

Equality Impact Assessment (DRAFT)

Name of policy	Passenger Transport Update
Department	Environment & Transport
Who has been involved in completing the EIA?	Head of Service Network Management Team Manager Safe and Sustainable Travel Transport Policy and Strategy Safe and Sustainable Travel Specialist Transformation Unit Change Manager
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Who is completing the EIA?	Head of Service Network Management Team Manager Safe and Sustainable Travel Transport Policy and Strategy Safe and Sustainable Travel Specialist Transformation Unit Change Manager

What is the proposal?	<p>To progress the recommencement of the review of all the Council's supported passenger transport services against the Passenger Transport Policy & Strategy (PTPS) following a necessary pause whilst service use was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The review will also include the Council's Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services.</p> <p>The PTPS was approved by the Cabinet on 16 October 2018.</p> <p>The PTPS was adopted in October 2018 to ensure the delivery of value for money passenger transport services and to provide a robust and transparent framework for determining decisions on the provision of passenger transport services. In accordance with the PTPS Operational Handbook a programme of service reviews commenced in December 2018. However, this programme was then paused in March 2020 due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and significant impacts it had on patronage and service operations. All contracts, with many due to expire, were extended until 31 March 2022.</p> <p>As a result of this challenging operating environment, some bus operators gave notice on their contracts and others were starting to confirm plans to change and/or withdraw/reduce their services. On 29 March 2022, the Cabinet authorised the Director of Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Highways, Transportation and Flooding and Director of Corporate Resources, to extend (where procurement rules allowed) and/or to retender existing supported bus service contracts on a like for like basis for two years (with an option to extend for one year).</p> <p>New contracts were awarded from 1 August 2022, providing some stability to the market and service users, and also allowing sufficient time for service reviews to take place to bring expenditure in line with budgets. However, this retendering exercise did lead to further inflated costs.</p> <p>The recommencement of the PTPS reviews of supported bus services began in September 2022. These reviews are being undertaken in four batches, the first of which is nearing completion and will result in changes to these services, including</p>
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	<p>the likely withdrawal of some of them.</p> <p>The adoption of the PTPS put in place a clear and transparent approach through which the Authority would continue to provide value for money financial support to passenger transport services while endeavouring to ensure access to important services and facilities (primary health care, food shopping) for Leicestershire residents. Priority is therefore given to trying to ensure that as many Leicestershire residents as possible are able to reach a local centre at least once per week to access these important services.</p> <p>In assessing future provision, services which support higher numbers of older people, people with disabilities, and people who live in isolated or employment-deprived areas will be classed as a higher priority than ones that have fewer. Leicestershire County Council does not have a statutory duty to provide or support passenger transport. The Council's statutory duty requires transport provision so far as the Council considers is appropriate to meet any public transport requirements which would not otherwise be met and consider what would be appropriate services to meet those needs.</p>
<p>What change and impact is intended by the proposal?</p>	<p>Each contracted service will be taken through the objective PTPS assessment system and the outcomes of the service reviews will result in one of three actions being undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain subsidy support and retain the existing bus service in its current form; • Revise the existing service e.g., change of routeing or network, frequency or days of operation; • Withdraw subsidy for existing service. This will mean the loss of the service if the bus operator cannot afford to continue to provide it when Council subsidy is removed. If the service is withdrawn, the Council will either: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Ensure a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service is provided, if there is no alternative access to transport services or a local centre for high priority journey needs within 800m; or II. Do nothing where communities still have access to other bus services or a local centre i.e., they are within 800m of another service or local centre. <p>The service reviews will have an impact across Leicestershire however travel patterns and habits have changed since the pandemic with more people working from home and passenger confidence being low, particularly with concessionaires. Some rural communities, older people, people with limited mobility, people with a disability, commuters and young people may be disproportionately affected by the outcome of the reviews.</p> <p>A DRT service operates by a local taxi provider and passengers book a seat (day before travel) by telephone to travel to the local centre. Passengers pay the fare to the driver which are similar and in line with the bus fares. This type of service</p>

	<p>only operates if it has been booked and operates on fixed days, times and destinations. Feedback can be sought from residents on the time and days of operation.</p> <p>The outcome of the service reviews will have an impact across Leicestershire; however, travel patterns and habits have changed since the COVID19 pandemic with reduced patronage on bus services which have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Some rural communities, older people, people with limited mobility, people with a disability and young people may be disproportionately affected by the outcome of the reviews.</p> <p>Following community engagement, the Director of Environment and Transport, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Highways and Transport, will implement the necessary changes to services in line with delegations approved by the Cabinet in October 2018.</p>
What is the rationale for the proposal?	<p>The PTPS was approved in 2018, with delegated authority assigned to the Director of E&T in discussion with the Lead Member as the basis for future management of passenger transport services so this assessment is an update rather than a proposal.</p> <p>The application of the PTPS reviews was delayed by the impacts of Covid and it is now planned to recommence those reviews. The reviews will aim to ensure value for money services and address the current financial situation of a projected in-year overspend of approximately £1m in 2022/23 and beyond, as well as proposed additional £200k MTFS saving.</p>

What evidence about potential equality impacts is already available? This could come from research, service analysis, questionnaires, and engagement with protected characteristics groups.

