

**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 – West Malling Feeder Bus Pilot

Responsible Owner/ Senior Officer: Stephen Pay

Version: 2.1 *Updated 06/03/19 Post Local 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 Malling area as being one where a feeder service could be effectively implemented to improve the 58 service by providing more journey opportunities.

The initial EqIA covered two proposal which has enabled a preferred option to be selected. Any equality impacts of the other proposal have been removed from this report

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 determine if similar changes to the supported bus network could be affected 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 West Malling 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: Simone 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 EqIA	Medium negative impact Screen	Low negative impact Evidence	High/Medium/Low Positive Impact Evidence
Age			Local consultation and market engagement 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			Whilst impacts associated with changing vehicles have been identified – the local consultation suggested the increased frequency to the hospital mitigated this negative impact.	Increased journey opportunities but only where individuals with disabilities can still access services.
Sex				Increased journey opportunities.

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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 with young children (maternity). No impacted users were identified in the local consultation.	
Marriage and Civil Partnerships			N/A	

<p>Carer's Responsibilities</p>			<p>Local consultation revealed that whilst carers still agree with the changes overall, they were much less likely to agree than those without caring responsibilities.</p>	<p>Increased journey opportunities</p>
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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)
West Malling Bus Pilot Consultation Report (March 2019)

Who have you involved consulted and engaged?

- Bus Operators
- Taxi Operators
- Community Transport Operators
- Wider Public (public meetings and deliberative groups)
- Parish Councils
- Service Users

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Analysis

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.

It was initially thought that the need to change vehicles may be more challenging for those with disabilities affecting their mobility and that the nature of this disability may eliminate any positive impacts identified. The local consultation conflicts with this assumption as 76% of disabled respondents agreed with the changes. This represents a similar response profile to those without disabilities. It is thought that the increased frequency of direct services to the hospital have mitigated any impacts associated with changing vehicles. There was however anecdotal evidence from disabled users with physical impairments that confirmed changing buses would make journeys to Maidstone Town Centre more difficult.

Pregnancy and Maternity

It was 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 with this characteristic.

Carers

The local consultation has raised concerns that these changes may make the services less accessible for carers. Whilst only 16 responses came from users identifying as Carers, they were much more likely to disagree with the changes. 47% of respondents disagreed with the changes to the service 13 compared to 16% of those without carers responsibilities. The open text reveals the disagreement tended to be based on the importance of direct services.

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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 which is supported by passenger data. In 2017-18, 25,474 passengers travelled on the 58 service of which 17,870 (70%) were ENCTS pass holders (this includes both elderly and disabled passenger). This was reflected in the local consultation with 64% of respondent being over the age of 65.

Elderly residents in Addington, Trottiscliffe, Wrotham Heath, Ryarsh, Birling, West Malling and East Malling would benefit from 2 additional return journeys Mon-Sat representing a significant increase in journey opportunities. The local consultation also revealed that users over the age of 65 were more likely to agree with the changes than the general populace, supporting the view that the positive impacts of the changes would affect this group more heavily.

- 82% of the over 65s agreed with the proposal, compared to 73% of respondents under 65.

1,330 (5%) of service users in 2017-8 were young people using YPTP and 16+ travel cards. 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 2 respondents were under 24 suggesting this assumption is correct.

Disability

This group 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 those with a disability are just as likely to agree with these changes as those who do not recognise as disabled. 76% of disabled respondents agree with the proposal compared to 77% of the non-disabled population. This supports the assumption these changes represent an improvement for this group.

Carers

This group were also identified as having greater reliance on public transport and thus could benefit from increases in service levels. Overall this group supported the proposal with 53% of respondents agreeing with the changes. 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 (64%) 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 more heavily from the increased journey opportunities.

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	<p>Standing at bus stops may be a barrier for those with physical impairments.</p> <p>Some disabled users reported they would not be able to use this service</p>	<p>Bus shelters with seating to be available at interchange locations.</p> <p>Ensure awareness of Kent Karrier services is raised.</p>	<p>Services will remain accessible to a greater proportion of disabled users.</p> <p>No service user will be left without transport services.</p>	Stephen Pay	June 2019	

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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.

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