

Universal Services

Name of SP25 proposal:	SP25 Proposal Reference:
Passenger Transport	<i>EIA – US04</i> Universal Services

EIA writer(s) and authoriser

No.		Name	Department	Position	Email address	Phone number	Date	Issue
1	Report Writer(s)	Lisa Cook	Universal Services	Public Transport Manager			30/4/2024	2
2	EIA authoriser	Patrick Blogg	Universal Services	Director – Universal Services			15/05/2024	2
3	EIA Coordinator	Patrick Poyntz-Wright	Universal Services	Capital and Governance Support Manager			14/05/2024	2

Section one – information about the service and service change

Service affected	Public Transport
Please provide a short description of the service / policy/project/project phase	The County Council currently spends £2.7m per annum directly supporting non-statutory local bus services, mostly in rural and semi rural locations where it is not currently possible to run commercially viable services, and community transport services like Dial-a-Ride and Call and Go. £1.068m of this is ringfenced government funding and therefore can only be spent on these services.

Please explain the new/changed service/policy/project

Removal of £587,000 of County Council revenue funding spent on passenger transport services. This would see the withdrawal of the County Council's funding on;

- Connect: Taxishare schemes
- Wheels to Work
- All discretionary enhancements to the Concessionary Travel Scheme in Hampshire
- Ten supported local bus services
- Yateley Connect
- Denmead Connect

A revised approach to Community Transport would be implemented combining these services with school transport provision. This would ensure that an element of these services is retained.

Engagement and consultation

The County Council's *Making the Most of your money budget* consultation (2024-2026) sought residents' and stakeholders' views on strategic options for funding the Authority's budget gap. Where applicable, detailed proposals for making savings were subject to further, more detailed 'stage two' consultation (detailed below).

Has any pre-consultation engagement been carried out?

Describe the consultation or engagement you have performed or are intending to perform.

Describe who was engaged or consulted. What was the outcome of the activity and how have the results influenced what you are doing? If no consultation or engagement is planned, please explain why.

The *Making the Most of Your Money Budget Consultation* referred to above received a wide range of comments on this proposal, many of which supported the findings of this assessment. In addition, feedback from individuals and organisations stressed that where individuals have multiple protected characteristics the impacts could be particularly negative.

5,518 responses were received for the passenger transport proposal within the subsequent *Future Services Consultation*. This was the highest number of responses received on any passenger transport savings proposals to date. This proposal also received 102 responses from organisations, the highest number of organisational responses of all savings proposals. This shows that a significant number of people who use and rely on these services had an opportunity to give their opinion. Additional promotional activity was carried out for this specific proposal to ensure that the messaging about the consultation reached the most vulnerable service users. On average 72% of respondents disagreed with the proposal. Two thirds of every demographic who responded, strongly disagreed. The key impacts respondents fed back were;

- isolation and poor mental health (39%)
- impact on older people (35%)
- impact on rural service users
- impact on those with disabilities/ mobility issues

The average respondent was female, aged 65+, low income, and 21% had a health issue which impacted their daily life. Many respondents said that they would not be able to travel if the savings proposal was made.

As a result of both the feedback received within this consultation, and work undertaken that established a link between changes proposed in the original passenger transport proposal and likely cost increases for the County Council's statutory school transport provision, the potential saving for this proposal has been reduced from £1.7m to £1.087m. £0.587m of this would be achieved through reductions to passenger transport services. The remaining £0.5m could be achieved as a saving across the County Council through the implementation of a revised approach that jointly commissions and delivers both passenger transport and school transport services. By combining these services, savings can be made whilst at the same time meeting the County Council's duties under the Transport Act 1985 to have a regard for the transport needs of older and disabled people.

Section two: Assessment

Carefully and consciously consider the impacts of the proposed change.

Consider at this point whether the assessment is of impacts on staff or service users. If it is both the impacts may be contradictory for each group (negative for staff but positive for customers, or vice versa). Consider completing two assessment tables (one for staff and one for customers) and providing one equality statement for both groups.

If the proposed change is expected to have a positive, neutral (no impact) or negative (low, medium or high) impact on people in protected characteristics groups or those who may be impacted by poverty or rurality. Indicate the impact by entering the risk score in the relevant column in the table below.

If an overview assessment of due regard is appropriate, please go to box 2.

Table 1 Impact Assessment [add ✓ to relevant boxes)

Protected characteristic	Positive	Neutral	Negative - low	Negative - Medium	Negative - High	Affects staff, public or both?
Age				✓		Public
Disability				✓		Public
Gender reassignment		✓				Public
Pregnancy and maternity			✓			Public
Race			✓			Public
Religion or belief			✓			Public

Sex				✓		Public
Sexual orientation		✓				Public
Marriage & civil partnership		✓				Public
Poverty				✓		Public
Rurality				✓		Public

Table 2 Geographical impact

Does the proposal impact on a specific area? Consider the [demographic data](#) of the locations.

