Impact Assessment

Devon County Council

Impact Assessment completed by:	**Responsible officer:**
Name/Job Title:	Name/Job Title:
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Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:
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1.   Background

1.1   Name of the policy or practice:

Public and community transport budget reductions - affecting:

 - financial support for local bus services and Fare Cars which would not otherwise operate, particularly in the evenings and on Sundays, services to schools and colleges for students not statutorily entitled to County Council-assisted school transport, including fares for post-16 students, services for tourism and leisure, services in rural areas and other less well-used services or parts of services;

- discretionary elements of the concessionary bus travel scheme, including exclusion of certain categories of service, selective relaxation of start time for free travel and charges for replacing lost passes;

- financial support for some rail services over and above the franchise requirement;

- financial support for community transport services, particularly Ring & Ride for frail elderly people and people with disabilities, local car-based lift-giving schemes, Shopmobility services;

- provision of bus travel information through printed material, roadside displays and on-line;

1.2   Purpose of the policy or practice:

Requirement to meet reduced DCC budgets in 2014/2017, this being the response to reduced Government funding, based on processes followed.

1.3   Intended benefits:

This assessment will focus on the outcomes of the possible service changes and reductions and different forms of service provision arising from the reduced expenditure.

Aims:

- to continue to support public and community transport within a reduced budget. No major change of policy but emerging priorities will have significant impacts whilst seeking to minimize negative effects of changes, maximize value for money and either reduce or remove support for some activities and increasingly promote and

rely on commercial provision. Some continuation of service reduction strategy implemented in April 2011;

- to continue to meet statutory obligations on concessionary bus travel.

1.4 **Overlap with other policies, services etc:**

Sustainable communities;

Public Health;

Access to learning opportunities;

Youth opportunities;

Access to employment;

Equal Opportunities;

Social Care;

Libraries;

Highways;

Cross-sector added costs, such as NHS costs, benefits paid by Employment Service.

1.5 **The following stakeholders have been involved in this assessment:**
DCC consulted key stakeholders including bus companies and community transport groups.

2. Analysis

2.1. Economic impacts

Mark an 'X' in the box to confirm which of the following are relevant and will be analysed further.		If not relevant, please explain why not.
☒	Impact on knowledge and skills.	
☒	Impact on employment levels.	
☒	Impact on local business.	

2.1.1 **Positive:**

Restricting people's ability to travel may have some limited positive impact on local shops and services, where they exist. Some people may use other methods to travel e.g. taxis to access work and services, which could stimulate local economy. Some people may learn to drive.

2.1.2 **Negative:**

Removal of travel provision or increased cost of travel to school for those not entitled to County Council-assisted school transport. Consequent reduction in choice and access to educational opportunities and preparation for employment.

Increased cost of travel to post-16 colleges. Consequent impact on the fulfilment of the policy of raising the age of participation in education, training or employment.

Reduced opportunities for travel to work, particularly seasonal, part-time and shift work. 27% of bus journeys in Devon are to and from work (Passenger Focus Survey 2012); 19% of Devon residents are in a household without a car; many others have no access to the household car for long periods during the day e.g. a parent with a child whilst the other parent is at work.

Reduced travel options and consequent reduced potential for workforce recruitment. Greener Journeys research (July 2013) recorded 56% of jobseekers are reliant on the bus for employment, 6.5% of respondents had left a job due to inadequate bus services, 11.6% had turned down a job and 18% had been deterred from applying for a job. Same research indicated a statistically significant link between local employment levels and transport provision. Independent research for Devon County Council (spring 2014) showed that 51% of supported service users have an income below £10,000 a year. A further 32% have an income of between £10,000 and £20,000.

Reduced opportunities for shopping journeys and consequent reduced spend in town centres. 30% of bus journeys in Devon are for shopping (Passenger Focus Survey, 2012)

Using Government figures relating to the socio-economic value of bus journeys (Department for Transport, March 2013), based on 2012/2013 passenger numbers on subsidized bus services in Devon and levels of DCC financial support, each £1 in DCC financial support for buses is worth £2.40 to the local economy.

