10. These trends were similar for all main demographic groups.
- 6.4 Across all demographic groups, the most common response when asked how they would travel if the element of CT that they use was not available was to not travel at all (45%). The only exception to this is for the male demographic, for which the most common response was to use a taxi or voluntary car scheme (50%).

Table 1.1: All Community Transport users

		All users	Gender		Age	Disability Status	Ethnicity	Belief
			Female	Male	Over 65's	Disabled	White British	Christian
Number of responses		96	69	18	73	80	86	82
What do you use Community Transport to access	Shopping	47%	51%	22%	53%	44%	50%	52%
	Leisure	47%	48%	44%	49%	49%	47%	46%
	Hospital/Health	55%	55%	44%	55%	59%	57%	61%
Out of ten how satisfied are you with...	Variety of trips and destinations on offer	7.94	7.98	7.91	8.02	7.87	7.75	7.94
	Cost of the service	8.19	8.29	8.20	8.11	8.12	8.10	8.23
	Driver friendliness and helpfulness	9.51	9.63	9.00	9.57	9.57	9.55	9.53
	Ability to book a journey at the time you want	8.13	8.08	7.92	8.22	8.07	8.13	8.16
	Overall satisfaction of the service	9.10	9.22	8.79	9.33	9.12	9.21	9.13
If Community Transport was removed how would you make your journey	I would use an alternative bus service	16%	19%	11%	16%	14%	16%	16%
	I would go by Car (Pax or Driver)	16%	14%	28%	12%	18%	15%	16%
	I would not make the Journey	45%	49%	39%	47%	46%	47%	48%
	I would use a taxi or volunteer car scheme	43%	38%	50%	37%	46%	42%	45%

Dial-a-Ride

- 6.5 In total 38 respondents stated that they used the Dial-a-Ride (DaR) element of CT in Bracknell.
- 6.6 The most common reason for using DaR was to access shops or health appointments, including those at Hospitals. 89% of DaR users used the service to access shops, 96% of females and 100% of those with a Christian faith. 89% of users used the service to access health appointments, 92% of females and 100% of those with Christian faith.
- 6.7 If users could no longer access DaR in Bracknell most commonly they would use a taxi or voluntary car to make the trip instead (58%). This trend was similar for all main demographic groups surveyed. 47% of DaR users would not make their trip if DaR wasn't available, compared to 50% of those with a limiting disability. Alternatives like car and bus scored relatively low as a second choice of transport, apart from in the male demographic (33% would use bus or car).

Table 1.2: DaR users

		Why do you use DaR				How would you make your Journey without DaR			
		No. of responses	Shopping	Leisure	Health	Alternative bus	Car	Not make Journey	Taxi or Voluntary car
All users		38	89%	53%	89%	13%	16%	47%	58%
Gender	Male	9	67%	56%	67%	22%	33%	33%	56%
	Female	25	96%	52%	92%	12%	12%	56%	56%
Age	Over 65's	25	88%	64%	84%	12%	12%	48%	52%
Disability	Disabled	32	88%	53%	97%	9%	19%	50%	66%
Ethnicity	White British	33	97%	52%	94%	12%	12%	55%	58%
Belief	Christian	33	100%	52%	100%	12%	12%	52%	61%

Scheduled Excursions

- 6.8 In total 31 respondents stated that they used the Scheduled Excursions (SE) element of CT in Bracknell.
- 6.9 The main reason for using this element of CT was for both shopping and leisure purposes (both 71% of all users). This trend was similar for all main demographic groups.
- 6.10 When asked what the individual would do if the SE element of CT was removed, the majority stated they would not make the journey at all (71%). 100% of males stated this compared to 72% of females. This was the highest scoring category for all demographic groups. Only 26% of SE users stated they would make the trip using a taxi or voluntary car scheme and 19% would use the bus.

Table 1.3: Scheduled Excursion users

		No. of responses	Why do you use Scheduled Excursions			How would you make your Journey without Scheduled Excursions			
			Shopping	Leisure	Health	Alternative bus	Car	Not make Journey	Taxi or Voluntary car
All users		31	71%	71%	58%	19%	13%	71%	26%
Gender	Male	3	100%	100%	100%	33%	33%	100%	33%
	Female	25	60%	64%	48%	20%	12%	72%	16%
Age	Over 65's	28	71%	68%	54%	18%	7%	71%	21%
Disability	Disabled	25	68%	72%	64%	20%	12%	72%	32%
Ethnicity	White British	29	76%	72%	59%	21%	14%	69%	28%
Belief	Christian	28	79%	71%	64%	21%	14%	68%	29%

Voluntary Group Transport

- 6.11 In total 44 respondents stated that they used the Voluntary Group Transport (VGT) element of CT in Bracknell. This was the most popular element of CT.
- 6.12 The main reasons for using this element of CT were for both health reasons (75% of users, including hospital and other health appointments). This trend was similar for all main demographic groups.
- 6.13 When asked what the individual would do if the VGT element of CT was removed, the majority stated they would use a taxi or voluntary car scheme (59%). This trend was similar for all main demographic groups with the exception of Males, who were more likely to not make the journey.