Area	Yes / no
All Hampshire	✓
Basingstoke and Deane	

East Hampshire	
Eastleigh	
Fareham	
Gosport	
Hart	
Havant	
New Forest	
Rushmoor	
Test Valley	
Winchester	

Section three: Equality Statement

For all characteristics marked as either having a neutral or low negative impact, challenge your assessment - carefully consider the protected characteristics, if necessary, review the Inclusion and Diversity eLearning, discuss with an EIA co-ordinator.

Table 3 Consideration of and explanation for neutral or low negative impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having neutral or low negative impact
Gender reassignment Sexual orientation Marriage and civil partnership	<p>NEUTRAL: There is no evidence to suggest that people who have any of these protected characteristics are any more likely to use public transport/community transport or hold a concessionary bus pass in Hampshire than those without them. Therefore there would be the same impact on these people as there would be for the general population.</p>
Religion	<p>LOW NEGATIVE: Reductions in availability of transport services could result in people having poorer access to activities relating to their religion</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>LOW NEGATIVE: Women are more likely to use public transport. During times of pregnancy and maternity women have a greater need to travel to access appointments etc. This means that the savings within this proposal are more likely to have a disproportionate impact on people who share this characteristic. The retention of a high number of passenger transport services, with a reduced savings target following public consultation, mitigates this impact to make it low.</p>
Race	<p>LOW NEGATIVE: People from ethnic backgrounds other than white are more likely to use public transport. This means that the savings within this proposal are more likely to have a disproportionate impact on people who share this characteristic. The retention of a high number of passenger transport services, with a reduced savings target following public consultation, mitigates this impact to make it low.</p>

For all characteristics marked as either having a 'medium negative' or 'high negative', please complete the following table:

Table 4 Explanation and mitigation for medium and high impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having medium or high negative impact	Is there a Geographical impact? If so, please explain -use list below to identify geographical area(s)	Short explanation of mitigating actions
Age	Medium Negative	Reductions in public bus are more likely to impact the rural areas of Hampshire.	The revised approach to community transport where services are commissioned around school transport would see some, albeit at a reduced level, community transport services retained. The most vulnerable older and disabled people with no other way to make their journeys would be able to use this provided that the new timings met their need to travel. E.g. if the vehicle is operating a school run at 3pm, it would not be able to transport a passenger to a 3pm doctors appointment.
Disability	<p>66% of consultation respondents highlighted age as being affected by this proposal, and 61% highlighted disability.</p> <p>Two thirds of all journeys on Hampshire's supported bus network are undertaken by holders of a concessionary bus pass; whether that be a disabled or older persons pass. The vast majority of journeys undertaken on Community Transport services serve the needs of older and disabled people. 96% of registered passengers on Connect: Dial a Ride services are over 60 years old with 80% being 80+ years old. Most journeys on door to door services are undertaken by people with a</p>	<p>The Wheels to Work scheme only operates in rural areas of Hampshire (New Forest, Test Valley, East Hampshire and Winchester Districts)</p> <p>Those who made a comment on the proposal within the consultation were asked whether their comments related to any protected characteristics. 57% of respondents raised concerns around the impact on rural areas.</p> <p>Of the ten bus services which are proposed to be withdrawn, nine cover very rural areas</p>	<p>Community Transport services are jointly funded by Borough/City/District/Parish and Town funding partners. The proposal only refers to the funding that the County</p>