Based on the annual spend survey (Devon County Council 2013), each £1 of DCC grant to community-based Ring & Ride services, combined with similar levels of income from other sources, generates £7.06 spending in local shops

County Council funding for Community Transport draws in match funding to the schemes. Any change in County Council funding has an impact on District and Parish Council contributions and therefore on the viability of services.

Reduction or withdrawal of County Council funding for Shopmobility could lead to the withdrawal of the service in some towns. This could impact on the ability of less mobile individuals and restrict their opportunity to access town centre facilities and services. Shopmobility users contributed an estimated £885,449 into the Devon economy during 2013 (Devon County Council 2013). This equates to £21.48 for every £1 of grant funding invested by Devon County Council.

Significant loss of County Council contracted work could lead to Bus Operating Companies becoming unviable, with a subsequent impact on local jobs.

Removal of support and consequent withdrawal of bus services for tourists likely to affect viability of local attractions and shops. Removal of support for those Shopmobility schemes which cater mostly for visitors could also impact on this sector.

The cost of car ownership is often prohibitive for young people, for whom car ownership and take-up of driving licences is falling. The lack of travel options reduces the chances for young people to access employment, training and other services.

Removal of support for evening bus services inhibits development of night-time economy. It also restricts the ability of people without a car to seek shift work.

Removal of support for Sunday services inhibits the ability of people to seek employment where shift working is required and for staff to travel to work e.g. retail workers. Also reduces shop revenues. Removal of Sunday services may also impact on level of spending within leisure services.

Some communities are likely to have their last bus or public transport service withdrawn, leaving anyone who does not have access to a car isolated.

2.2 Environmental impacts
2.2.1

Mark an 'X' in the box to confirm which of the following are relevant and will be analysed further.	If not relevant, please explain why not.
☐ Reduce waste, and send less waste to landfill.	Not related to waste
☐ Conserve and enhance biodiversity (the variety of living species).	Not relevant to transport
☒ Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape.	Public transport does not directly impact on physical geographical features but it can reduce the impact of car numbers accessing the countryside.
☒ Conserve and enhance the quality and character of our built environment and public spaces.	No direct impact from public transport, but bus services reduce the numbers of people travelling by car to towns.
☒ Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage.	May be some impact through reduced visitor numbers
☒ Minimise greenhouse gas emissions.	Increasing bus usage and reducing car usage helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions (CO_2)
☒ Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise).	Increasing bus usage and reducing car usage helps reduce air pollution from exhausts
☐ Contribute to reducing water consumption.	No direct impact from public transport
☒ Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level).	Increasing bus usage and reducing car usage leads to reduced greenhouse gas emissions and thereby assists resilience to the future effects of climate change

☐	Other (please state below)	

2.2.2 **Positive:**

Fewer buses may improve some perceptions of air quality but in reality would be negated by increased car traffic.

2.2.3 **Negative:**

Displaced bus passengers may transfer to private car travel. In particular, reduction or withdrawal of services in urban areas and on inter-urban corridors is likely to lead to increased traffic congestion - with consequent increase in carbon footprint, noise pollution, worsening air quality and greater contribution to climate change.

Car use in England and Wales has declined by 2% since 2001 (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, 2013). Reduced public transport services make further decline less likely.

Carbon Dioxide emissions from the United Kingdom transport sector fell by 1.2% in 2012 (Government Committee on Climate Change, 2013). Further progress relies on the role of public transport.

