Stage 6 – Validation Decision Notice

| Title of policy/proposal etc. and EIA number | 30 – Transport Subsidy Review |
| Date of assessment | 21 October 2013 |
| Job titles of assessors | Business Analyst, Principal Property Investment Surveyor, Transport Contracts and Policy Officer, Grant Funding Officer |

Consider:

- Was discrimination or disadvantage identified? [✓] [No]
- If so, was this overcome/can this be overcome? [✓] [No]
- Is the service promoting equality? [Supports Access] [No]
- Could the service be improved in promoting equality? [Improved monitoring] [No]
- Were the Initial Assessment / Screening and Scoping exercises satisfactory? [No]
- Is there good evidence/reasoning to support the decisions made? [No]
- Are the customers' needs understood and met? [No]
- If actions have been identified, do they address the main issues raised? [No]
- Does the summary report properly reflect the key findings of the assessment? [No]

If you have any comments, please note them here:

The decision is to: Validate [✓] Not validate [ ]

If not validated, please explain:

Signed: [signature]
Name: [Hayley L England]
Date: 26/11/2013

Designation: Portfolio holder
Date: 26/11/2013
STAGE 1 – Briefing Note

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Public Transport Subsidy Review</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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The Assessment
This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) considers the impact of potential changes to bus services and bus subsidies on the protected characteristics and other groups, in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). It is therefore necessary to assess future service options and consider mitigating actions where adverse impacts are identified. Information from this assessment will be included in the OSCOMM and Cabinet reports to inform Members and support decision-making.

The council is reviewing its expenditure (approximately £630,000) on public transport to seek on-going savings, understand perceptions of service delivery and ensure delivery meets needs. Research includes public surveys on-line, by leaflet (10,000 copies) and face to face (1,600 responses returned overall) in addition to other ‘desk’ and benchmarking exercises.

The review includes over 20 services but the initial report (and this assessment) considers:

- Whitchurch Community Bus
- Stratfield Saye Shopper (service 154)
- Taxi shares for Stony Heath and Old Basing (considered as one with the above)
- Services 21/22/23/24
- An evening services pilot

Assessment Findings
Case studies for each of the above services and consultation results to date were assessed to identify any impacts upon protected characteristics. A brief description of the current services, potential future options and findings from this assessment are outlined below.

Whitchurch Community Bus
This service connects Laverstoke, Woodcote and Litchfield with Whitchurch on Tuesdays and Fridays, one service every morning and afternoon. The service has a high net cost (£9.28 per passenger trip versus and average of £3.72) carrying 1,381 passenger trips per year, all bar 7 of which were concessionary fare users. Nine passengers or less travel at any one time, with no more than 17 different daily users. Consultation results show that all but one survey respondent were over 65 years old and medical trips accounted for 25% of all uses. 7 of 12 respondents identified themselves as disabled, 11 or 12 were over 65 years old.

Option 1 - Terminate route and approach Whitchurch Neighbourcare to support passengers
Potential for differentially adverse impacts on existing users (older people and disabled people) but some mitigation via Whitchurch Neighbourcare which offers travel via a voluntary car scheme may be practicable given the low passenger numbers involved. However,
wheelchair carriage cannot be guaranteed due to the use of private, non-adapted cars and concessionary fares are not accepted as payment. A further potential mitigating factor is that Dial-A-Ride services cover this area but are available on a less frequent basis.

**Option 2 – Operate the route as a taxi-share scheme**
A taxi share scheme operates on a fixed route, with fixed price and can accept concessionary fares. Indicative costs are high limiting its viability but this option would mitigate any negative issues for older/disabled users following the demise of the existing provision.

**Option 3 - Revise existing route and expand to Basingstoke/Andover on a commercial basis**
This option maintains/improves the existing service and as such provides positive impacts for all of its users by offering more options for travel. Any suggested fare increases are unlikely to affect passengers as almost all use concessionary passes.

