

Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA)

Front Sheet:

Directorate and Service Area:

Communities – Planning & Place

What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change):

Better Deal for Buses – Expression of interest

Responsible owner / senior officer:

Sue Halliwell, Director for Planning & Place

Date of assessment:

May 2020

Summary of judgement:

There are risks of negative impacts relevant to the following characteristics/areas:

- Age
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sex
- Rural communities
- Areas of deprivation
- Other council services
- Other providers of council services

The assessment recommends:

- Further assessment of these risks
- Further consultation with the communities and individuals identified
- Consideration of changes to the proposals to mitigate the risks identified

Detail of Assessment:

Purpose of assessment:

Briefly summarise why you have done the assessment (e.g. in response to new or proposed changes to a policy, project, contract or service delivery).

This assessment is being carried out in response to the development of options for two new requests for 'Expressions of Interest' from the DfT. These consist of:

- i) All-electric bus town or city, converting its entire bus fleet to electric zero emission; and
- ii) On-demand services in rural and suburban areas as part of a Rural Mobility Fund

Ideas presented within the EoIs are based on the policies and strategy in the county council's Local Transport Plan, the Oxford Transport Strategy and Oxforde's Air Quality Management strategy

The proposals are still in their early stages, with no decisions having been made yet about the schemes. An initial Expression of Interest in each of the pilot bus schemes is proposed to be submitted on 4 June 2020 (Subject to delays associated with the COVID 19 virus).

The bidding process takes the form of a two-stage competition. Phase one is the preparation and submission of an Expression of Interest and Phase 2, should we be successful at Phase 1, is the development and submission of a Business Case which will be undertaken towards the end of 2020.

The purpose of this SCIA is to:

Provide a high level summary of the known issues at this stage, to inform a Cabinet decision in May 2020; and

Inform the next stage of work on the project, if approved by Cabinet.

You should also include the following statement to clearly set out the reasons and context for undertaking the assessment:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 ("the 2010 Act") imposes a duty on the Council to give due regard to three needs in exercising its functions. This proposal is such a function. The three needs are:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.

Complying with section 149 may involve treating some people more favourably than others, but only to the extent that that does not amount to conduct which is otherwise unlawful under the new Act.

The need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages which are connected to a relevant protected characteristic and which are suffered by persons who share that characteristic,
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and which are different from the needs other people, and
- encourage those who share a relevant characteristic to take part in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such people is disproportionately low.
- take steps to meet the needs of disabled people which are different from the needs of people who are not disabled and include steps to take account of a person's disabilities.

The need to foster good relations between different groups involves having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

These protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership

Social Value

Under the Public Services (Social Value Act) 2012 the Council also has an obligation to consider how the procurement of services contracts with a life value of more than £173,934¹¹ might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the area affected by the proposed contract, and how it might act to secure this improvement. However, it is best practice to consider social value for all types of contracts, service delivery decisions and new/updated policies. In this context, 'policy' is a general term that could include a strategy, project or contract.

Context / Background:

Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.

Buses play a vital role in our transport system – getting people to work, to education and to see friends and family, the everyday journeys that make up our lives. The benefits of a reliable and innovative bus service are clear: less congestion, greater productivity and communities that are connected.

¹¹ [EC Procurement Threshold for Services](#)

The 'Better Deal for Bus Users' fund sets out a package of ambitious and innovative actions to meet the needs and demands of the travelling public. With £220 million of new funding to help start a revolution in bus services. There are 11 packages including:

- 1) up to £50 million to deliver Britain's first all-electric bus town or city
- 2) £20 million to support on-demand services in rural and suburban areas

All-Electric Bus Town or City

The stated aims of the All-Electric Bus Town / City project are to:

- act as a pilot to understand what can be achieved when all parties are committed to the objective for introducing an electric-zero emission city;
- understand the impact on air quality and greenhouse emissions;
- understand the challenges of running a wholly electric fleet;
- understand the cost implications for bus operators; and
- to support bus manufacturers in the development of zero emission technology.

Government recognise that buses have a significant role to play in tackling air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Not only does a fully loaded double decker bus takes up to 75 cars off the road which helps to reduce congestion and the impact of transport on the environment, but by switching to the next generation ultra-low or zero emission buses the improvement in air quality is significant.

Buses already play a key role in Oxford's transport system – getting people to work, to education and to see friends and family. Both the City Council and the County Council are committed to tackling air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions with the introduction of the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) and development of the 'Red Zone' of a city centre Zero Emission Zone, with expansion to the wider 'Green Zone'. In addition, there is an agreed requirement for most buses operating in the city to be Euro 6 by the end of 2020.