	<p>concessionary bus pass. People with these characteristics are less likely to have access to a car or van and therefore have no alternative to bus/community transport use. Within these groups, these services are used as a means to remain independent. A reduction of service would have a disproportionate impact on people with these characteristics.</p> <p>The removal of the enhancement to the concessionary travel scheme in Hampshire would have a particular disproportionate impact on people with disabilities because;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) People with a disabled persons bus pass would no longer be able to travel for free until 9:30am Monday to Friday. B) Those disabled people who require a companion to be able to travel, would no longer be able to be accompanied for free. 	<p>which would lead to a specific impact.</p>	<p>Council provides towards these services and therefore, should the partner funding remain, there would be a lesser impact on users.</p> <p>The report proposes that the vast majority of supported local bus services are retained, this would mean that those passengers would continue to be able to travel.</p> <p>Of all the passenger transport services provided by the County Council, it is supported local bus and community transport which has the highest usage and therefore it is likely that the continuation of these services would mitigate some of the impact of any savings.</p> <p>This represents a significant improvement to the impact that the savings would have on the residents of Hampshire compared to the original proposal. Most areas would see a maintained level of</p>
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	<p>With specific regards to younger people, around 15% of all journeys undertaken on the Council's supported services are for educational purposes. This equates to around 250,000 trips per year across the whole supported network. A reduction in service would mean many of these journeys would not be able to take place, resulting in a negative impact for younger people. In addition, fewer supported bus services would limit the County Council's scope to use public bus services to provide home to school transport, which could in turn have impacts on the home to school transport service funded by the Children's Services Budget.</p> <p>The Wheels to Work scheme which would be withdrawn is specifically for younger people who fall within the 16-24 age bracket. This scheme is used by people who have no access to other modes of transport, primarily in rural areas. 94% of</p>	<p>accessibility, albeit at a reduced availability for community transport users, which would prevent people from becoming (more) isolated.</p> <p>In the total absence of these services, many would have to use the voluntary transport network which the County Council does not support. Therefore this would increase the demand on these services which the voluntary transport network (i.e. car schemes) is unlikely to be able to meet. In addition, these services are inaccessible for those with a wheelchair / complex mobility needs and therefore these people would need to rely on taxis. There is a national shortage of taxi drivers and therefore, accessibility would depend on localised availability.</p> <p>Wheels to Work users would not be able to use the voluntary transport network to</p>
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	<p>users who responded to the consultation did not agree with the proposal to withdraw the scheme and 72% stated that they would not be able to make their journey should the scheme be stopped.</p> <p>Reductions in community transport funding could also diminish the efficacy of the County Council's investment in the voluntary sector, with transport limitations reducing the scope and quality of support provided by volunteers funded by the County Council out of other budgets.</p> <p>Those who made a comment on the proposal within the consultation were asked whether their comments related to any protected characteristics. 66% of respondents raised concerns over the impact on old people and 61% on the impact on those with disabilities.</p>	<p>make regular journeys to work and would need to rely on lifts, or hire a taxi to make the same journey. This age group are more likely to have a wide social circle making the provision of lifts a more realistic prospect than it would be for older, isolated people.</p> <p>The amount of funding spent on the provision of companion passes for disabled people is relatively small suggesting that where people do require a companion to travel, they do not heavily rely on a companion pass.</p> <p>The removal of the other enhancements to the Concessionary Travel Scheme e.g. free all day travel for disabled people and the ability to travel for free between 9am and 9:30am on a small number of very infrequent routes do not prevent passengers from travelling.</p>
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Sex	<p>Medium negative</p> <p>Nationally more women than men do not have access to a private car / van and thus more use bus and community transport services. 74% of the registered passengers for Connect: Dial a Ride / Call & Go services are women.</p> <p>Within Hampshire 60% of passengers who travel with a concessionary bus pass on the supported local bus network are female. This means that any reduction to service would disproportionately affect women. This is compounded by the pregnancy and maternity impact detailed above.</p>	<p>Reductions in public bus are more likely to impact the rural areas of Hampshire.</p> <p>The Wheels to Work scheme only operates in rural areas of Hampshire. (New Forest, Test Valley, East Hampshire and Winchester Districts)</p> <p>Those who made a comment on the proposal within the consultation were asked whether their comments related to any protected characteristics. 57% of respondents raised concerns around the impact on rural areas.</p>	See above
Poverty	<p>Medium Negative</p> <p>42% of consultation respondents highlighted poverty as being affected by this proposal.</p>	<p>Reductions in public bus are more likely to impact the rural areas of Hampshire.</p> <p>The Wheels to Work scheme only operates in rural areas of</p>	<p>See above</p> <p>The retention of the most used services would be of particular benefit to people living in</p>

	<p>Although poverty is not a statutory protected characteristic, within the consultation, 85% of lower income households, especially those with an income of £10,000 or lower disagreed with the proposal, raising particular concerns over isolation and reductions in mental wellbeing. Those who did agree with the proposal were more likely to have a higher income (£60,000 plus).</p> <p>There is a relationship between income and type of transport used. Those on lower incomes use buses more than those on higher incomes, and those on higher incomes use cars and trains more than those on lower incomes (Department for Transport 2017). People with more money have more options in both where to live and how to travel, and transport links are a key component of land value and housing costs. Poverty rates for all groups of women are higher than those of White British men.</p>	<p>Hampshire. (New Forest, Test Valley, East Hampshire and Winchester Districts)</p> <p>Those who made a comment on the proposal within the consultation were asked whether their comments related to any protected characteristics. 57% of respondents raised concerns around the impact on rural areas.</p>	<p>poverty as passenger transport services offer an affordable alternative to private transport.</p> <p>If the enhancements to the concessionary travel scheme are removed, the statutory aspects would remain and therefore all bus pass holders in Hampshire would continue to be able to travel for free between 9:30am and 11pm M-F and all day at the weekend.</p> <p>If the enhancements are removed, those making morning outgoing journeys which are currently free, would only have to pay a single fare, provided that they return after 9:30am.</p> <p>The government are currently capping all bus fares at £2 which may offer some mitigation for this impact.</p> <p>The amount of funding spent on the provision of companion</p>
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Among women, they are lowest for White British women, followed by Chinese, Indian, Black Caribbean and Black African women. Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have extremely high poverty rates of around 50 per cent. Dependency on public transport and poverty are interlinked, resulting in a reduction to bus services or community transport services having a disproportionate impact on people living in poverty.

