

## Equality Impact Assessment (DRAFT)

<b>Name of policy</b>	Passenger Transport Policy & Strategy (PTPS)
<b>Department</b>	E&T
<b>Who has been involved in completing the EIA?</b>	Lee Quincey
<b>Relevant contact information</b>	<a href="mailto:Lee.Quincey@leics.gov.uk">Lee.Quincey@leics.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0116 305 6308
<b>Who is completing the EIA?</b>	Lee Quincey

<b>What is the proposal?</b>	<p>To implement a revised PTPS which enables the Council to take a more flexible approach to help support communities and their high priority journey needs. This is through efficient use of its budgets and utilising the commercial bus market through the Enhanced Partnership to maximise a sustainable service offer to passengers and help stabilise the commercial market.</p> <p>The revised PTPS will enable a blended, layered approach to passenger transport provision, with a mix of traditional scheduled services and other solutions, such as demand responsive transport (DRT) and digital demand-responsive transport (DDRT.) The PTPS would continue to operate in the context of any future remodelling of the passenger transport network in Leicestershire. Remodelling proposals would be subject to a further equality impact assessment.</p> <p>The revised PTPS would mitigate risks to the Council's own budgets caused by fluctuations and uncertainty in levels of future Government funding for passenger transport services, by setting out a revised mechanism for considering support for services.</p> <p>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 it 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>Support would be determined based on net subsidy cost per passenger per kilometre, accessibility (number of residents who would have no alternative access to facilities,) and access to opportunities/facilities based on what combination of city, town or local centre the service accesses. More detail about the assessment process and criteria can be found in Paragraphs 52-54 of the Cabinet report to which this EIA is appended.</p> <p>The revisions would allow temporary support to be provided for necessary services that become unviable for operators. This would be in the form of "de minimis" arrangements for a period of time, in conjunction with a plan to bring the service back to commerciality. This would reduce the risk of vital services being withdrawn.</p> <p><b>Context</b></p>
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	<p>A review of supported services started in early 2023 with the view to address a £1m shortfall in the passenger transport budget and to deliver a further £200,000 Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) saving per year.</p> <p>This work was halted and a review of the PTPS was commissioned following the award of additional revenue funding (known as BSIP+) from the Department for Transport (DfT) for the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25. There was a further award of funding from savings from the second leg of HS2, for 2024/25.</p> <p>The DfT expects this funding to be targeted on actions that the Authority and its Enhanced Partnership with operators believe will deliver the best overall outcomes in growing long term patronage, revenues and thus maintaining service levels, whilst maintaining essential social and economic connectivity for local communities. In addition, the DfT expects the funding to be used to maintain existing service levels or on measures that are consistent with Departmental guidance on Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs.)</p>
<p><b>What change and impact is intended by the proposal?</b></p>	<p>There may be some changes to routes and type of transport to best meet priority journey needs. These are largely expected to be positive changes for passengers, providing, where possible, better access to more commercial centres, and more DRT in rural areas.</p> <p>Services would be ranked by priority to allow for changes to levels of support based on fluctuating funding. “Lifeline” services to access essential facilities would be retained.</p>
<p><b>What is the rationale for the proposal?</b></p>	<p>The refreshed PTPS is required to ensure longer-term flexibility for a sustainable, value-for-money and fit-for-purpose passenger transport network across Leicestershire, that meets people’s high priority journey needs, the Government’s ambitions set out in the National Bus Strategy and Leicestershire’s BSIP.</p> <p>Government funding is likely to fluctuate in coming years and the Council needs to be able to adapt to this to ensure that services remain affordable and best value for money within the context of its wider budget pressures.</p>

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

<p><b>What equalities information or data has been gathered so far?</b></p>	<p>Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment 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>
<p><b>What does it show?</b></p>	<p>As the proposal should sustain and potentially make services more fit-for-purpose in the short term, there should be no additional negative impacts, but if services are reduced in line with reduced budgets in the future it may more negatively impact people with the following protected characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Disability</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pregnancy &amp; maternity</li> <li>• Sex (greater impact on females)</li> <li>• Rural communities</li> <li>• Areas of deprivation</li> </ul>
<b>What engagement has been undertaken so far?</b>	<p>Full public consultation in 2018 prior to approval of the current PTPS.</p> <p>Engagement with the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p>
<b>What does it show?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The only aspect listed which was less supported was providing DRT as an alternative solution where subsidised bus routes do not provide value for money.</li> </ul>

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.