2.3 Social impacts

Mark an 'X' in the box to confirm which characteristics are relevant and will be analysed further.		If not relevant, please explain why not.
☒	Age	Factors such as age have an impact on people's access to transport. Younger and older people are more likely to use public transport
☒	Disability	Low floor/ easy access buses and community transport provision impact on the ability of people with disabilities to access services. People who are temporarily unable to use their car e.g. through ill-health or injury
☒	Gender/Sex (men and women)	Women are less likely to hold a driving licence so are more reliant on access to public transport.
☐	Marriage and civil partnership	Not affected by public transport provision - although increased connectivity from public transport increases social interaction and reduces personal isolation.
☒	Pregnancy and maternity	Access to pre and post natal care, particularly from rural areas

☒	Race/ethnicity	Access to cultural/peer groups. Rurally isolated communities
☒	Religion/belief	Access to faith establishments and groups
☒	Sexual orientation	Access to support networks
☒	Trans-gender/gender identity	Access to support networks
☒	Other (e.g. socio-economic, general health and wellbeing, geographic communities, human rights, safeguarding)	Bus travel is an "Active Travel" mode and helps provide exercise through walking to either end of the journey and through access to activities, sport, healthy lifestyles, healthy food and health appointments. Bus Travel is an essential travel mode, often the only travel mode, for many on low incomes and for job-seekers.

Low-income groups

Households with no car

Individuals within car-owning households who do not drive or have access to the household's car (lifts are unlikely to meet the many different travel needs of most people

Factors such as old age, disability, gender and possibly ethnicity have an impact on people's likely access to a car.

2.3.1 **Positive:**

There may be an increase in local walking to facilities where these are relatively close-by, which may give some health benefits. This is likely to be negated by the reduction in walking for those who have used buses who can no longer do so.

There may be an increase in social interaction within the local area due to people making greater use of local facilities including by car-sharing.

2.3.2 **Negative:**

Recent independent research on County Council supported bus services (, May/June 2014) indicates that 73% of passengers have no sustainable alternative to using the bus. The research suggests that the more rural the service, the greater the level of dependency among passengers. Dependency exists irrespective of the frequency of travel.

Older people and people with disabilities have greater reliance on public transport. 24% of bus passengers in Devon have some disability; 45% of bus passengers are National Bus Pass-holders, i.e. people of pensionable age or with a disability. (Passenger Focus Survey 2012). These groups are more likely to rely on public transport for journeys to health appointments, shops, religious ceremonies and social activities.

Removal of most pre-0930 free travel for National Bus Pass-holders means some pass-holders may be deterred from travel but will not be isolated since they can either travel later or pay a fare before 0930.

Excluding some services from the National Bus Pass scheme (such as Service 302 summer Sundays) may discourage some social activity.

The number of people in England diagnosed with dementia has risen by 62% over seven years. In 2013-14, 344,000 people received a diagnosis up from 213,000 in 2006-07 when statistics were first collected. According to the Health and Social Care Information Centre, the rise could be due to several factors including an ageing population as well as improved diagnosis. The Alzheimer's Society claim that half of the people living with dementia are still not registered as having the condition. (Research published 30th July 2014: Quality Outcomes Framework, Recorded Dementia Diagnoses – 2013-14, Provisional Statistics).

Research published in 2013 found that 6% of adults in the UK consider themselves to be lonely 'all or most of the time', with a further 21% 'sometimes' lonely (C.Victor and K. Yang: The Prevalence of Loneliness Among Adults: A Case Study of the United Kingdom", The Journal of Psychology 2012). Over a quarter – or 3.1 million people aged over 65 – say that they often go for more than a week without seeing any friends, family, or neighbours. Age UK estimates the prevalence of loneliness in older people at around 30%.

Loneliness is also an issue for younger generations: in 2010, 11% of people aged 35–54 and 12% of people aged 18–34 described themselves as 'often lonely'. (J. Griffin: The Lonely Society, London Mental Health Foundation 2010)

Women are less likely to hold a driving licence. Reductions in school-time buses may impact on women with young children who are more likely to be assisting children to get to school. They will also have reduced access to work, volunteering and training opportunities.

19% of entire households do not have use of a car. 47% of bus passengers in Devon say they have no option but to use the bus (Passenger Focus Survey, 2012)

27% of bus passengers in Devon say they do not use the bus more due to cost (Passenger Focus Survey, 2012)

Link between local employment levels and transport provision has a more concentrated effect on younger age groups (Greener Journeys Research, July 2013)

Transport poverty in rural areas is a greater problem for residents than fuel poverty (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2010). Reducing rural bus services will increase the need to run a car, even when unaffordable, for many people.

Rurally isolated communities have less choice of affordable food shopping, which entails greater expense.

Isolation exists in urban as well as rural communities. Reduction or withdrawal of town bus services leaves some housing estates isolated from their nearest shopping and other services.

Younger people use cars less and travel by public transport more than the middle-aged. Young people make significantly fewer car journeys than in the past. In the mid-1990's, the average young person took almost 600 car journeys each year; that figure decreased to 377 trips in 2011. Some 48% of 17 to 20-year-olds held a

driving licence in the early 1990's; today 38% of 17 to 20-year-olds hold a driving licence (Passenger Transport in Isolated Communities, July 2014)

Young people's social horizons may be restricted due to removal of support for services to schools of choice, increase in fares to college (for post-16 students) or removal of support for evening services.

Passenger transport is essential for unemployed people, because it allows them both to sign on at a jobcentre and to look for work. That is a particular concern in urban areas, because some 77% of jobseekers in British cities outside London do not have regular access to a car, van or motorbike. More widely, two out of five jobseekers cited lack of transport as a barrier to finding work. A recent Joseph Rowntree Foundation study found that while 70% to 90% of unfilled low-skilled job vacancies were easily accessible by car, only 35% to 55% could be reached within 30 minutes by public transport. (Passenger Transport in Isolated Communities, July 2014)

Low-income families are more dependent than others on bus travel. People in the lowest income quintile make three times more journeys by bus than people in the highest income quintile. (Passenger Transport in Isolated Communities, July 2014)

Passenger transport allows disabled people to access employment and community and family life. Some 60% of disabled people have no car in the household, and disabled people use buses about 20% more frequently than the non-disabled population. (Passenger Transport in Isolated Communities, July 2014)

People's access to counselling and advice services on personal and health issues may be restricted.

Reduction or withdrawal of Shopmobility funding could result in the closure of the service in some towns. This may affect some residents and visitors with mobility difficulties, by reducing their access to town centre facilities and services.

Arguably, there may be less social impact on Devon residents by removing support from transport services for accessing leisure and from those Shopmobility services which cater mostly for visitors, rather than accessing health, shopping and essential services.

The ability to access services and have social interaction is valuable in maintaining good mental health and wellbeing.

The implications of isolation and loneliness on health and wellbeing are increasingly well-known. One particularly startling finding is that loneliness is as bad for physical health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day or moderate alcohol abuse (Holt-Lunstad et al: Social Relationships and Mortality Risk – A Meta-analytic review 2010). Loneliness has also been shown to increase the risks of high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease and onset of disability and dementia.

The people who rely heavily on the bus tend to be those in lower socio-economic groups for whom the prevention agenda is seeking to improve their opportunities to work and live more independent and healthy lives.

2.3.4 **Neutral impacts:**

None identified

2.4   **Combined Impacts**

2.4.1 **Linkages or conflicts between social, environmental and economic impacts:**

Reduced public transport would work against the prevention agenda, which aims to increase independence and employment amongst those people in society who have a greater dependence on benefits and care through a lack of independence;

Public health improvement policies, through reduced ability to travel to health appointments and through making active lifestyles more difficult for those who rely on the bus;

The local economy, through the connectivity that buses provide for rural workers and in providing connectivity between the skills of the rural workforce and the needs of Devon businesses which are often rural based SMEs (Small and Medium sized Enterprises);

Youth opportunities, by taking away the ability to access opportunities for young people in rural areas;

Sustainable Communities, a community where a significant proportion of residents are unable to travel freely, where they need bus services to do so, will struggle to be "sustainable";

Air quality, congestion and car dependence; through increasing car dependence.

2.4.2 '**Social Value' of planned commissioned/procured services: How will the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area be improved through what is being proposed? And how, in conducting the process of procurement, might that improvement be secured?**

No improvements. Social Value will be made significantly worse under these proposals.