Table 1.4: Voluntary Group Transport users

		Why do you use VGT			How would you make your Journey without VGT				
		No. of responses	Shopping	Leisure	Health	Alternative bus	Car	Not make Journey	Taxi or Voluntary car
All users		44	64%	41%	75%	14%	16%	41%	59%
Gender	Male	5	20%	40%	20%	0%	20%	80%	60%
	Female	33	67%	42%	76%	18%	18%	36%	55%
Age	Over 65's	34	71%	44%	82%	15%	12%	38%	53%
Disability	Disabled	39	67%	44%	77%	10%	18%	41%	59%
Ethnicity	White British	40	68%	43%	75%	15%	18%	40%	58%
Belief	Christian	41	68%	44%	78%	12%	17%	44%	61%

Other Transport (i.e. Dial-a-car)

- 6.14 In total 25 respondents stated that they used the other transport modes offered by CT in Bracknell.
- 6.15 The main reason for using these elements of CT was to access health facilities (56% of users, including hospital and other health appointments). This trend was similar for all main demographic groups.
- 6.16 When asked what the individual would do if this element of CT was removed, the most common response was that they wouldn't travel (44%) or that they would use a taxi or Voluntary car scheme (40%). For all demographic groups not travelling was the most common response, with the exception of the male demographic for whom travelling by taxi or voluntary car scheme was a more likely alternative.

Table 1.5: Other CT transport users

		No. of responses	Why do you use other CT			How would you make your Journey without other CT			
			Shopping	Leisure	Health	Alternative bus	Car	Not make Journey	Taxi or Voluntary car
All users		25	36%	48%	56%	12%	20%	44%	40%
Gender	Male	4	25%	25%	25%	0%	25%	25%	50%
	Female	17	35%	53%	59%	18%	24%	53%	41%
Age	Over 65's	20	45%	40%	70%	10%	15%	50%	40%
Disability	Disabled	23	35%	52%	57%	13%	22%	48%	39%
Ethnicity	White British	23	39%	48%	61%	13%	22%	43%	39%
Belief	Christian	22	41%	50%	59%	14%	23%	45%	41%

Analysis of Adversely Impacted Characteristics

	D-a-R users		Scheduled Excursions		Voluntary Group Transport	
	Not make Journey	Taxi or Voluntary car	Not make Journey	Taxi or Voluntary car	Not make Journey	Taxi or Voluntary car
All users	47%	58%	71%	26%	41%	59%
Female	56%	56%	72%	16%	36%	55%
Over 65's	48%	52%	71%	21%	38%	53%
Disabled	50%	66%	72%	32%	41%	59%

- 6.17 A total of 96 responses stated that they regularly used Community Transport (CT) in Bracknell.
- 6.18 If either the Dial-a-ride (DaR) or Voluntary Group Transport (VGT) element of community transport was withdrawn then the majority of users stated that they would instead make the journey by Taxi or Voluntary Car scheme.
- 6.19 The results indicate that users are more likely to find a way to make trips like these as they are seen as essential journeys;, for example 66% of disabled users would use a taxi if the DaRe service was removed. The most common reason for using DaR was to access shops or health appointments, including those at Hospitals. 89% of users used the service to access health appointments, 92% of females and 100% of those with Christian faith.
- 6.20 Results of those who used VGT show an even higher percentage likely to continue making their trip if the Council ceased funding to this element of CT. 53% of over 65's stated that they would use a taxi or voluntary car to make the journey and only 38% stated they would not travel at all if this service was not available. The main reason for using this element of CT was for health reasons (75% of users).
- 6.21 This differs from those who use the scheduled excursion element of CT, who were more likely not to make the trip at all if it was not available through Keep Mobile. The main reason for using this element of CT was for both shopping and leisure purposes (both 71% of all users).

- 6.22 100% of males stated that they would not make the trip if scheduled excursions were offered by CT compared to 72% of females. This was the highest scoring category for all demographic groups. Only 26% of Scheduled Excursion users stated they would make the trip using a taxi or voluntary car scheme if the scheme was removed, and 19% would use the bus.
- 6.23 Due to the nature of the services withdrawal of funding to any element would have an impact on any demographic group.
- 6.24 The results show very similar trends for all the main demographic groups that have been analysed.

7.0 **Next Steps**

- 7.1 Taking this full equality impact assessment and its consultation results into account, the decision on whether to make the £50,000 savings will be taken by to the Council's Executive on 12 June 2012.
- 7.2 Monitoring of impact of any reduction in subsidy will take place over the coming months. The Council will also be reflecting on how it provides its subsidy for Community Transport in future, including how more personal choice for supported trips may be delivered in the future.
- 7.3 The main reasons for using the excursion element of the Community Transport service was for both shopping and/or leisure trips. All of the main demographic groups showed this trend. Seventy-one percent of the respondents said that if the excursions element was removed, they would not make the journey at all. All male respondents stated this, compared to 72% of female respondents.
- 7.4 However, cutting the budget by £50,000 is likely to impact on more elements than just the excursions. Given that the annual spend is currently £138k and the SLA states that the service provider should spend 50% of that (£69k) on Dial-A-Ride, we are assuming that half of the remaining budget (£34.500) is spent on each of the other two elements – Excursions and Voluntary Group Transport. This assumption has to be made due to the lack of data received from the current service provider. Therefore, if all of the budget for excursions is cut, there will be a shortfall of £15,500 which will impact on the Dial-A-Ride and Voluntary Group Transport 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/equalitiesassessmentandconsultation>

9.0 Monitoring Arrangements

- 9.1 Should the Executive decide to reduce the budget the impact on community transport passengers will need to be monitored. 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. This should be done alongside development of the Council's new approach to Community Transport provision for 2013/14.
- 9.2 There are other community transport providers in the Borough (e.g. churches, social clubs) and other potential funding providers (e.g. community outreach programmes, parish and town councils) who may be able to help fill the gap left by this budget reduction if taken. As part of developing the emerging Community Transport Strategy, the Council will reach out to these organisations to see if greater collective services could be developed to help mitigate the impact of this potential reduction, and to deliver more efficient and effective community transport in the Borough.