<b>AGE</b>	
<b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b>	<p>Many users of supported services are concessionary pass holders, i.e. elderly people, or people with disabilities, so by the nature of supporting services that are not provided by commercial operators, this section of the community is supported.</p> <p>Some areas may see infrequent, inflexible bus services replaced with services designed to be flexible and meet the needs of communities. For example, DRT/DDRT 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.</p> <p>Grant-funded Community Transport is also available for elderly people who are disabled, infirm and isolated (subject to eligibility criteria being satisfied). See “What action is planned?” below for more detail about the Council’s strategic priority outcomes and commitment to priority groups.</p>
<b>Are there any specific risks or concerns?</b>	<p>SHORT-TERM there are no significant risks. Concerns about ability to book DDRT online are mitigated by the requirement for DDRT services to be bookable by phone as well as through an app.</p> <p>LONGER-TERM Although future Government funding is anticipated post-2024/25, it is not guaranteed. In the event that funding reduces to the point where a reduction in</p>

	<p>service is needed, it may be more difficult for older people to access services and get around the county. This may lead to increased potential for isolation.</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>
<b>DISABILITY</b>	
<b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b>	<p>The majority of users of supported services are concessionary pass holders, i.e. elderly people, or people with disabilities, so by the nature of supporting services that are not provided by commercial operators, this section of the community is supported.</p> <p>Some users with disabilities may have more flexible and responsive transport to access, for example, through the provision of DRT/DDRT.</p> <p>Grant-funded Community Transport is available for people who are disabled, infirm and isolated (subject to eligibility criteria being satisfied). See "What action is planned?" below for more detail about the Council's strategic priority outcomes and commitment to priority groups.</p>
<b>Are there any specific risks or concerns?</b>	<p>SHORT-TERM Concerns about ability to book DDRT online are mitigated by the requirement for DDRT services to be bookable by phone as well as through an app. This concern was also noted by the Environment &amp; Transport Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 9 November 2023. Any roll-out of DDRT service apps should ensure they are optimised for accessibility.</p> <p>Taxi DRTs are bookable by phone, however, there is not a specific requirement for them to be fully accessible. Any provision where this is an issue would be looked into, or information given on Community Transport services that may better meet disabled passengers' needs.</p> <p>LONGER-TERM Although future Government funding is anticipated post-2024/25, it is not guaranteed. In the event that funding reduces to the point where a reduction in service is needed, it may be more difficult for people with disabilities to access services and get around the county. This may lead to increased potential for isolation.</p> <p>Taxi DRTs are bookable by phone, however, there is not a specific requirement for the vehicles to be fully accessible. Any provision where this is an issue would be looked into, or information given on Community Transport services that may better meet disabled passengers' needs.</p>
<b>RACE</b>	
<b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b>	<p>It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from race.</p>

<b>Are there any specific risks or concerns?</b>	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from race.
<b>SEX</b>	
<b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b>	The majority of service users identify as female (65%). If services are replaced with more flexible alternatives, i.e. DRT, then this may be of benefit as opposed to a traditional bus service.
<b>Are there any specific risks or concerns?</b>	There are no anticipated risks or concerns in the short-term.  Longer-term, if funding reduces to the point where a reduction in service is needed, and given that the majority of bus users are female, numerically there would be a greater impact on this group.
<b>GENDER REASSIGNMENT</b>	
<b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b>	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from gender reassignment.
<b>Are there any specific risks or concerns?</b>	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from gender reassignment.
<b>MARRIAGE &amp; CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</b>	
<b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b>	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from marriage and civil partnership.
<b>Are there any specific risks or concerns?</b>	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from marriage and civil partnership.
<b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>	
<b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b>	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from sexual orientation.
<b>Are there any specific risks or concerns?</b>	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from sexual orientation.