3. Improvements and changes

3.1 **The following changes will be made to the policy or practice as a result of this impact assessment:**

Potential service reductions are based on an analysis of financial support cost per passenger trip according to permitted maximum thresholds. Differential thresholds apply, in particular allowing a higher threshold for services covering less frequent services which operate predominantly in rural areas. The thresholds are not set arbitrarily, nor even purely with available budget in mind, but rather with the ideal of spreading resources to maintain as much as possible of our current geographical network coverage.

The guideline thresholds are currently £2.50 for daily services; £4.00 for journeys to work; £6.00 for less than daily services (maximum twice-weekly); £8.00 for a last remaining weekly link; £1.50 for town services; £1.50 for services in the evenings and on Sundays. A bigger budget reduction requires these thresholds to be lowered. Protecting one service category (e.g. work journeys) means giving less protection to another.

The differential thresholds reflect a degree of priority to services which are most likely to benefit people in the vulnerable groups, particularly since rural isolation compounds the socio-economic disadvantages of these groups. Journeys to work are also given some priority.

The subsidy per passenger trips thresholds also mean that better used services are least likely to be reduced. The County Council thereby reduces the number of people affected by service reductions.

As a result of this assessment, further work will be done to seek ways of making savings by means other than removing services. This will include management and administrative efficiencies, seeking best value from innovative and more open methods of tendering for transport contracts, reviewing reimbursement of bus companies for acceptance of the National Bus Pass, avoiding duplication of services, revising services (including reduction of services which have very low usage), encouraging commercial initiative by transport operators, testing alternative means of providing services, increasing fares and charges.

It is also proposed to continue to focus on priorities - with the most important being essential travel for work and shopping, travel for health appointments by the most cost-effective means and less priority given to services for leisure and tourism.

However, as the need for savings increases it becomes less possible to protect essential travel.

The aim is to keep the National Bus Pass scheme in line with the statutory requirement supplemented only by the most important discretionary extensions - namely the companion pass and the relaxation of the 0930 start time on rural buses where there is no other bus. The possibility of removing these two extensions has been specifically ruled out in view of the hardship that would be caused e.g. people in rural areas whose only bus leaves before 0930 would have no service.

The reduction or withdrawal of funding support for the Shopmobility schemes will require the service operators to reassess service provision. It may still be possible for the service to be provided with reduced funding, although alternative funding may have to be sought or service delivery costs may need to be reduced.

3.2   **The following changes cannot be made:**

The County Council's actions comply with its duty under Section 63 of the Transport Act 1985 as amended by Section 68 (2) of the Local Transport Act 2008, together with the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007 and the Travel Concessions (Eligible Services) (Amendment) Order 2002 (updated) and 2009. Service reductions can not be avoided if the budget reductions required by Government are to be achieved. Some adverse impact on vulnerable groups is inevitable. There is likely to be significant disruption to and opposition from stakeholders, significant service disruption and customer opposition. There may be a threat of legal action.

3.3   **How will you monitor the actual impacts of recommendations/decisions?**

Financially supported bus usage and levels of service are continuously reviewed. We also seek feedback from town and parish councils, county, district and parish councillors and members of the public and those groups identified in the impact assessment.

We work with bus companies to ensure services - both commercial and supported - are kept under review and operate as effectively as possible. Public and Community Transport operators are required to supply regular financial and service user information.

4.   Risks

The combined risks are as follows.

Inherent risk (mark an **X** in one box).

*The risk **without** actions, improvements and changes made.*

Severity			Rare 1	Unlikely 2	Possible 3	Likely 4	Almost certain 5
	Catastrophic	5	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Major	4	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Moderate	3	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Minor	2	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Negligible	1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Likelihood (in a 5 year timeframe)

Current risk (mark an **X** in one box).

*The risk **with** all actions, improvements and changes (detailed in section 3) in place.*

Severity			Rare 1	Unlikely 2	Possible 3	Likely 4	Almost certain 5
	Catastrophic	5	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Major	4	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Moderate	3	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Minor	2	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Negligible	1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Likelihood (in a 5 year timeframe)