**Stratfield Saye Shopper (Service 154) and taxi shares for Stony Heath and Old Basing**
All three services currently operate in different areas; however the main option for replacing service 154 directly impacts on two taxi share schemes. This proposal considers providing one service covering all three areas. Background information is set out below.

**Service 154**
Service 154 enters the borough for only 2 kilometres connecting Stratfield Saye with shopping opportunities in Reading, providing one return journey each Thursday and Saturday. It has a high net cost (£6.73 per passenger trip versus an average of £3.72) carrying approx. 508 Basingstoke ad Deane residents per year – average of 3 (Saturdays) and 8 (Thursdays). Consultation results showed that shopping (92%) is the main use and all (12 respondents) were aged 55 years or above. There is an average of 8 users on Thursdays (the busier day). 93% of ward households can access 1 or more cars. 1 of 14 respondents identified themselves as having a disability. All respondents were over 55 years of age.

**Taxi shares (Old Basing and Stony Health)**
Taxi shares operate like bus services, but use a taxi and require advance booking. They use a fixed route and timetable with fixed prices. They use bus stops to collect but those with mobility difficulties can choose more convenient places. Concessionary passes are accepted.

Stony Heath scheme runs - Stony Heath, Pound Green, Baughurst, West Heath, Ramsdell, Charter Alley, Monk Sherborne, Sherborne St John, Basingstoke Hospital and Basingstoke Railway Station. It has a high cost per trip (£7.95 V £3.72 average) and provides 876 passenger trips per year. No survey responses were received from Stony Health users.

Old Basing taxi share runs - Old Basing, Pyotts Hill, Chineham Centre, Lychpit Centre with a cost per trip of £3.93 (versus average of £3.72) providing 1,800 passenger trips per year. From 16 Old Basing survey respondents: shopping (48%) and medical trips (26%) were key uses. 81% suggested a high impact of service removal and 93% used concessionary fares. All respondents were aged over 55 years and 4 of 11 identified themselves as disabled.

**Option 1 – Terminate service 154 without replacement (Taxi shares remain)**
Negative effect on the few (estimated at 10 - 20) older people accessing Service 154 as no other public transport exists. However, this service is primarily used for shopping purposes. Retaining the taxi share services would provide no adverse effect for those passengers.
Option 2 - Replace service 154 with circular route from Stratfield Saye via Chineham, Old Basing, Basingstoke railway station, Monk Sherborne and Stony Heath (two circular trips a day, twice a week incorporates and replaces Stony Heath and Old Basing Taxi shares) Positive impact as it provides access for Stratfield Saye (and surrounding area) users to Basingstoke, increases ‘footprint’ of service/increases access and maintains service in both taxi scheme areas. The negative impact for all users, all of whom are older, is that the service would be less frequent and may not reach every settlement covered by the taxi shares.

A potential mitigating factor for both of the above options is that Dial-A-Ride services cover these areas and Neighbourcare services also cover the areas covered by the taxi share schemes though they are available on a less frequent basis.

**Services 21/22/23/24**

Services 21-24 operate along the following routes:

- 21/22 - Newbury via Woolton Hill and Burgholere (36 journeys a week)
- 23/24 - Newbury via Sydmonton, Burgholere, Ecchinswell and Bishops Green (13 journeys a week)

The services have a (joint) cost of £3.37 per passenger trip versus an average of £3.72. Passenger trips p.a. were (21/22 - 12,893), (23/24 - 3,182). When considering consultation responses, key uses of the service were mixed (work, shopping) on 21/22 and mainly shopping on 23/24 (from 12 survey respondents). Most on the 23/24 service paid concessionary fares, but there was a more equal split of cash/concessionary fares on the 21/22 service. There were mixed ages on 21/22 but service users were mainly over 55yrs on the 23/24 service and on all services approximately 10% were disabled service users.

**Option 1 - Retender on existing basis**

Neutral impact.

