

## **KCC – Highways Transportation and Waste (HTW).**

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

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

National Bus Strategy – Development and Publication of a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) for Kent.

#### **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 has been pledged by Government, although the methodology for funding allocation is as 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 Franchising and 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 must follow a set of process established by Government. This sees:

- 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,
- 3) A requirement to implement Enhanced Partnerships or to be developing franchising by April 2022.

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This Equalities Impact Assessment focuses on the production of Kent's BSIP which is a locally driven / owned document.

The BSIP will act as a strategic overview document for the County and will look to set out the basis on which statutory Enhanced Partnership schemes are formed and operated. In line with Government guidance, the BSIP will explain the current operational situation in the County, highlight existing initiatives and policies, identify potential initiatives to improve the bus offering (subject to funding through the NBS), conduct a gap analysis of the current bus network and consider method for ongoing monitoring and evolution of Enhanced Partnerships. Whilst initial timescales are challenging, KCC want their BSIP to be informed by engagement with bus operators, bus users (and potential bus users) and other key stakeholders.

### **Aims and Objectives**

Whilst operating within very tight timescales, KCC wish for its initial BSIP (for publication on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021) to:

- Capture the strategic context, current policies and existing initiatives which are already in place in Kent.
- Be developed in conjunction with bus operators in line with Government guidance.
- Be informed by deliverable levels of engagement with bus users, potential bus users and other key stakeholders. KCC wish for the engagement activity to inform initiatives included within then BSIP and their subsequent prioritisation.
- Set out a number of key initiatives under a range of subject areas covering – a) improvements and enhancements which can be delivered within existing funding levels and b) aspirational policies, principles and initiatives which can be implemented subject to the appropriate funding being delivered through the NBS.

### **JUDGEMENT**

Kent's BSIP is intended to offer a strategic blueprint of how the combination of a set of key principles and related initiatives can improve Kent's bus offer both within current funding levels and 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
		Head of Service	
		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><i>MUST</i></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 exact initiatives and policies have yet to be identified, 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</p>

				levels. KCC's engagement activity on the BSIP is designed to ensure the authority's initiatives and their prioritisation are well informed.
<b>Disability</b>	None	None	None	<p>Whilst exact initiatives and policies have yet to be identified, 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 physical accessibility (e.g. access to bus services / bus stops), digital accessibility (e.g. availability of public transport information), ticketing and other areas.</p> <p>KCC's engagement activity on the BSIP is designed to ensure the</p>

				authority's initiatives and their prioritisation are well informed.
<b>Sex</b>	None	None	None	None
<b>Gender identity/ Transgender</b>	None	None	None	None
<b>Race</b>	None	None	None	None

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<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	<p>Whilst exact initiatives and policies have yet to be identified, 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 physical accessibility (e.g. access to bus services / bus stops) and requirements on vehicles.</p> <p>KCC's engagement activity on the BSIP is designed 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 Responsibilities</b>	None	None	None	<p>Whilst exact initiatives and policies have yet to be identified, 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 physical accessibility (e.g. access to bus services / bus stops), digital accessibility (e.g. availability of public transport information), and ticketing.</p> <p>KCC's engagement activity on the BSIP is designed to ensure the authority's initiatives and their prioritisation</p>

## **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 production of the BSIP.

**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 BSIPs.

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

Kent's BSIP is intended to be informed by:

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

**Adverse Impact,**

No negative impacts identified.

**Positive Impact:**

Potential medium / high impact on some protected groups depending on final initiatives included within BSIP. Potential for benefits to all existing / potential bus users.

**JUDGEMENT**

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## **JUDGEMENT**

The Kent Bus Service Improvement plan is an aspirational strategy that seeks to improve and enhance standards in all areas. As such, no diminishing impact should be experienced in respect of any of the protected groups. The approach therefore seeks to ensure that equality considerations are foremost in thinking through the development of the plan and ensure that opportunities for positive impact are not lost.

Kent's BSIP is intended to offer a strategic blueprint of how the combination of a set of key principles and related initiatives can improve Kent's bus offer both within current funding levels and should funding be secured from Government through the NBS. The delivery of these measures would be expected to see a medium – high positive benefit.

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