What equalities information or data has been gathered so far?	<p>EHRIA for the 2018 Cabinet report, which was informed by an extensive consultation to inform the adopted PTPS.</p> <p>Intelligence gained in response to the continued management of impacts of changes to the commercial bus network.</p>
What does it show?	<p>That people in the following protected/other groups may be more negatively impacted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Disability • Pregnancy & maternity • Sex (greater impact on females) • Rural communities • Areas of deprivation
What engagement has been undertaken so far?	<p>Full public consultation in 2018 prior to approval of the current PTPS.</p>
What does it show?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A snapshot of needs and aspirations of individuals and communities, including purpose of journey, alternatives available to individuals, the impact on individuals if there were no bus service, and what is important to individuals and community groups.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, there was broad agreement with the majority of aspects of the PTPS – such as supporting operators to provide services commercially; core operating times; proposed priority groups and journey purposes; supporting Community Transport schemes; and encouraging and supporting communities to develop local transport solutions. • The only aspect listed which was less supported was providing DRT as an alternative solution where subsidised bus routes don't provide value for money.
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Please specify if any individuals or community groups who identify with any of the protected characteristics may **potentially** be affected by the policy and describe any benefits and concerns including any barriers.

Use this section to demonstrate how risks would be mitigated for each affected group.

AGE	
What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Some areas may see infrequent, inflexible bus services replaced with services designed to be flexible and meet the needs of communities. For example, DRT services could be designed which coincide with market days in specific local centres to enable service users to travel at the times which are the most suited to them.
Are there any specific risks or concerns?	<p>The benefit above is unlikely to apply to all areas, and may not fully mitigate any disbenefits, depending on the outcome of the review of each service. Therefore, there is potential that any changes may negatively impact older people. A reduction in service may mean that it is more difficult for older people to access services and get around the county. This may lead to increased potential for isolation. Because of this, older people have been identified as a priority group in determining future provision, meaning that services with a significant amount of elderly passengers will score more highly in assessment of the service.</p> <p>Younger people are not identified as a priority group, as the priority groups were based on significant usage of current services and the importance of provision for those who would otherwise be unable to access essential services, such as food shopping or primary health care.</p>
DISABILITY	
What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Some users with disabilities may have more flexible and responsive transport to access, e.g. through the provision of DRT.
Are there any specific risks or concerns?	The benefit above is unlikely to apply to all areas, and to all users with disabilities, depending on the outcome of the review of each service. Therefore, there is potential that any changes may negatively impact this group. A reduction in service may mean that it is more difficult for people with disabilities to access services and get around the county. Another potential negative impact on some people with specific mobility issues is if any alternative provision, such as DRT, is not provided with vehicles that these people can access. Because of these concerns people with disabilities have been identified as a priority group in determining future provision.

	<p>This means that services with a higher number of people in this group will score more highly in assessment of the service.</p> <p>Community Transport should also be available for people who are disabled, infirm and isolated (subject to eligibility criteria being satisfied).</p>
RACE	
What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from race.
Are there any specific risks or concerns?	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from race.
SEX	
What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	The majority of service users identify as female (65%). If services are replaced with more flexible alternatives e.g. DRT, then this may be of benefit as opposed to a traditional bus service.
Are there any specific risks or concerns?	As there are more female-identifying bus users, any resulting reduction in service would, numerically, have a greater impact on this group.
GENDER REASSIGNMENT	
What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from gender reassignment.
Are there any specific risks or concerns?	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from gender reassignment.
MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	
What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from marriage and civil partnership.
Are there any specific risks or concerns?	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from marriage and civil partnership.
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from sexual orientation.
Are there any specific risks or concerns?	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from sexual orientation.
PREGNANCY & MATERNITY	
What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Some users in this group may have access to more flexible and responsive transport e.g. through the provision of DRT.
Are there any specific risks or concerns?	There is a risk that potential service reduction could impact on this group in terms of access to healthcare services. However, priority has been given to services which allow access to primary healthcare to reduce the risk of negative impacts to those who require these services.
RELIGION OR BELIEF	
What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from religion or belief.
Are there any specific risks or concerns?	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from religion or belief.
OTHER GROUPS e.g. rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived, armed forces, or disadvantaged communities.	
What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Some users from these groups may have access to more flexible and responsive transport e.g. through the provision of DRT.
Are there any specific risks or concerns?	<p>A reduction in service may have a negative impact on rural communities as they may have reduced access to services and find it more difficult to get around the county. There may also be a disproportionate impact on areas of deprivation, particularly in rural areas, as those without access to other modes of transport may have their opportunities for travel reduced.</p> <p>There is a risk that potential service reduction could limit some individuals from accessing community services or getting out into their community.</p>

ACTION PLAN

<p>What concerns were identified?</p>	<p>In applying the PTPS it is likely that some existing subsidised bus services will no longer be supported and will therefore cease to operate. As a result, individuals who use these services will be negatively impacted as they will no longer receive the services they currently use. As noted above, there is the potential for this to disproportionately impact older people, people with disabilities, and people who live in isolated or employment deprived areas.</p>
<p>What action is planned?</p>	<p>The PTPS is already in place and the recommencement of the service reviews is applying its requirements.</p> <p>The Director of Environment and Transport, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Environment and Transport, has existing delegated powers to implement the outcome of the service reviews as previously agreed by the Cabinet on 16 October 2018.</p> <p>It is intended to start a rolling programme of local focused engagement with affected communities in Spring/Summer 2023. The purpose of the engagement will be to inform communities of the outcomes of the service reviews and the Council's intended course of action. Engagement will not be undertaken where no changes are to be made to the current service. The engagement events will be tailored to what the outcomes of the service review are and what the planned course of action is. There are a number of possible outcomes and the type of engagement for each one is broadly outlined below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Where the Council's subsidy for the current service is to be removed or reduced and the Council is not going to provide a replacement, because communities continue to have access to alternative bus services or a local centre, the Council will inform them of the Council's position and advise them of the alternative options available to them. b. Where the Council's subsidy for the current service is to be removed or reduced but it leaves some communities without access to alternative services or a local centre, the Council will inform them of a replacement DRT it intends to provide for those communities. At the events communities will have the opportunity to input into the design of that DRT e.g. feedback on the most suitable days and times of operation that best meet the demand for accessing those important services and facilities as outlined in the PTPS. c. Where the Council is removing or reducing subsidy from a network of subsidised bus routes and redesigning that network, then communities will be presented with that planned revised network. There will be an opportunity for them to comment and provide feedback on the revised network design, which will be considered and, where viable and reasonable, minor adjustments can be made e.g. timetable adjustments, minor route adjustments etc. <p>Events will be arranged in the local area (parish hall/library) for residents to find out about the proposed changes to the public transport provision and enable them to provide feedback. The events will also provide the opportunity for residents to have access to the community travel pack and be able talk to officers about how their journey needs can be met by alternative transport</p>

	<p>solutions. Feedback from the community events will be considered and where possible revisions to the service provision will be implemented. Other general feedback received regarding transport provision in Leicestershire during these events will be considered as part of future developments of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).</p> <p>The community pack will include details of other travel options and initiatives that the community could consider supporting themselves such as car share, social car schemes, walking/cycling routes etc. Community Transport will continue to be available for those residents with mobility difficulties and there is a mix of provision in the form of a social car or community minibus schemes throughout Leicestershire.</p> <p>A communication strategy will be developed to ensure communities are fully aware of the information events, any changes to their services and the timeline for any changes. This will include media releases, social media, notices on buses and bus stops, posters for the community events and updates/information on the Choose How You Move website.</p> <p>Engagement with local elected members, bus operators, schools and other affected organisations will be undertaken throughout the review, engagement and implementation stages.</p> <p>While some services will no longer be supported and cease, where any residents are left without access to important services (food shopping, healthcare) the Council will ensure that replacement service provision is in place. Any replacement service will be designed with the needs of communities in mind, but within the requirements of the PTPS.</p> <p>The Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group (LECG) will continue to be involved through the implementation of the PTPS to ensure equalities considerations remain at the heart of putting the PTPS into practice.</p>
Who is responsible for the action?	The Director of Environment and Transport, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member, is responsible for making decisions based on the application of the PTPS.
Timescale	<p>Initial timescale estimate (subject to change):</p> <p>All local bus service contracts are included within the review and there is a mix of fully subsidised and part subsidised services. Services will be reviewed and implemented in batches (4 batches) through to April 2024.</p> <p>Batch one includes 6 services and a total of 12 community events will be programmed during Spring/Summer 2023.</p>
How will the action plan and recommendations of this assessment be built into decision making and	<p>As described above, the PTPS is already in place and the criteria for review of each service will be applied.</p> <p>Community events with affected communities will take place.</p>

implementation of the proposal?	
How would you monitor the impact of your proposal and keep the EIA refreshed?	<p>The Council's adopted PTPS aims to ensure that Leicestershire residents have access to important services such as food shopping and healthcare. Feedback and requests for passenger transport services received via established County Council communication channels will continue to be considered in relation to current service provision in line with the PTPS as part of business-as-usual operation.</p> <p>The Council's recently published Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) recognises the rural transport challenges for Leicestershire (as outlined in the impact analysis of this EIA) and the Council will continue to explore innovative solutions to tackle these challenges and set aspirations within the BSIP as part of its annual review process. Subject to receipt of future BSIP funding such solutions could then be implemented.</p> <p>The Council's recently formed Enhanced Partnership will be the delivery vehicle for its BSIP and views/feedback from users and operators will be fully considered to inform any future BSIP aspirations.</p> <p>A review of the PTPS has been undertaken to ensure it is aligned with the BSIP. As the BSIP is refreshed on an annual basis a PTPS compatibility check will be made to ensure the PTPS remains fit for purpose and in line with the Council's passenger transport aspirations.</p> <p>The appropriateness of the EIA will be reviewed accordingly as part of the above.</p>

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