**Option 2 - Retain 21/22 and extend to Sydmonton and Ecchinswell (ceasing 23/24)**

Potential negative impact on older residents (23/24 users) living in smaller settlements on 23/24 route no longer covered. However, the Dial-A-Ride and Neighbourcare services cover some of these areas which may mitigate some of the impacts. The only issue is that these are available on a less frequent basis.

**Option 3 - Retain 21/22 and operate 23/24 as ‘call and go’ service (potential frequency 3 trips per day, 6 days per week or 3 trips, 2 days per week).**

No adverse impact on existing users, just inconvenienced by less frequent service.

**Evening Services Pilot**

This is being proposed on a pilot basis and represents positive changes as these are additional services. The survey highlighted a strong desire for the return of evening services within Basingstoke and Deane and as a result there is a proposal to run a pilot to test actual take up.

Early discussions with Stagecoach mirrored the survey feedback regarding which routes would be best to pilot which would operate for not less than nine months with a review after
six months to consider whether this will be established as an on-going service. Focus groups comprising town centre employers and residents will assist in developing schedules for the pilot which will be informed by public consultation responses.

This proposal is positive for all protected characteristic groups, by extending the availability of a bus service in high usage areas beyond 21.00/21.30 hrs. It would have a particularly positive impact on people who work late evenings/nights and people who want to go out later in the evening. No negative impacts are identified.

**Justification**
The following options will be considered in Stage 2 due to the fact that they have been identified as having a potentially differential negative impact on older/disabled service users:

**Whitchurch Community Bus**
- Option 1 - Terminate route and approach Whitchurch Neighbourcare to support passengers

**Stratfield Saye Shopper Service**
- Option 1 - Terminate service 154 without replacement (Taxi shares remain)
- Option 2 - Replace service 154 and both taxi shares with circular route.

**Services 21/22/23/24**
- Option 2 - Retain 21/22 and extend to Sydmonton and Ecchinswell (ceasing 23/24)

The other options assessed were noted as being positive or having a neutral impact on the protected characteristics groups, despite the potential reduction in the frequency of service in some instances.
Stage 5 – Summary Report

<table>
<thead>
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**Overview**

This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) considers the impact of potential changes to bus services and bus subsidies on the protected characteristics and other groups, in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). It is therefore necessary to assess future service options and consider mitigating actions where adverse impacts are identified. Information from this assessment will be included in the OSCOMM and Cabinet reports to inform Members and support decision-making.

The council is reviewing its expenditure (approximately £630,000) on public transport to seek on-going savings, understand perceptions of service delivery and ensure delivery meets needs. The review includes over 20 services but the initial report (and this assessment) considers:

- Whitchurch Community Bus
- Stratfield Saye Shopper (Service 154)
- Taxi shares for Stony Heath and Old Basing (considered as one with the above)
- Services 21/22/23/24
- An evening services pilot

**Details of assessment and key findings**

Case studies for each of the above services and consultation results to date were assessed to identify any impacts upon the protected characteristic groups. The following options were identified as having a potentially negative impact on older and disabled service users:

**Whitchurch Community Bus**

- Option 1 - Terminate route and approach Whitchurch Neighbourcare to support passengers. Although relatively low in number, most service users are older people and a problem with this proposal is that the Neighbourcare scheme does not accept concessionary fares as payment. When considering the needs of disabled passengers, 37% of consultation respondents were disabled and Neighbourcare scheme vehicles are not guaranteed to have wheelchair access as they use private, non-adapted cars.

**Stratfield Saye Shopper Service**

- Option 1 - Terminate Service 154 without replacement (Taxi shares remain). Negative effect on the few (estimated at 10 - 20) older people accessing Service 154 as no other public transport exists in this area. However, this service was noted to be used primarily for shopping purposes. Retaining the Taxi share service aspect of this option would provide no adverse effect for those passengers.
• Option 2 – Replace Service 154 and both taxi shares with circular route. This provides a positive impact giving access for Stratfield Saye (and surrounding area) users to Basingstoke and by increasing the ‘footprint’ of service/increasing. The negative impact for all users, all of whom are older, is that the service would be less frequent and may not reach every settlement covered by the current taxi shares.

