



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

Part A (Initial assessment) - Section 1 - Background

Proposal/Brief Title: Demand Responsive Transport Pilot Schemes

OneDrive link to report/policy: to follow

Related policies: na

Date: 15 March 2022

Type of strategy, policy, project or service: Demand Responsive Transport

Please tick one of the following:

- Existing
- New or proposed
- Changing, update or revision
- Other (please explain)

This assessment was created by:

Name: James Loader
Job Title: Public Transport Lead Officer
Email address: james.loader@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the proposal below:

BC awarded funding by Government to run two Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) pilot schemes. DRT is an alternative type of bus service which, rather than following a fixed route and timetable, is flexibly routed and scheduled based on bookings made by passengers in a defined area. The proposal is to award contracts to operate these pilot schemes.

What outcomes do we want to achieve?

We wish to run the contract for these services for a period of three years. If successful these services may run for longer than this, although the Government funding is finite.

We will be monitoring and evaluating the service continually. We are also required to collect and supply various data elements to the Government throughout the pilots. This includes information on who uses the service and for what purposes – for example to access healthcare.

As such, the Government is also keen to learn from experience on these pilot schemes.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

Does this proposal plan to withdraw a service, activity or presence? ~~Yes~~/No

Please explain your answer: In future DRT may be used instead of some subsidised bus services if it proves successful but no council services will be withdrawn at this stage of the project.

Does this proposal plan to reduce a service, activity or presence? ~~Yes~~/No

Please explain your answer: No, this is not part of the proposal

Does this proposal plan to introduce, review or change a policy, strategy or procedure?
Yes/~~No~~

Please explain your answer:

There is no new policy to be introduced as part of this project. However, as this is a new type of service for Buckinghamshire Council to be directly involved with, this will involve new procedures for monitoring and managing the service. The service will be similar to existing Dial-a-ride type services that are typically run by the voluntary sector or by local community groups and Parish Council. The Council will need to be adaptable and flexible during the pilot schemes, to develop a set of best practices based on experience.

Does this proposal affect service users and/or customers, or the wider community? Yes/~~No~~

Please explain your answer: This service will be a new DRT bus service provision that will be available to the general public. However, this is being launched as an additional service that will complement existing public transport.

We will ensure that we that the wider community is engaged with as fully as possible. We will use internal expertise to identify useful outlets of information, such as health care establishments, community centres and libraries.

Does this proposal affect employees? ~~Yes~~/No

Please explain your answer: Only insofar as they may travel as members of the general public.

Will employees require training to deliver this proposal? Yes/~~No~~

Please explain your answer: As there is new technology to be used on the service, some members of staff will receive training on these so as to ensure they are familiar with the



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

service that is being offered and able to access performance data. Technology will be provided and managed by a third party service provider, but the Council will need some degree of familiarity with it.

Has any engagement /consultation been carried out, or is planned in the future? Yes/~~No~~

Please explain your answer: Member briefings will be carried out. Community engagement forms a part of the pilot. The appointed provider will be required to engage with the wider community in order to promote and develop the service, including during mobilisation to explain how to make use of the service.

Section 2 - Impacts

Please highlight potential impacts (including unintended impacts or consequences) for each protected characteristic*/equality groups below. Where there are negative or positive impacts please give more details of the impact. Where the impacts are unclear please explain why.

Age*

Positive

~~Negative~~

~~Unclear~~

~~None~~

Details: This service, by its demand responsive nature, allows it to be utilised by all members of the community. It can, by its nature, be booked to pick up closer to individuals' homes or destinations than a traditional bus service could represent a potential enhancement in accessibility.

It has been noted that older passengers may find it more challenging to make use of technology to book the service. Whilst it is intended to be a modern offering, encouraging the use of apps or a website to book and pay for the service, we have been careful to ensure that a telephone booking system is in place and that cash fares are payable in the usual way on-bus.

Users of the app will receive live updates on their vehicle location. For those using a telephone booking system, they will be given an estimated pick-up time and the driver will be able to telephone them in the event of delays or other issues.

