

KCC - Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate (GET).

Equality Analysis / Impact Assessment (EqIA) template

Name of decision, policy, procedure, project or service: KCC Travel Saver Cost Increase.

Brief description of policy, procedure, project or service

The KCC Travel Saver (KTS) is a subsidised bus pass scheme provided by KCC which can save up to 50% of the costs on travel to school.

The KTS is for students in academic years 7-11 and once issued the pass provided free at the point of use travel on all public buses from 6am to 7pm, Mondays to Fridays throughout the academic year from September to July. In addition, some operators also accept the pass as valid for travel at other times i.e. at evenings, on weekends and in the Summer Holidays.

The scheme is administered as a concessionary travel scheme whereby KCC have to reimburse operators for every journey made using a pass reflecting the fare that they would otherwise have received from the parent. At the current rates, the costs of reimbursing operators exceeds the income received through the application fee by about £6m per annum which reflects the subsidy allocated to parents and the overall costs of the scheme to KCC.

Financial pressures placed on KCC's budget mean that the Council face an intensely challenging period ahead, when tough decisions will need to be taken to guarantee services for our most vulnerable residents. The impact of this does unfortunately necessitate that the Council is having to consider savings measures across a whole range of services. The budget set by the Council for the 2022/23 financial year, includes a reduction in funding available to subsidise parents of (circa. £1m) and it is therefore necessary to increase the application fees to off-set this and ensure that the scheme can continue to be sustained.

It is therefore proposed to adjust the cost of the standard Kent Travel Saver from £370 per academic year to £450 and to increase the cost of the low-income Kent Travel Saver from £120 per academic year to £150. All other concessions such as the provision for free passes and the sibling (buy 2 and get the 3rd and 4th passes for free) would continue unchanged. The ability to spread the cost by paying through a series of instalments would also be maintained.

It should be noted that separate consideration will be given to the costs of the KCC 16+ Travel Saver scheme which is not therefore covered by this EQIA.

Aims and Objectives

The proposed increase in the cost of the pass is estimated to deliver circa £964K in additional income beyond anticipated operator inflation. The price increase enables a budget of £11.5M gross cost offset by £6.8M of income to give a net cost of £4.7M to Kent County Council for 2022/23 enabling the scheme to be sustained within the available budget.

JUDGEMENT

Continue : any increase to the costs of a support service will undoubtedly cause a greater degree of hardship to all who access the service and this will include some greater impact to some protected groups. This is the case in this instance, although it is also noted that the proposed increase in pass costs is designed to protect the scheme to ensure that financial support can be maintained for all passholders. In this context, the continuation of the scheme, even at increased costs, continues to have a positive impact for all service users by comparison with it becoming unsustainable and ceasing to exist.

I have found the Adverse Equality Impact Rating to be LOW as whilst there are some greater impacts to protected groups, these are identified as limited to those only in a disabled category. It is also considered that the changes are designed to ensure that the scheme can be sustained and continue to have a positive impact for all users by comparison with it ceasing altogether.

GET Document Control

Revision History

Version	Date	Authors	Comment
V0.1	14.01.22	Steve Pay	First Draft

Document Sign-Off (this must be both the relevant Head of Service and the relevant Director)

Attestation

I have read and paid due regard to the Equality Analysis/Impact Assessment. I agree with the actions to mitigate any adverse impact(s) that has /have been identified.

Name	Signature	Title	Date of Issue
Phil Lightowler		Interim Director of Highways and Transportation	19.01.22

Date Document Updated 02/03/2022

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Part 1 - Screening

Regarding the decision, policy, procedure, project or service under consideration,

Could this policy, procedure, project or service, or any proposed changes to it, affect any Protected Group (listed below) less favourably (negatively) than others in Kent?

Could this policy, procedure, project or service promote equal opportunities for this group?

Please note that there is no justification for direct discrimination; and indirect discrimination will need to be justified according to the legal requirements

Protected Group	You MUST provide a brief commentary as to your findings, or this EqIA will be returned to you unsigned			
	High Negative Impact	Medium Negative Impact	Low Negative Impact	High/Medium/Low Favourable Impact
Age			The scheme is available only to those in a lower aged group, namely those of secondary school, age. With the parents of passholders also not expected to be of a more senior age, there is considered to be little impact on this protected group.	

Disability		The ability for children to travel to school, independently is arguably more important in the context of a disabled parent who could have less means of supporting travel to school themselves.		
Sex	None	None	None	None
Gender identity/ Transgender	None	None	None	None
Race	None	None	None	None
Religion and Belief	None	None	None	None
Sexual Orientation	None	None	None	None
Pregnancy and Maternity	None	None	None	None
Marriage and Civil Partnerships	None	None	None	None
Carer's Responsibilities	None	None	None	Passes will continue to be provided free of charge to Young

				Carers of eligible age thus providing significant support for this characteristic.
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Part 3 - Action Plan

Protected Characteristic	Issues identified	Action to be taken	Expected outcomes	Owner	Timescale	Resource implications
Disability	The ability for children to travel to school, independently is arguably more important in the context of a disabled parent who could have less means of supporting travel to school themselves.	Positive action is difficult given the stated financial needs to reduce costs. It should be noted that maintenance of the scheme and the offer for Young Carers continues to offer support for this group.	Maintenance of the Scheme	Steve Pay	Ongoing .	None

Have the actions been included in your business/ service plan?

Yes

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