The All-Electric Bus City pilot scheme is in alignment with the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) and would support proposals for the Oxford Zero Emission Zone and be complementary to proposals such as Connecting Oxford.

Demand Responsive Transport Service

Demand responsive transport solutions (DRT) have the potential to transform the local transport offering in areas where demand is more disperse and the distances involved makes it more challenging to maintain or provide services which meet local residents' needs. This also include mixed use and residential areas at the outer fringe of urban areas, where links to existing transport hubs are poor. They can also be used to provide area-based services, rather than corridor-based services that exclude large populations such as industrial estates.

The objective of this fund is to trial demand-responsive transport solutions in providing transport services which work better for local residents of rural and suburban areas than traditional transport services (i.e. timetabled bus services). The proposals should either fill a gap in provision, where there is no current local transport offer, or complement existing timetabled bus services, for example by acting as a feed-in service.

The proposed submissions provide services that provide access to education, employment, healthcare and other services which are currently lacking and enable greater social inclusion. In each case the solutions will demonstrate diversity of passenger groups.

Proposals:

Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.

All-Electric Bus Town or City

The city of Oxford is subject to poor air quality, particularly in areas with high levels of road traffic. Whilst, improvements have been seen over the last decade the latest figures suggest the reductions have plateaued.

Oxford's current air quality challenges are likely to be exacerbated by planned growth across Oxfordshire unless appropriate steps are taken. Prior to Covid-19 the Oxford Transport Strategy predicted substantial increases in demand for bus services by 2031.

Whilst it is acknowledged that after the current crisis, use of buses will not immediately return to normal it is expected that they will eventually return at least to current levels if not rise as previously predicted. Therefore, there is still a need to continue tackling air quality issues to ensure they do not return to current levels.

The Oxford Transport Strategy, which forms part of the county's Local Transport Plan, sets out a vision and strategy to transform transport in Oxford and overcome its long-term challenges. The strategy has three key components: mass transit (including bus rapid transit), walking and cycling, and managing traffic and travel demand. This also means moving Oxfordshire's transport system to one that is largely zero emission, and as close to zero-carbon as possible, within 20 years. An All Electric Bus City would go a long way to achieving this.

The proposal indicates that all Local bus services should operate in Electric within the Oxford City boundary which aligns with Oxford's Air Quality Management Area.

This would require the conversion of all buses designated as Local Service Operations that enter this area to be converted to either purely electric or hybrid buses (or range extenders) which switch from diesel operation to electric as they enter the Zone. Range extending buses would be self-charging allowing them to operate in Electric mode in other towns across the County, improving air quality further afield than just Oxford City Centre.

There are currently six bus companies classed as operating local services within the City. These are Oxford Bus Company/Thames Travel, Stagecoach, Arriva, Red Rose, Charlton and Swanbrook.

Currently technology does not exist to allow for the conversion of coaches. There are no electric or hybrid vehicles currently on the market with sufficient numbers of seats to replace existing coach services. As a result, services such as National Express, Airline services and Swanbrook services are expected to be exempt from the all-electric requirements.

Demand Responsive Transport Service

A DRT is seen as an opportunity to improve services in our rural areas providing much needed transport solutions where none currently exists. Each solution would provide access to a variety of services for a wider demographic of people than currently exists with some community transport solutions which may individually focus on the elderly, disabilities or the young. Instead, these solutions would enable all groups to access a single service.

DfT are permitting multiple submissions. They wish them to be pilots to trial different solutions. As such Officers have recommended the submission of three different solutions.

- 1) A corridor based solution on the A4074 providing mini transport hubs linking rural areas to an existing route and working with our existing partners at Thames Travel;
- 2) An area based solution linking surrounding villages into towns outside of Oxford such as Bicester or Didcot; and
- 3) A voluntary run solution expanding and on an existing project being undertaken in Freeland and Hanborough which currently borrow Scout buses; by providing them with accessible transport, aiding with automation of a call in system and investigation options to expand to a wider area.

Evidence / Intelligence:

Explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users etc that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact of different individuals, communities or groups.

The SCIA is informed the Calls for Expressions of Interest set out by the DfT, [consultation with bus operators and local partners as well as UK and international research on transport demand management and air pollution](#).

Alternatives considered / rejected:

Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.

All Electric Bus City

Alternative towns were considered but it was felt they did not provide the level of reduction in emissions that Oxford city would generate. Further, bus services entering Oxford City will reach well beyond the city boundary as a high number of services travel between neighbouring towns, enabling them to switch to All Electric the wider area and a far reaching impact on emission improvements.

Demand Responsive Transport

A total of 21 options were initial considered and scored against set criteria identified in the Expression of Interest document set out by the DfT. Ten options were deemed to meet the criteria, which were then packaged into the three headline groups as detailed above. The full set of options was reported to the Informal Cabinet on 5 May 2020 and agreement to proceed with the 3 options stated above given.

Doing nothing is not an option because the problems of poor transport connectivity to rural areas local air pollution, and climate change would remain and worsen if nothing is done.

Impact Assessment:

Identify any potential impacts of the policy or proposed service change on the population as a whole, or on particular groups. It might be helpful to think about the largest impacts or the key parts of the policy or proposed service change first, identifying any risks and actions, before thinking in more detail about particular groups, staff, other Council services, providers etc.

It is worth remembering that 'impact' can mean many things, and can be positive as well as negative. It could for example relate to access to services, the health and wellbeing of individuals or communities, the sustainability of supplier business models, or the training needs of staff.

We assess the impact of decisions on any relevant community, but with particular emphasis on:

- Groups that share the nine protected characteristics
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
 - religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
 - marriage and civil partnership
- Rural communities
- Areas of deprivation

We also assess the impact on:

- Staff
- Other council services
- Other providers of council services
- Any other element which is relevant to the policy or proposed service change
- How it might improve the economic, social, and environmental of the area affected by the contract **if** the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies

For every community or group that you identify a potential impact you should discuss this in detail, using evidence (from data, consultation etc.) where possible to support your judgements. You should then highlight specific risks and any mitigating actions you will take to either lessen the impact, or to address any gaps in understanding you have identified.

If you have not identified an impact on particular groups, staff, other Council services, providers etc. you should indicate this to demonstrate you have considered it.

Impact on Individuals and Communities:

Community / Group being assessed (as per list above – e.g. age, rural communities – do an assessment for each one on the list)

Summarise the specific requirements and/or potential impact on this community / group, and then highlight the most significant risks and mitigating action that has been or will be taken.

Age

Risks	Mitigations
No specific risks identified	Not applicable

Disability

Risks	Mitigations
No specific risks identified	Not applicable

Gender reassignment

Risks	Mitigations
No specific risks identified	Not applicable

Pregnancy and maternity/paternity

Risks	Mitigations
<p>Pregnant women, who during their pregnancy have a temporary disability which falls into one of the two categories identified in the “Disability” section above</p> <p>No specific risks identified</p>	Not applicable

<p>Parents with very young children, using pushchairs etc, who are more reliant on travel by car</p> <p>No specific risks identified see above</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p>Parents with children who are more reliant on travel by car because they drop/collect their children at school or childcare using their car</p> <p>No specific risks identified</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>

Race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality

Risks	Mitigations
No specific risks identified	Not applicable

Religion or belief – this includes lack of belief

Risks	Mitigations
No specific risks identified	Not applicable

Sex

Risks	Mitigations
No specific risks identified	Not applicable

Sexual orientation

Risks	Mitigations
No specific risks identified	Not applicable

Marriage and civil partnership

Risks	Mitigations
No specific risks identified	Not applicable

Rural communities

Risks	Mitigations
No specific risks identified	Not applicable

Areas of deprivation

Risks	Mitigations
No specific risks identified	Not applicable

Impact on Staff

Summarise the specific requirements and/or potential impact on staff, and then highlight the most significant risks and mitigating action that has been or will be taken.

None

Impact on other Council services

Summarise the specific requirements and/or potential impact on other council services, and then highlight the most significant risks and mitigating action that has been or will be taken.

None

Impact on providers:

Summarise the specific requirements and/or potential impact on providers of council services, and then highlight the most significant risks and mitigating action that has been or will be taken.

None

Social Value

If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area.

How might the proposal improve the economic well-being of the relevant area?

All groups within rural areas without a public transport option are reliant on private vehicles, those within these groups who have limited access to a private vehicles can loneliness, feel isolated leading to depression and anxiety.

DRTs would see better links to local services such as healthcare, education, employment, support groups, clubs, shops and entertainment, thus having a positive impact on social inclusion and mental wellbeing.
mental wellbeing.

How might the proposal improve the environmental well-being of the relevant area?

The All Electric Bus City / Town would see an improvement in air quality in Oxford City and surrounding town resulting in an improvement in public health.

Action plan

Summarise the actions that will be taken as a result of the assessment, including when they will be completed and who will be responsible. It is important that the officer leading on the assessment follows up to make sure the actions are completed, and updates the assessment as appropriate. Any significant risks identified should also be added to the appropriate service or directorate risk register, to ensure they are appropriately managed and reviewed.

Action	By When	Person responsible
None		