There is a peak demand at around 0900 each day for those with free bus passes under the English National Concessionary Scheme. The need to balance demand has been considered and each area will have multiple vehicles available at any given time. Intelligent algorithms, with human input, will be responsible for efficiently scheduling to ensure that demand is met. There will also be KPIs around how long passengers have to wait that will be monitored (see section 12). In addition the service is scalable, with



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

additional vehicles available, albeit at additional cost, with a lead in time for mobilisation.

Disability*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
-----------------	-----------------	----------------	-------------

Details: This service, by its demand responsive nature, allows it to be utilised by all members of the community. It can, by its nature, be booked to pick up closer to individuals’ homes or destinations than a traditional bus service could representation a potential enhancement in accessibility. We have endeavoured to make the services and technology as accessible as possible and do not foresee any issues in this regard, however as these are new pilot schemes there may be unknown impacts that occur during them, hence the marking of this as “unclear”.

We have been careful to ensure that vehicles will be fully accessible, including space for wheelchairs. By its nature, the pre-booking system will ensure that a wheelchair space is available if needed and dispatch a separate vehicle if there is a need for 2 wheelchairs on a specific journey (although this may entail a slightly longer wait). We have ensured that telephone bookings and cash fares remain valid for those who may have difficulty in accessing or using technology.

There is a peak demand at around 0900 each day for those with free bus passes under the English National Concessionary Scheme. The need to balance demand has been considered and each area will have multiple vehicles available at any given time. Intelligent algorithms, with human input, will be responsible for efficiently scheduling to ensure that demand is met. There will also be KPIs around how long passengers have to wait that will be monitored (see section 12). In additional the service is scalable, with additional vehicles available, albeit at additional cost, with a lead in time for mobilisation.

We will monitor the availability of the services and technologies to assess how suitable they are for those would require the use of assistive technologies.

Pregnancy & maternity*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
-----------------	-----------------	----------------	-------------

Details: This service, by its demand responsive nature, allows it to be utilised by all members of the community. It can, by its nature, be booked to pick up closer to individuals’ homes or destinations than a traditional bus service could representation a potential enhancement in accessibility. This would equally apply to those who are pregnant and who may find longer walks more challenging. As these are new pilot



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

schemes there may be unknown impacts that occur during them, hence the marking of this as “unclear”.

Race & Ethnicity*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	------

Details: The service is to be made available to everybody in the community and is being launched as an additional service. The use of technology as a method of booking may assist those who have difficulty in communication in English as may be the case if telephone booking was the only option.

Marriage & Civil Partnership*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	------

Details: The service is to be made available to everybody in the community and is being launched as an additional service.

Religion & Belief*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	------

Details: The service is to be made available to everybody in the community and is being launched as an additional service.

Sex*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	------

Details: The service is to be made available to everybody in the community and is being launched as an additional service.

Sexual Orientation*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	------

Details: The service is to be made available to everybody in the community and is being launched as an additional service.

Gender Reassignment*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	------

Details: The service is to be made available to everybody in the community and is being launched as an additional service.

Gender identity

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	------



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

Details: The service is to be made available to everybody in the community and is being launched as an additional service.

Carers

~~Positive~~ ~~Negative~~ ~~Unclear~~ ~~None~~

Details: We do not foresee any issues arising from these services, however as they are new pilot schemes there may be unknown impacts that occur during them, hence the marking of this as “unclear”.

Buckinghamshire has a statutory scheme under the English National Concessionary Scheme, i.e. free bus passes for older and eligible disabled persons. Buckinghamshire has a discretionary add on to its scheme that allows a companion entitlement, whereby those with a disabled persons’ pass may apply for a companion to travel with them (such as carer) if they are unable to travel alone. These would be valid on this service as they would on any bus service in the County. We have also been careful to ensure that vehicles are accessible and that there is parking for pushchairs on board.

Rural isolation

~~Positive~~ ~~Negative~~ ~~Unclear~~ ~~None~~

Details: The concept of a DRT service is to access areas where there isn’t a traditional bus service. Parts of their respective operating areas include some rural communities, which only have limited access to bus services or where residents may be required to walk some distance to access their existing services. The new service will help to improve access for these areas.

