

6. This paper also sets out why these are the only two services for which this course of action is proposed, New Forest Cango due to its high level of stakeholder involvement and Andover Villages for its higher than average proportion of passengers who travel using a wheelchair.

Contextual information

7. On 7 November 2022, a report setting out how the County Council proposed to implement £800,000 of savings against the passenger transport budget was taken to Executive Lead Member for Transport and Environment Strategy Decision Day.
8. This report set out how these savings would be implemented by 1 April 2023.
9. Apart from savings associated with the two services detailed in this report, the only exception to this was the consistent fares policy for users of the Council's community transport services which were proposed to be implemented incrementally to mitigate the financial impact on passengers of these services.

New Forest Cango

10. New Forest Cango is a bookable local bus service. Since 2015, a consortium of parishes has funded the booking element of this service.
11. Due to its position as a stakeholder in this service, the Council has undertaken a series of meetings with the parishes to try to identify a savings proposal that both meets as many needs of their parishioners as is possible within the reduced budget available.
12. During one of these meetings, the Parish identified that they would like to explore a more community based solution and should such a solution be possible, they would explore whether there was a possibility of making a funding contribution towards this service.
13. In order to achieve this, a procurement process would need to be carried out and therefore more time required to ensure that such a process was legally compliant.

Andover Village Services

14. The report in November recommended that the Andover Village Services were replaced with a demand responsive solution. This is because the County Council has wider medium term ambitions around implementing a demand responsive minibus service in Andover.
15. The village of Enham Alamein is served by this service where the charity Enham Trust is based. This is a charity which supports disabled people to live, work and enjoy life to the full, as independently as possible.
16. Due to the housing and support that Enham Trust offer, a higher than average number of passengers travelling with a wheelchair use the Andover Villages Service.
17. Since November, the County Council has run a procurement process to secure an operator for this service. A limited number of bids were received for this contract, most likely due to the requirement that the service must be accessible to those who need to travel with a wheelchair. The pool of providers with accessible vehicles is smaller than those with standard vehicles.

18. The delay in the implementation of the savings against this service would enable the County Council to explore new potential options that have arisen following stakeholder engagement since the savings report was approved in November.
19. If the County Council is unable to secure an operator for a demand responsive transport service, it may be that an alternative solution is implemented.

Finance

20. The November decision day report approved that annually, £32,200 savings were made against the New Forest Cango Service and £45,502 against the Andover Villages Service.
21. If the proposal to delay the implementation of these savings is approved, the maximum pressure on the County Council's budget between 1 April and 31 August 2023 would be £32,376.
22. It is proposed that this pressure is funded from the Local Transport Fund. A temporary one-off fund issued by the Department for Transport to support subsidised services during this period.

Performance

23. If approved, there would be no changes to service levels on 1 April 2023.
24. The latest that changes would be made is 1 September 2023.
25. Services that are competitively tendered will be brought back to Decision Day to seek approval to spend and enter into contractual arrangements.
26. The County Council will ensure that these changes are publicised within the local community ahead of implementation.

Consultation and Equalities

27. Consultation was undertaken between May and July 2022 to inform implementation plans for a reduction of £800,000 per annum of the County Council's passenger transport budget. A full breakdown and analysis of this consultation can be found as an appendix to the previously mentioned Decision Day report taken in November 2022.
28. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken. Data shows that the service users more likely to be positively impacted will belong to groups with the following protected characteristics: Age, Disability, Gender, Pregnancy & Maternity, Race, Rurality and Poverty. This is because people with these characteristics are more likely to use public transport. Therefore, the continued provision of these services would be a benefit to them. In particular, the continuation of the Andover Villages service will benefit the high proportion of wheel chair users who rely on this service.

Climate Change Impact Assessments

29. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies

and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.

Carbon Mitigation

30. The continued operation of these two specific services until September will have a minimal impact on climate change, but the opportunity to develop better solutions for realising the required savings will enable more people to continue to use public transport, with a consequent benefit for carbon mitigation.

Conclusions

31. If approved, the recommendations within this report will ensure that the best level of service within the reduced budget available is secured for these two areas.
32. Any modified contract arrangements would be in place until existing contracts expire at which point, services will be competitively tendered.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	no
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	no

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u> Passenger Transport SP23 Savings Proposals-2022-11-07-ELMTES Decision Day (hants.gov.uk)	<u>Date</u> 07/11/2022
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 2.1. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken. Data shows that the service users more likely to be positively impacted will belong to groups with the following protected characteristics: Age, Disability, Gender, Pregnancy & Maternity, Race, Rurality and Poverty. This is because people with these characteristics are more likely to use public transport. Therefore, the continued provision of these services would be a benefit to them. In particular, the continuation of the Andover Villages service will benefit the high proportion of wheelchair users who rely on this service.