



# **Oxfordshire County Council**

## **Equalities Impact Assessment**

Future Bus Regulation Models

03/06/2025

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## Section 1: Summary details

<b>Directorate and Service Area</b>	Environment and Place, Transport Policy.
<b>What is being assessed</b> (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Future Bus Regulation Models -  A) The recommendation to Cabinet to <i>develop a proposal</i> for an Enhanced Partnership Plus (EP+) model B) The potential end impact if an EP+ is implemented
<b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b>	Enhancement to existing
<b>Summary of assessment</b>  Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?  (following completion of the assessment).	<p>This assessment considers the potential impacts of a) pursuing and b) implementing an EP+ with local bus operators.</p> <p>The precise impacts on different user groups will be dependent on the outcomes sought through the EP+. These are as yet undefined and will be examined in more detail during the proposed work to scope out the EP+ option.</p> <p>This EIA therefore has been assessed on the assumption that there will be tangible improvements for bus passengers in general which will lead to either neutral or positive equalities impacts.</p> <p>There are considered to be no negative impacts from an EIA standpoint.</p>
<b>Completed By</b>	Katharine Broomfield
<b>Authorised By</b>	Paul Fermer

<b>Date of Assessment</b>	03/06/2025
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## Section 2: Detail of proposal

<b>Context / Background</b>  Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.	<p>A preliminary examination of bus regulation and ownership possibilities, as relevant to Oxfordshire has been conducted by an external consultant.</p> <p>In considering the findings of the Bus Report, officers conclude that the most appropriate bus model to pursue at this time is an Enhanced Partnership Plus (EP+).</p>
<b>Proposals</b>  Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	<p>An EP+ builds on the existing EP by introducing more ambitious commitments on both bus operators and the County Council. This could include for example, joint network planning, (greater) interoperable ticketing, and unified branding.</p> <p>The primary rationale for pursuing an EP+, compared with pursuing other models, is that it can leverage bus improvements with comparably low risk and is significantly cheaper and quicker to implement.</p>
<b>Evidence / Intelligence</b>  List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can	<p>Consultation and stakeholder engagement was undertaken during March and April 2024 in developing the latest version of the Oxfordshire BSIP to determine bus improvement priorities. Similar priorities for bus-related improvements were received from stakeholders and the public, which supports the data from existing surveys. The top 5 priorities for improvements were identified as follows: 1) Faster or more direct buses, 2) more reliable buses, 3) more buses/ services in general, 4) better value fares and 5) better information before you travel.</p>

<p>help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	<p>There is research that indicates certain groups are statistically more reliant on bus and are therefore more frequent bus users. These include younger and older people, women, those with protected characteristics of disability, race, pregnancy and maternity, people in rural locations, and those on lower incomes. All these groups will therefore benefit from improvements gained through an EP+.</p> <p>Buses can help reduce congestion, improve air quality, and enhance road safety, which are all factors that affect the quality of life and well-being of residents and visitors.</p> <p>As evidenced in numerous texts, reducing car journeys is fundamental in enabling us to achieve global climate targets of limiting the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees. A fully loaded double decker bus can take 75 cars off the road. In this sense all buses can be viewed as 'green' regardless of how they are fuelled or emissions levels.</p>
<p><b>Alternatives considered / rejected</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Other models that were considered and rejected:</p> <p>Enhanced Partnership (EP) – the existing model (do nothing), this will not lead to any additional improvements and will therefore have no EQIA impacts.</p> <p>Bus Franchising - where the Council would have full control over routes, timetables, fares, and service standards. It involves significant upfront and ongoing costs, increased staffing, and operational risks.</p> <p>Municipal Bus Operation - where the Council would own and operating its own bus services. It carries high setup and operational costs, exposure to market competition, and financial risk, making it a complex and resource-intensive option.</p>

### **Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics**

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
<b>Age</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Younger and older people are statistically more likely to rely on buses. Therefore this group will benefit from improvements to bus services and access.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Disability</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	People with disabilities are statistically more likely to rely on buses. Therefore this group will benefit from improvements to bus services and access.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is likely to be a neutral impact on this group	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is likely to be a neutral impact on this group.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.

<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Women are statistically more likely to rely on buses. Therefore this group will benefit from improvements to bus services and access.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Race</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) households tend to have the highest rates of poverty and are therefore statistically more likely to rely on buses. Therefore this group will benefit from improvements to bus services and access.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Sex</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Women are statistically more likely to rely on buses. Therefore this group will benefit from improvements to bus services and access.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is likely to be a neutral impact on this group	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.



<b>Religion or Belief</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Could be impacted positively through improved services supporting access to religious events or places of worship.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
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### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
<b>Rural communities</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The impacts of transport poverty are worst for poor people in rural areas. Therefore this group will benefit from improvements to bus services and access.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Armed Forces</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is likely to be a neutral impact on this group	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Carers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carers are likely to be unpaid or on low income and therefore would benefit from improvements to bus services and access.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Areas of deprivation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Those on lower incomes are statistically more likely to rely on buses. In addition, access to work is greatly improved by more accessible and	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.

<b>Additional community impacts</b>	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Description of impact</b>	<b>Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts</b>	<b>Action owner</b> (* Job Title, Organisation)	<b>Timescale and monitoring arrangements</b>
				affordable public transport opportunities. Therefore this group will benefit from improvements to bus services and access.			

### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

<b>Additional Wider Impacts</b>	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Description of Impact</b>	<b>Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts</b>	<b>Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)</b>	<b>Timescale and monitoring arrangements</b>
<b>Staff</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to work is greatly improved by more accessible and affordable public transport opportunities. Therefore this group will benefit from improvements to bus services and access.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Other Council Services</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is likely to be a neutral impact on this group	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Providers</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is likely to be a neutral impact on this group	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.

<b>Additional Wider Impacts</b>	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Description of Impact</b>	<b>Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts</b>	<b>Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)</b>	<b>Timescale and monitoring arrangements</b>
<b>Social Value <sup>1</sup></b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Buses provide affordable, accessible, and reliable transportation, especially for those who may not have other options. They connect people to jobs and customers to businesses, facilitate access to education and essential services, promote social inclusion, and contribute to environmental improvements by encouraging a shift from private to public transport.	None	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	N/A

## Section 4: Review

**Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and**

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<sup>1</sup> 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

evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

<b>Review Date</b>	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Person Responsible for Review</b>	Technical Lead Bus Service Improvement
<b>Authorised By</b>	Paul Fermer