It is acknowledged that app booking and tracking system may not be accessibility from some rural areas. While it is not expected to cause a significant issue within the operational area of these services, we have been sure to include a local-rate phone number as an alternative.

Further from the town centres of these operations, there will be less scope for buses to overlap to provide service. Therefore, we are mindful to avoid situations where the further areas from the town centres receive a lesser service with longer waiting times. We intend to work with the service provider(s) to ensure that demand is met in a balanced way and the technology solutions will incorporate an intelligent routing algorithm to make this as efficient as possible. Performance with respect to waiting times for buses will be a metric that is measured and reported to the DfT.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

Explain your answer:

Advice was sought and discussion held on this matter. Several answers have been answered "yes" above. This was coupled with the fact that this is a new service with new processes to indicate that a full assessment should be undertaken.

Have you completed an DPIA for this project/change? Yes/No

(As you are completing an EqIA, you may also require a DPIA - for more information please contact dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

Part B (Full assessment) - Section 5 – Further information

Will there be an impact on any other functions, services or policies? If so, please provide more detail:

The Passenger Transport Team will be responsible for managing the contract for these services day-to-day. This will include promotional activities and the dealing with customer feedback. Depending on the workload associated with these pilot schemes, there is the potential for this to impact on other services overseen and provided by the team.

This is been mitigated by employing an additional staff member within the team.

Are there any potential barriers to implementing changes to your service/strategy/policy/project?

The bus industry has been facing a period of low usage which is resultant from the pandemic, somewhere around 70-75% of 2019 levels depending on the route. It is therefore essential that we keep in mind the need to be flexible and adaptable but the services will be operated under a contract and to a specification agreed by the Government so there is limited scope to vary these.

Section 6 - Information gathering – what do you need to know about your customers and making a judgement about potential impacts on them?

What data do you already have about your service users, or the people your policy or strategy will have an impact on, that is broken down by protected characteristics* and equality groups (non-statutory)?

Age*: Through our support of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme, we know that in 2019, being the last full year before the pandemic), around 1/3 of all bus trips were taken by those with a free bus pass. Free bus passes are issued to those who are over pensionable age or having an eligible disability. This is around 3 million passenger trips per year.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

National research conducted by Transport Focus, who are an independent body representing the view of bus passengers across the company gives some insight in national trends around public transport usage.

In general terms, those who are over 60 and use a free bus pass are more satisfied with various aspects of their bus services than those who are not (93% compared to 89%).

This includes various specific elements such as:

Ease of getting on to the bus (94% compared to 91%)

Availability of seating space (91% compared to 87%)

Convenience and accessibility of a bus stop (91% compared to 89%)

Position of grab rails to move about the bus (90% compared to 85%)

It is important that we work with the operator(s) of the services to ensure that we do not compromise what is already successful about public transport. The layout of the vehicles that are likely to be used will make seating more accessible, with less movement about the bus.

Although the nature of this service will allow us to pick passengers up closer to home where a bus stop on a traditional bus stop is further away or less accessible, it must be ensured that these pick up points are correctly assessed and that the ease of getting on or off the bus is not compromised.

Disability*: Through our support of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme, we know that in 2019, being the last full year before the pandemic), around 1/3 of all bus trips were taken by those with a free bus pass. Free bus passes are issued to those who are over pensionable age or having an eligible disability. This is around 3 million passenger trips per year.

National research conducted by Transport Focus, who are an independent body representing the view of bus passengers across the company gives some insight in national trends around public transport usage.

In general terms, those who consider themselves to have a disability are less satisfied with various aspects of their bus services than those who do not. The following specific measures, based on traditional bus services across England, will be positively addressed or are a key consideration of how the pilot schemes will be operated:

85% of users who consider themselves to have a disability are satisfied with seating space provided on board (compared to 89%). Similarly, 75% of users who consider themselves to have a disability are satisfied with the amount of personal space provided on board (compared to 81%). The booking system will ensure there is always space for wheelchairs on board by dispatching vehicles appropriately and there will be priority seating on entry level for less mobile persons.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

87% of users who consider themselves to have a disability are satisfied with seating space provided on board (compared to 89%). A DRT service will allow us to explore additional boarding points in rural locations or urban locations that are currently not accessible by traditional bus services.