The withdrawal of the taxishare network would result in those passengers using the remaining community transport services. The current cost of the taxishare is £2 return, the cost of community transport is on average £7 return. This means that the cost of travel would increase significantly which may not be affordable for those people on lower incomes.

Removal of the enhancements to the concessionary travel scheme in Hampshire would have a

passes for disabled people is relatively small suggesting that where people do require a companion to travel, they do not heavily rely on a companion pass.

disproportionate impact on those people with lower income where they would go from being able to travel for free, or accompanied for free for those with a companion pass to needing to pay for at least one way of their journey.

The Wheels to Work scheme hires mopeds to those who need access to a vehicle for employment or education but live in an area with few public services and cannot afford to purchase a moped or car privately. The removal of this service would have a disproportionate impact on this group of people.

Overall, those most likely to not make a journey if their service was withdrawn were those on a household income below £10,000 (57%),

Those who made a comment on the proposal within the consultation were asked whether their comments related to any protected characteristics. 42% of

	<p>respondents raised concerns over the impact on lower income people/ families.</p>		
Rurality	<p>Medium Negative</p> <p>57% of consultation respondents highlighted rurality as being affected by this proposal.</p> <p>Although rurality is not a statutory protected characteristic, the vast majority of Hampshire's supported bus and Taxishare network provides accessibility for people within rural areas to access towns for employment and essential services. Rural areas are also currently served by Community Transport services.</p> <p>As well as providing access to towns from rural areas, supported bus services play a crucial role bringing people into rural areas,</p>	<p>Reductions in passenger transport services are more likely to impact the rural areas of Hampshire.</p> <p>The Wheels to Work scheme only operates in rural areas of Hampshire. (New Forest, Test Valley, East Hampshire and Winchester Districts)</p> <p>Those who made a comment on the proposal within the consultation were asked whether their comments related to any protected characteristics. 57% of respondents raised concerns around the impact on rural areas.</p>	<p>See above. The retention of the majority of bus services, and the reduction of the savings target following public consultation, would be of particular benefit to rural residents. Most community transport services operate on a district-wide basis ensuring that rural communities are not as isolated as they would have been had the original proposals been implemented.</p>

improving their health and wellbeing, and supporting the economy of rural communities.

Rural areas are notoriously difficult to serve by public transport and make a profit, this is because the number of passengers who need to travel are lower. This means that where Council support is withdrawn in these areas, it is far less likely than in an urban area that a bus operator would provide an alternative on a commercial basis.

Where the overall amount of funding is reduced to operators, this could have impact their overall operations. This could see more rural depots becoming commercially unviable and therefore additional services to those which are directly funded by the County Council could be withdrawn.

The enhancement to the concessionary Travel Scheme in Hampshire which allows holders

	<p>of a bus pass to travel for free between 09:00 – 09:30 is only eligible on rural, infrequent services. These passengers would have little alternative other than to pay for their outgoing journey which is currently free.</p> <p>The Wheels to Work scheme which would be withdrawn is specifically for younger people who fall within the 16-24 age bracket. This scheme is used by people who have no access to other modes of transport, primarily in rural areas. 94% of users who responded to the consultation did not agree with the proposal to withdraw the scheme and 72% stated that they would not be able to make their journey should the scheme be stopped.</p>		
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If you have specified mitigations as part of the assessment, now consider reviewing the impact severity/risk assessment.

For all characteristics marked as either having a positive impact please explain why here.

Table 5 Consideration of and explanation for positive impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having positive impact

Further actions and recommendations to consider:

- If neutral or low negative impacts have been carefully considered and identified correctly, the activity is likely to proceed.

- If medium negative or high negative have been identified:
 - The policy, service review, scheme or practice may be paused or stopped
 - The policy, service review, scheme or practice can be changed to remove, reduce or mitigate against the negative impacts.
 - Consider undertaking consultation/re-consulting⁴.
 - If all options have been considered carefully and there are no other proportionate ways to remove, reduce, or mitigate - explain and justify reasons why in the assessment.
 - Carry out a subsequent impact severity assessment following mitigating actions.

Box 1

Please set out any additional information which you think is relevant to this impact assessment:

It should be noted that the most recent available data suggests that only 9% of all bus services in Hampshire are subsidised by the County Council, which means that 91% of bus services would not be directly affected.

Box 2

If appropriate, (i.e., it is immediately evident that a full EIA is not necessary) please provide a short succinct assessment to show that due regard has been given and that there is no requirement for a full EIA: