

Kent County Council
Equality Analysis/ Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Directorate/ Service: Public Transport Service, Highways, Transportation and Waste (HTW), Growth, Environment and Transport (GET)

Name of decision, policy, procedure, project or service: The Big Conversation – Maidstone Feeder Bus Pilot

Responsible Owner/ Senior Officer: Stephen Pay

Version: 2.1 *Updated 04/03/19 Post Consultation*

Author: Robert Clark

Pathway of Equality Analysis:

Summary and recommendations of equality analysis/impact assessment.

Context

Against a backdrop of ever decreasing funding for local councils, we want to maintain and, where possible, improve rural accessibility for those without alternative means of travel. Helping to tackle social isolation and provide the “right transport solution for the right customer need, at the right price”.

Around 97% of journeys in Kent are run on a purely commercial basis by private operators however, over the last 30 years KCC has funded some routes which, while not commercially viable have been considered important to meet the needs of the communities and passengers they serve.

We want to explore how we can improve connectivity and evaluate the feasibility of delivering alternative services. Through engagement with all stakeholders, the “Big Conversation” programme has identified the Maidstone area as being one where a feeder service could be effectively implemented to improve the 13 and 59 services by providing more journey opportunities.

Aims and Objectives

To test how rural accessibility can be improved through feeder services despite increasing budget pressures. If the pilot is successful, we will look to make the changes permanent. If the pilot is not successful, KCC would work with commercial operators to reinstate direct journeys to Maidstone. The success of this pilot will be used to determine if similar changes to the supported bus network could be implemented however this decision will be taken separately.

Summary of equality impact

Overall the local consultation has evidenced that the positive impact of the proposed increase to journey frequency out-weighs the negative impacts of having to change buses. Recommended actions to minimise the negative impacts where possible have been included in this report.

Adverse Equality Impact Rating: Low

Attestation

I have read and paid due regard to the Equality Analysis/Impact Assessment concerning **The Big Conversation Maidstone Bus Pilot**. I agree with risk rating and the actions to mitigate any adverse impact(s) that has /have been identified.

Head of Service

Signed: Phil Lightowler

Name: Phil Lightowler

Job Title: Head of Public Transport

Date:

DMT Member

Signed: Simon Jones

Name: Simon Jones

Job Title: Director Highways,
Transportation and Waste

Date:

Part 1 Screening

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?

Protected Group	Please provide a <u>brief</u> commentary on your findings. Fuller analysis should be undertaken in Part 2.			
	High negative impact EqlA	Medium negative impact Screen	Low negative impact Evidence	High/Medium/Low Positive Impact Evidence
Age			Local consultation revealed some concerns for the elderly population however the analysis of equalities data proved this to be inaccurate – elderly respondents were more likely to agree to the changes.	Increased journey opportunities.
Disability		Requirements to change vehicles are likely to impact on those with disabled users – particularly those with physical impairments. The local consultation confirmed this view.		Increased journey opportunities but only where individuals with disabilities can still access services.

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Sex				Increased journey opportunities.
Gender identity/ Transgender			It is not considered that alterations to bus services have any greater impact on this group than it does on the general public.	
Race			It is not considered that alterations to bus services have any greater adverse impact on this group.	
Religion and Belief			It is not considered that alterations to bus services have any greater adverse impact on this group	
Sexual Orientation			It is not considered that alterations to bus services have any greater adverse impact on this group.	
Pregnancy and Maternity			Requirements to change vehicles may impact on those will young children (maternity). No impacted users were identified in the local consultation.	

Carer's Responsibilities		Local consultation revealed that whilst carers still agree with the changes overall, they were much less likely to agree than those without caring responsibilities.		Increased journey opportunities
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Part 2

Equality Analysis /Impact Assessment

Protected groups

- Disability
- Age
- Maternity & Pregnancy
- Carers
- Gender

Information and Data used to carry out your assessment

Total Transport Market Research Report (Nov 2016)
Kent County Council Bus Funding Review Equality Impact Assessment
Big Conversation Consultation Report (Sept 2018)
Maidstone Bus Pilot Consultation Report (March 2019)

Who have you involved consulted and engaged?

