

Swindon Borough Council and NHS Swindon

Diversity Impact Assessment for Local Bus Services provided by Section 106 funding.

1 What's it about?

Refer to equality groups

There is a need to review current local bus services provided by Section 106 funding as a budget pressure of £147k is forecast.

There is a need to review current local bus services in receipt of Section 106 funding whose funding ends in 2012/13. The funding is for bus services which operate to the GW Hospital and to a lesser extent Dorcan Mail Centre.

Swindon has benefited over the last ten years from Section 106 funding. These are financial contributions provided by developers to ensure that the development is sustainable in respect of public transport provision. The purpose of the funding is to enable services, which might not be commercially viable at the outset due to the need to build up the number of residents living in a new development, to run. The expectation is that after a period of time the service will be commercially viable and funding from the Council will no longer be necessary. During 2012/13 a number of these agreements come to an end, and a decision will have to be made on the future of the services affected.

If these are not commercially viable the decision will be whether to

- Cease the service as it has not proved to be commercially viable or
- Retain as part of the supported bus network with replacement funding from Council sources either at the current level of service or at a reduced level. This could therefore have an effect on bus services funded from the public transport revenue budget if no additional funds are provided.

What potential is there to help meet the equality duties?

We strive where possible to ensure that every area of the Borough has a bus service which meets the needs of the local area based on its size and locality.

Where possible we try to provide buses under five years old funding permitting to ensure we have modern accessible buses where the frequency of service merits it.

The local bus strategy outlines our expectations for each area of the Borough.

What equality benefits does it create?

It provides freedom of travel for those wishing to travel to work, education and leisure. At the same times it provides accessible transport enabling more people to access transport. For those who cannot access public transport a Dial a Ride service is available.

What are the barriers to meeting this potential?

Sufficient funding and meeting expectations are the barriers to meeting this potential.

Passengers providing sufficient demand to warrant the bus service being retained or improved.

Bus operators being stimulated to provide commercial alternatives when Section 106 funding finishes.

2 Who's it for?

Refer to equality groups

Who is expected to benefit? What do we know about them?

Everyone living in the Borough can benefit from using local bus services and those individuals who choose to visit Swindon Borough.

Those moving to a new development have a public transport facility available which normally would not be available.

Who is missing or may find it difficult to benefit?

Those unable to access a bus service because of their location and those people because of disability.

Our objective is to have bus services accessible to each area of the Borough e.g Park South, Penhill, Highworth for example and retain at least an hourly or 2 hourly service or a community transport alternative so no area is deprived of accessible public transport. Where it is not possible to fund a direct service then a connecting service would be an alternative option. So there are options to limit the impact on any locality in the Borough.

Do we know why?

They have had their bus service withdrawn and do not have an alternative travelling mode such as a car, bicycle or are unable to due to a disability. As an alternative we would explore the viability of the options above to counter or mitigate the affect on the locality.

3 Impact

Refer to dimensions of equality

How will these services be delivered to a diverse group of people? (positive impact)

We will be meeting with a Members task group to evaluate how we will limit the effect of any bus service withdrawal.

Separately we meet with rural parish councils in the Borough as a Passenger Transport Forum so we have a full understanding of their essential needs and requirements.

The affect of the impact will be considered against the whole community of the area affected and we believe there is no adverse impact on the basis of sex, gender, religion, race, sexual orientation, marital/civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity.

Is there any innovative thinking, working, technology or equipment that could improve delivery?

In order to lessen the impact of any bus service withdrawal we will look at best practice and possible innovative alternatives that could be used as an alternative e.g community bus service or a taxibus service. There may be alternative service revisions which could be combined to be more effective or a commercial alternative if its clear there is no further funding available.

Is there anything about the way we deliver which may stop people getting involved? (negative impact)

No we will be consulting with a Members task group and are seeking the views of rural parishes generally about their current level of bus service. We also provide details of all bus services receiving section 106 funding to those who request it.

Is that reasonable? Can it be justified? Is it something that can be resolved?

Yes it is considered to be reasonable and justified and resolvable.

What consultation has taken place?

Consultation will be with a Members task group and depending upon their terms of reference will be extended to all ward members and parish councils affected.

4 So what?

Link to business planning process

How can we bring about any necessary change?

Proposals will be put forward by officers to a Member task group and decisions considered by Cabinet before a final decision is made.

What can be done now and what will be included in future planning?

A thorough process needs to be followed due to the sensitivity of all service users and potential ones involved. All implications will need to be carefully considered and robust planning is a key part of this process. In particular it is important that the consultation carried out is as thorough and wide ranging as possible and that any views obtained are reported in detail to Cabinet before a final decision is taken.

When will this be reviewed?

An ongoing review of this process throughout both until a final decision is taken and ongoing afterwards. The review process will include officers and Members, in particular, the Lead Member

for Transport.

How will we measure success?

Cabinet will make the final decision whether it wishes to agree changes to public transport provision.

For the record

Name of person leading this DIA Nigel Hale

Names of people involved in consideration of impact Richard Bell, Tim Price, Cllr Peter Greenhalgh

Date Completed 25/10/11

Name of director signing DIA Richard Bell

Date DIA signed

Date approved by corporate group.