<b>PREGNANCY &amp; MATERNITY</b>	
<b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b>	Some users in this group may have access to more flexible and responsive transport, for example, through the provision of DRT/DDRT.
<b>Are there any specific risks or concerns?</b>	There are no anticipated risks or concerns in the short-term.  Longer-term, although future Government funding is anticipated beyond 2024/25, it is not guaranteed. In the event that funding reduces to the point where a reduction in service is needed, this could negatively impact those going through pregnancy and maternity. This could be particularly an issue if there is a reduction in access to primary 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.
<b>RELIGION OR BELIEF</b>	
<b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b>	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from religion or belief.
<b>Are there any specific risks or concerns?</b>	It is not anticipated that there will be any specific positive or negative impacts arising from religion or belief.
<b>OTHER GROUPS</b> e.g. rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived, armed forces, or disadvantaged communities.	
<b>What other groups/situations may be impacted?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural isolation</li> <li>• Deprivation or disadvantaged communities</li> <li>• Health inequality</li> <li>• Carers</li> </ul>
<b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from these groups?</b>	Some users from these groups may have access to more flexible and responsive transport, for example, through the provision of DRT/DDRT. This applies particularly to rural areas.
<b>Are there any specific risks or concerns?</b>	In the short-term there are no anticipated risks.  Longer-term, although future Government funding is anticipated beyond 2024/25, it is not guaranteed. In the event that funding reduces to the point where a reduction in service is needed, it 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 deprived rural areas, as those without access to other modes of transport may have their opportunities for travel reduced.  There is a risk that potential service reduction could limit some individuals from accessing community services or getting out into their community.

**ACTION PLAN**

<p><b>What concerns were identified?</b></p>	<p>In the short-term (next two years) the one concern identified was around the accessibility of the booking system for DDRT.</p> <p>Longer-term, if funding levels reduce, some services may no longer be supported and would therefore cease to operate or be reduced. As a result, individuals who use these services could 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 deprived areas.</p>
<p><b>What action is planned?</b></p>	<p>The PTPS describes specifically the approach to priority groups:</p> <p>“As noted in our PTP document, to deliver the Council’s Strategic Plan priority outcomes there is emphasis on supporting a high level of health and wellbeing (including combating isolation), and on helping deliver the right conditions for a thriving local economy. We also have a statutory obligation to consider the needs of ‘elderly and disabled’ people in determining what to support and how to provide passenger information.”</p> <p>“Meeting some key needs of older, disabled or isolated people is therefore given higher priority than meeting needs of other sectors of the population. We also give higher priority to meeting the needs of people living in employment-deprived areas in order to help them access the job market. This prioritisation is in line with Leicestershire’s Third Local Transport Plan (LTP3), which emphasises ‘continuing to improve the connectivity and accessibility of our existing transport system for vulnerable individuals, groups and communities’.”</p> <p>Where commercial or supported services are not provided, there are Community Transport schemes across Leicestershire which are grant funded by the Council for use by priority groups where eligible.</p> <p>The revised PTPS should allow for more suitable or creative solutions within budget constraints. The changes to criteria for support are likely to result in more positive outcomes, such as more support for services that reach more opportunities in local centres, towns or city, rather than the current focus on meeting essential travel needs to the nearest local centre. If funding reduces, then the PTPS gives an evidence-based priority assessment to ensure that support is given to highest priority services.</p> <p>The Director of Environment and Transport, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member, has existing delegated powers to implement the outcome of service reviews as previously agreed by the Cabinet on 16 October 2018.</p> <p>Before any changes are implemented to a service, local communities will be engaged with to ensure that the changes are clearly understood, and, where appropriate, work with the community to help shape suitable DRT/DDRT provision.</p>

	<p>There is also potential for targeted personal travel planning to take place in specific areas to support people in using services and making passenger transport the travel option of choice. This would be particularly valuable in areas to be served by non-traditional scheduled routes.</p> <p>A feasibility study is underway on rolling out further DDRT pilots. As with the existing pilot, passengers would be able to book by phone as well as by app. DDRT vehicles are expected to be accessible. Any further roll-out of DDRT should ensure that apps/phone lines are optimised for accessibility.</p>
<p><b>Who is responsible for the action?</b></p>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Timescale</b></p>	<p>The PTPS would be adopted for all future decisions relating to subsidised passenger transport services. Services would be reviewed at an appropriate time in accordance with contract end dates. New proposed services, or proposed changes to/withdrawal of services by operators would be addressed when they arise.</p>
<p><b>How will the action plan and recommendations of this assessment be built into decision making and implementation of the proposal?</b></p>	<p>For service changes, engagement with relevant communities would take place at an appropriate time. If beneficial, targeted personal travel plans could be carried out at a similar time.</p>
<p><b>How would you monitor the impact of your proposal and keep the EIA refreshed?</b></p>	<p>The Council's 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 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. The recent allocation of BSIP+ funding is allowing the Council to carry out feasibilities into these. As a condition of the funding, it has to provide assurance to the DfT through provision of data on performance.</p> <p>The Council's 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>



	The appropriateness of the EIA will be reviewed accordingly as part of the above.
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