- Bus Operators
- Taxi Operators
- Community Transport Operators
- Public
- Parish Councils
- Service users

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Analysis

Positive Impact:

Age

Older residents are identified as being more reliant on public transport and the proposed changes would increase the frequency of services, providing these groups with more opportunities to travel.

- Residents in Hollingbourne, Leeds, Langley and Otham will benefit from 4 additional outbound journeys Mon-Sat representing a significant increase in journey opportunities.
- Residents in Boughton Monchelsea, Grafty Green, Kingswood, Ulcombe, Sutton Valence and Chart Sutton will benefit from 3 additional outbound journeys Mon-Sat, representing twice as many journey opportunities

In 2017-18 there were a total of 26,236 passengers on the 13 and 59 KCC supported services (as the 59 is commercially operated through the week KCC does not hold passenger data for Monday-Friday services and this data has not been included). Of these, 13,581 (40%) passengers were ENCTS pass holders (this includes both elderly and disabled passengers). This was reflected in the response to the local consultation with 64% of respondents being over the age of 65. This is significantly higher than the general population with 11% of the population on the 59 route and 22% of the population on the 13 route being over 65.

The local consultation also revealed that users over the age of 65 were less likely to disagree with the changes than the general populace, supporting the view that the positive impacts of the changes would impact this group more heavily.

- For the 13 service only 10% of the over 65s disagreed with the proposal, compared to 12% of respondents under 65.
- For the 59 service only 13% of the over 65s disagreed compared to 25% of those under 65.

7,636 (29%) of there were young people (entitled scholars, YPTP and 16+ travel pass holders). It is likely that majority of young people travelling are accessing the service to travel to and from school and their journeys will be unaffected by these changes. Only 6 respondents were under 24 suggesting this assumption is correct.

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Disability and Carers

These groups were also identified as having greater reliance on public transport and thus could benefit from increases in service levels. Analysis of the responses from these groups suggests that these groups are more likely to agree with these changes to the service 13 than to disagree. Respondents from these groups were just as likely to agree as disagree with the changes proposed for the 59 service. This supports the assumption these changes represent an improvement for these groups. However, the positive impact is limited by negative impacts on these groups which are detailed in the next section.

Gender

In addition, the consultation has highlighted that a high percentage of responders were female, and this may indicate that there is a greater impact depending on Gender which is also defined as a protected group. This group would therefore also benefit from the increased journey opportunities.

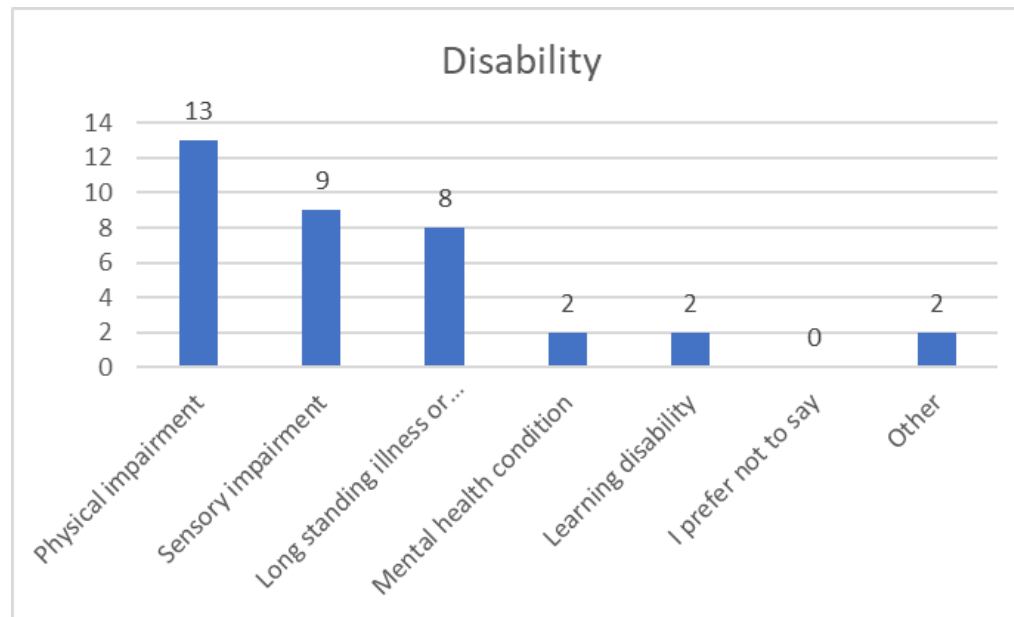
Adverse Impact:

Disability

It has been identified that disabled people, such as those with mobility or visual impairments, are potentially more reliant on the public transport network than other protected groups or members of the wider public because their disability may mean they cannot drive. The need to change vehicles may be more challenging for those with disabilities affecting their mobility which is supported by the consultation response. The nature of this disability will alter this impact these changes may have and may eliminate any positive impacts identified.

The local consultation response confirmed those respondents identifying as disabled were more likely to disagree with the changes than those who did not identify as disabled. However, overall, disabled users were just as likely to agree as they were to disagree. This supports the initial assessment that were users were able to change buses easily they would be positively impacted, however there is a group who will find the feeder service harder to access and will be negatively impacted.

The consultation also enabled other disability groups who were not initially identified to be incorporated in this assessment enabling mitigating action to be taken. The response levels by type of disability are below.



Maternity

It has been identified that the need to change vehicles may be more challenging for those with young children who may be using push chairs. There was no evidence either supporting or denying this assumption. Notably, although respondents were specifically asked about these impact (Q8A) no service user came forward to detail specific impacts suggested there are a low number of service users within this characteristic.

Carers

The local consultation has raised concerns that these changes may make the services less accessible for carers. Whilst only 12 responses came from users identifying as carers, they were much more likely to disagree. 33% of respondents disagreed with the changes to the service 13 compared to 6% of those without carers responsibilities. Similarly, 50% of carers were likely to disagree with the changes compared to 13% of the non-carer response group. The open text reveals the disagreement tended to be based on increased journey lengths and the need to change buses.

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JUDGEMENT

Adjust and continue - adjust to remove barriers or better promote equality

Internal Action Required **YES**

Equality Impact Analysis/Assessment Action Plan

Protected Characteristic	Issues identified	Action to be taken	Expected outcomes	Owner	Timescale	Cost implications
Disability, Carers and Maternity	This service requires users to change buses at Morrisons, Sutton Road to access Maidstone Town Centre which may make the service more difficult to access for those with physical disabilities or young children.	If the pilot progresses, the impact on these groups should be monitored as part of the evaluation process.	A greater understanding of the impact of changing buses on disabled passengers and those with children.	Stephen Pay	March 2020	

Disability – Physical Impairment	Standing at bus stops may be a barrier for those with physical impairments. Some disabled users reported they would not be able to use this service	Bus shelters with seating to be available at interchange locations. Ensure awareness of Kent Karrier services is raised.	Services will remain accessible to a greater proportion of disabled users. No service user will be left without transport services.	Stephen Pay	June 2019	
Disability – Mental Health Condition Learning Disability Longstanding health condition (Alzheimer's)	Some users reported the service being more complicated might make it less accessible to certain groups.	Promotional materials to be produced which use clear English and provided on the feeder buses.	Services will remain accessible to a greater proportion of disabled users.	Stephen Pay	June 2019	

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

No – these will be monitored as part of the programme board that take places monthly and the stage gate review March 2020.

Please forward a final signed electronic copy and Word version to the Equality Team by emailing diversityinfo@kent.gov.uk

If the activity will be subject to a Cabinet decision, the EqIA must be submitted to committee services along with the relevant Cabinet report. Your EqIA should also be published.

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The original signed hard copy and electronic copy should be kept with your team for audit purposes.

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