Pregnancy and maternity*: there is no specific data available

Race*: The census of 2011 provides some details of ethnicity characteristics. Buckinghamshire, in general, had a non-white population of 13.6%. The census reveals many areas served by the pilot schemes are significantly higher than this. In particular the Oakridge and Castlefield ward show a non-white population of 63.9% and 13.9% of households do not have English as a main language (compared to 2.5% Countywide).

Marriage & Civil Partnership*: there is no specific data available

Religion or belief*: there is no specific data available

Sex*: there is no specific data available

Sexual orientation*: there is no specific data available

Gender re-assignment*: there is no specific data available

Gender identity: there is no specific data available

Carers: there is no specific data available

Rural isolation: Aston Clinton, which scoring highly in the index of multiple deprivation and includes Weston Turville, scores less well in barriers to services. It has been identified that Aston Clinton and Weston Turville, whilst served regularly through the main part of the respective villages, has a portion of the population that are a long walk from their nearest bus service and will benefit from a more flexible service.

Single parent families: County-wide the 2011 Census shows that 5.3% of households are Lone Parents with dependent children. Certain parts of the pilot scheme areas are slightly above this average.

Poverty (social & economic deprivation): Research undertaken by Bucks Business First in 2015 highlights deprivation in Buckinghamshire. In particular, the then-Disraeli Ward is in the bottom decile for income and employment. This part of High Wycombe is identified as having the potential from a more-comprehensive localised service. This similarly applies to parts of Rymeade and The Wooburns.

Military families / veterans: Approximately 5% of the population of Buckinghamshire are military personnel and their families. In particular, this service will serve Halton village



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

which encompasses a community of military families based at both RAF Halton and RAF High Wycombe.

Do you need any further information broken down by protected characteristic or equality group to inform this EqIA?

- Yes
 No

If yes, list here to help you gather data for the action plan in Section 11

Section 7 – Negative effects, impacts or consequences

Is there any potential for or actual direct or indirect discrimination or a disproportionate effect on a protected group or equality group?

- Yes
 No
 Not sure at this time

What are the potential negative effects, impacts or consequences and how have, or may, they arise:

Because this relates to services which are currently going through a procurement process, some of the elements will not be known until we have a provider or providers in place. Additionally, as these are pilot schemes, there may be unforeseen impacts and therefore we cannot be completely sure until they are operational. Whilst the specification has been developed being mindful of the need to be accessible to all, it will not be until later in the process that some specifics will be known.

A particular point is around registration in advance and at this stage there is not enough information about this until we have appointed a supplier or suppliers.

We have not identified any negative impacts in section 2. However, this needs to be carefully monitored due to this being a pilot service to ensure that no unknown impacts occur. For example, we would need to ensure that the service performs as expected for members of the community we anticipate that it will improve the transport situation for. We would also need to be certain that the entire community is accessing or is able to access the service.

Section 8 – Proposals to remove or minimise negative effects, impacts or consequences



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

How is it proposed to mitigate or minimise the negative effects, impacts or consequences identified in Section 7?

Please see details provided in Part A. This gives details of some of the measures that will be in place through the contract including how the flexible nature of the service and its pricing model is intended to overcome accessibility and isolation issues and how assistive technology may be used.

Section 9 - Other factors to take into consideration:

These pilot schemes are new services to Buckinghamshire and many of the Local Authorities that have been awarded funding to implement these services are in the same situation. These are a positive innovation for the residents of the areas that these areas serve. The areas of operation have been designed to include rural areas or suburbs where there is no or limited public transport and will complement existing services.

As there are pilot schemes, there are great deal of unknowns about how successful services will be and who will use the service. We are mindful of these and need to keep an open mind to ensure that the service is accessible to all as it develops.

We are hoping to draw on experience from within the industry of similar services, no matter who the successful bidder(s) are. There is a group meeting of local authorities involved in pilot schemes a few times every year and this, combined with the monitoring we are required to undertake as part of the funding, presents the Council was an excellent opportunity to learn and develop the service.

Section 10 - Conclusion:

It is not identified that there are any negative impacts caused to any person with protected characteristics. As an additional service, it identified that there are some positive benefits that should result from their implementation.

These are pilot schemes, so by their very nature there are unknowns, and these should be monitoring and evaluated through the metric that we collect to ensure that no negative impacts are caused.

We have through the procurement process, specified for a service that will be fully accessible, that will encourage use of new technologies but give the option for traditional methods of communication to be used with the aim of achieving this.

Section 11 - Action Planning



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

Not applicable

Section 12 - Monitoring Arrangements

What are the plans to monitor the actual and/or final impact? (The EqIA will help anticipate likely effect but final impact may only be known after implementation)

The scheme forms part of a Government Pilot Scheme, who are funding this scheme and 15 others like it across England. As part of this there is a significant amount of information that we are required to collect and report on. The full suite of metrics required is listed below.

Operational data – Monthly	
Operating Days	How many days were DRT services operating for over the month
Vehicles operating	How many DRT vehicles were operational (providing services) during the month
Operating hours (planned)	Planned operating hours (across all DRT vehicles in the pilot)
Operating hours (actual)	Actual operating hours (across all DRT vehicles in the pilot)
Usage data - Monthly	
Passengers carried (average)	Average per hour / day across service days
Passengers carried (total)	Total per month
Unfulfilled journeys	Number of passengers whose bookings were unable to be fulfilled
Distance travelled by service	Total distance travelled by service carrying passengers this month
Empty distance	Total distance travelled empty to facilitate journeys this month
Average journey length	Average journey length across all passengers this month
Average elapsed journey time	Average journey time across all passengers this month
Journeys: time	Journeys per hour across operating hours (07:00-07:59, 08:00-08:59, etc.) this month
Journeys: days	Journeys per day (Monday, Tuesday etc.) across operating days this month
Booking mode	Journeys booked through different options that month (e.g. App, Call centre, Online, Other)
Booking lead-time	Average time journeys are booked in advance (days / hours / minutes) this month
Demographic data (anonymised) – If available from technology platform(s)	
Age groups of passengers	Passengers carried this month by age group (e.g. under 18, 19-29, 30-39, 40-49 etc.)
Gender of passengers	Gender breakdown for passengers travelling this month.
Concessionary fares	Number of passengers travelling on a concessionary fare this month (broken down by different categories if possible, e.g. older people, younger people, disabled people)
Context Data	
Destinations	Number of destinations served (by type if possible, employment, healthcare etc.). Ideally this would include Geo-location of the destinations.
Origins	Number of origins served (by type if possible, employment, healthcare etc.) Ideally this would include Geo-location of the origins.

There is a requirement to collate this information on a monthly basis and submit it to DfT on a six-monthly basis. The software provider that we are procurement will have a requirement to collect and report this information to us.

This information can be used to monitor the uptake of the service or any difficulties that may be had.

There is also a proposal the undertake on-bus surveys, which can tailor this information more specifically to different groups. We intend to work with our providers, once appointed, to establish a form of surveying and monitoring, including immediate feedback, that captures the experience of those with accessibility or other needs that those with protected characteristics may have.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

We will continually liaise with local community groups and employers or educational establishments to understand uptake of the service.

What are the proposals for reviewing and reporting actual impact?

The data we will collect, including that we are required to collect, is shown above. It is our intention to update stakeholder regularly on the performance of the service. This will also include members and community groups.

Section 13 - Part A and B Sign off – (If Part B has not been completed please complete Section 4)

Officer completing Part A and B assessment: James Loader Date: 13 April 2022

Equality advice sought from: Natalie Donhou Morley Date: 19 April 2022

Service Director sign off:

SIGNATURE

NAME	SARA TURNBULL
TITLE	SERVICE DIRECTOR
DATE	26 APRIL 2022

Leader sign off: (Please insert name) Date: (Please insert Date)

Next review date: Review in 8-12 weeks, depending on length of procurement exercise and introduction of provider. Should be reviewed at least quarterly during further development and implementation.