

## **KCC – Highways and Transportation (HT).**

### **Equality Analysis / Impact Assessment (EqIA)**

#### **Name of decision, policy, procedure, project or service:**

National Bus Strategy – Publication of initial “shell” Enhanced Partnership agreements from April 2022

#### **Brief description of policy, procedure, project or service**

On 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021, the Government published its National Bus Strategy (NBS) for England, entitled “Bus Back Better”. The NBS sets out Government’s vision for the future of bus provision and covers a range of subject areas including network development, air quality, physical and digital accessibility, road network management and public transport information. The NBS is based on a principle of “levelling up” ,defined as raising industry standards across the Country to match the offer in London. To support the strategy, a headline figure of £3bn was pledged by Government, although the extent of funding Kent will receive is yet unknown. Alongside this future vision, a new regulatory framework is proposed for buses, which sees Government encouraging the greater use of powers within the Buses Bill (2017) with respect to Enhanced Partnerships.

In order to continue to access existing funding streams and to ensure availability of future funding schemes, Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) in England had to follow follow a set of process established by Government. This required:

- 1) A requirement to commit to either Franchising or Enhanced Partnerships for the whole LTA area by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021. KCC are pursuing the Enhanced Partnership route in line with government guidance.
- 2) A requirement to publish the first draft of a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021. Now complete.
- 3) A requirement to implement Enhanced Partnerships or to be developing franchising by April 2022. The purpose of this document,

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This Equalities Impact Assessment focuses on the production and publication of Kent's shell EP Agreements.

Kent's EPs will cover the operation of all public bus services in the county and as per statutory requirements will consist of an overall EP Plan and related EP Schemes. The EP Plan, like the BSIP, will set out the overarching and long-term aspirations for the county, with EP schemes detailing current commitments and undertakings based on available funding and resources. In Kent it is proposed to introduce three schemes in order to account for local geographical and operational circumstances - in East Kent, West Kent and Kent Thameside

At the time of producing this decision document, there has been no announcement on the funding allocation that Kent will receive to support the NBS process and related EPs. Due to the statutory processes involved with introducing an EP, including a statutory consultation period and two potential 28-day operator objection periods, it is therefore not possible to introduce a "full" EP, taking account of Kent's funding allocation and related commitments from April 2022. As such it is proposed to introduce a "shell" EP agreement from this date, setting out commitments from both parties in a no /low funding scenario. Commitments and funding investment within the "shell" schemes will then be subject to variation through a bespoke variation method

### **Aims and Objectives**

KCC wish for its "shell" EP documents to:

- Reflect the elements of the BSIP which are deliverable in a no / low funding scenario.
- Provide genuine improvements to the bus network in Kent.
- Have the flexibility to add and amend commitments to reflect any funding announcement linked to NBS funding.

## **JUDGEMENT**

Kent's EPs are intended to introduce commitments on both operators and KCC which will lead to a continuation of offer in a number of areas and an improved offer where funding allows. The documents can be improved further should funding be secured from Government through the NBS. The delivery of these measures would be expected to see a medium – high positive benefit.

**I have found the Adverse Equality Impact Rating to be: LOW**

# GET Document Control


## Revision History

Version	Date	Authors	Comment
V0.1			
V1 (this should be assigned to the version the Director signs off)			

## 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		Head of Service	December 2021

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		Director	
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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 <b>MUST</b> 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	None	None	None	<p>Whilst detail of will be added to initiatives once funding is known, there is the potential for some of these to have a positive impact on this protected group.</p> <p>Favourable impacts could be seen with respect to ticketing, accessibility and</p>

				overall bus provision levels. KCC undertook prior engagement activity on the BSIP to ensure the authority's initiatives and their prioritisation are well informed.
<b>Disability</b>	None	None	None	<p>Whilst detail of will be added to initiatives once funding is known, there is the potential for some of these to have a positive impact on this protected group.</p> <p>Favourable impacts could be seen with respect to ticketing, accessibility and overall bus provision levels. KCC undertook prior engagement activity on the BSIP to ensure the authority's initiatives and their prioritisation are well informed.</p>

<b>Sex</b>	None	None	None	None
<b>Gender identity/ Transgender</b>	None	None	None	None
<b>Race</b>	None	None	None	None



<b>Religion and Belief</b>	None	None	None	None
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	None	None	None	None
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	None	None	None	Whilst detail of will be added to initiatives once funding is known, there is the potential

				<p>for some of these to have a positive impact on this protected group.</p> <p>Favourable impacts could be seen with respect to ticketing, accessibility and overall bus provision levels. KCC undertook prior engagement activity on the BSIP to ensure the authority's initiatives and their prioritisation are well informed.</p>
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>	None	None	None	None
<b>Carer's</b>	None	None	None	Whilst detail of will be

<b>Responsibilities</b>				<p>added to initiatives once funding is known, there is the potential for some of these to have a positive impact on this protected group.</p> <p>Favourable impacts could be seen with respect to ticketing, accessibility and overall bus provision levels. KCC undertook prior engagement activity on the BSIP to ensure the authority's initiatives and their prioritisation are well informed.</p>
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## **Part 2 - Full Equality Analysis /Impact Assessment**

**From the screening grid, identify the Protected Groups impacted**

No protected groups will be negatively impacted by the publication of shell EPs.

**Information and Data used to carry out your assessment.**

Assessment carried out based on requirements on the National Bus Strategy and specifically guidance linked to EPs and BSIPs

**Who have you involved consulted and engaged with?**

Kent's BSIP (which led to EP content) was informed by:

- Public engagement activity.
- Stakeholder and operator workshops
- Information from previous passenger / operator surveys with respect to bus use .

A consultation is also to be held with Statutory consultees.

**Adverse Impact,**

No negative impacts identified.

**Positive Impact:**

Potential medium / high impact on some protected groups depending on final initiatives delivered (dependent on funding). Potential for benefits to all existing / potential bus users.

**JUDGEMENT**

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