Services 21/22/23/24
• Option 2 - Retain 21/22 and extend to Sydmonton and Ecchinswell (ceasing 23/24). This has a potential negative impact on older residents (23/24 users) living in smaller settlements on 23/24 route no longer covered.

A potential mitigating factor for all of the above options is that Dial-A-Ride services cover all of these areas and Neighbourcare services also cover all areas apart from Stratfield Saye. The only issue is that these are available on a less frequent basis.

Other options considered as part of the forthcoming consultation have also been assessed in this EIA and were noted as being positive or having a neutral impact on the protected characteristics groups, despite the potential reduction in frequency of some services. These include:

Whitchurch Community Bus
• Option 2 – Operate the route as a taxi-share scheme. A taxi share scheme operates on a fixed route, with fixed price and can accept concessionary fares. Indicative costs are high limiting its viability but this option would mitigate any negative issues for older/disabled users following the demise of the existing provision.

• Option 3 - Revise existing route and expand to Basingstoke/Andover on a commercial basis. This option maintains/improves the existing service and as such provides positive impacts for all of its users by offering more options for travel. Any suggested fare increases are unlikely to affect passengers as almost all use concessionary passes.

Services 21/22/23/24
• Option 1 - Retender on existing basis. Neutral impact.

• Option 3 - Retain 21/22 and operate 23/24 as ‘call and go’ service (potential frequency 3 trips per day, 6 days per week or 3 trips, 2 days per week. No adverse impact on existing users, just inconvenienced by less frequent service.

Evidence used to draw conclusions and summary of consultation/research results
Evidence used
• Data on numbers of passenger trips
• Initial survey research, including numbers of concessionary pass holders, age profile, disability and profile, reasons for use, access needs and general improvements that could be made. Initial survey undertaken on-line, by leaflet (10,000 copies) and face to face, providing 1,600 responses overall, in addition to other ‘desk’ research and benchmarking exercises undertaken. To raise awareness of the review information was provided to the Basingstoke and Deane Area Passenger Transport Forum, Over 55’s Forum, Basingstoke Multicultural Forum and the Basingstoke Disability Forum.
• A four week public consultation begins on 15 November 2013 to consider options included in this assessment. The three sets of services (and options) noted will be promoted in separate consultation documents distributed to various community points (community centres, post offices, key shops, parish councils) in the areas in question and will also be available online. Leaflets for the Service 154/taxi share services will be directly mailed to all registered users of the two taxi share schemes. A press release will be produced and a general promotional item included in Basingstoke and Deane Today (December edition).

Summary of research and consultation results:

• **Whitchurch Community Bus** - service has few users (virtually all older, using concessionary fares, significant proportion disabled) and is high cost per trip, consultation results showed that medical trips represented 25% of use

• **Service 154** - service has few users (virtually all older, concessionary fares), consultation results showed that the main use is shopping

• **Taxi Shares** – (Stony Heath) relatively low use and no survey feedback. (Old Basing) higher usage, consultation results showed that users were older people mostly using concessionary fares, a significant proportion were disabled people and medical trips represent 26% of use

• **Services 21/22/23/24** – average overall cost per trip but lower use on 23/24.
  Key results were:
  (21/22) mixed use, more equal split of cash and concessionary fares, mixed age of users, small number of disabled users
  (23/24) mainly shopping use, most concessionary fares, most users over 55yrs of age, small number of disabled users

Recommendations for action

• Any potential changes must be communicated clearly, using a variety of communication methods, and well in advance of implementation. Contact details should be provided for people who have concerns, queries or need specialist support.

• Consultation on the options to ensure that service users that are affected have their say and inform final decisions taken. The results of this second consultation will further assessed for equalities implications when the results have been collated.

• Possible evening services pilot - focus groups comprising town centre employers and residents to assist in developing schedules for the pilot and be informed by public consultation responses.

• To consider the possibility of future monitoring of the characteristics of service users, for example through concessionary fare usage information.