

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

(Revised March 2021)

Please refer to the current Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this document. If you would like further guidance please contact the Diversity and Inclusion Team on 01443 444529.

An equality impact assessment **must** be undertaken at the outset of any proposal to ensure robust evidence is considered in decision making. This documentation will support the Council in making informed, effective and fair decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010.

This document will also contribute towards our duties to create a More Equal Wales within the

- Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015.

The [‘A More Equal Wales – Mapping Duties’](#) guide highlights the alignment of our duties in respect of the above-mentioned legislation.

SECTION 1 – PROPOSAL DETAILS

Lead Officer: Geraint Roberts

Service Director: Stephen Williams

Service Area: Transportation

Date: 26/2/2024

1.a) What are you assessing for impact?

Strategy/Plan	Service Re-Model/Discontinuation of Service	Policy/Procedure	Practice	Information/Position Statement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.b) What is the name of the proposal?

Review of the Council's Home to School Transport Policy

1.c) Please provide an overview of the proposal providing any supporting links to reports or documents.

A new Home to School Transport Policy, namely providing mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary school, secondary school and college transport in line with relevant statutory distance criteria, which would be implemented from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year. However, it should be noted that it is not proposed to amend the discretionary elements of Additional Learning Needs, (ALN), transport - distance criteria for ALN Transport will not change.

An alternative option for Cabinet to consider has arisen following feedback from the public consultation and an analysis of the Equalities Impact Assessment and Welsh Language Impact Assessment. This option would maintain the discretionary element of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith). Transport provision to all secondary schools and colleges (English, Welsh, and Faith) would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Welsh Government's Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.

1.d) Please outline where delivery of this proposal is affected by legislation or other drivers such as code of practice.

The Welsh Government’s Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 sets out the current statutory duties of Local Authorities with regard to the provision of home to school transport. Statutory guidance is also provided by the Welsh Government in the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance – June 2014.

1.e) Please outline who this proposal affects:

- Service users
- Employees
- Wider community

SECTION 2 – SCREENING TEST – IS A FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?

Screening is used to determine whether the initiative has positive, negative or neutral impacts upon protected groups. Where negative impacts are identified for protected groups then a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Please provide as much detail as possible of how the proposal will impact on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups. Please take an intersectional approach in recognising an individual may have more than one protected characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Age (<i>Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people</i>)	Negative	The proposals will affect children and young people of school age, and their	Current passenger information.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>families/carers, in the county borough.</p> <p>The proposal will affect 305 primary school pupils and 2,370 secondary school and college pupils (based on February 2024 passenger data).</p> <p>Overall, this proposal will impact approximately 29% of pupils that currently receive school transport.</p> <p>The alternative option proposed in section 14 of the cabinet report would help towards mitigating this negative impact.</p>	<p>A walking route is considered to be available if it is safe for the learner to walk the route alone or, if appropriate for the age of the learner, accompanied by an appropriate adult. Pupils of primary age would not be considered appropriate to walk a route unaccompanied.</p>
<p>Disability <i>(people with visible and non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions)</i></p>	<p>Negative</p>	<p>Children and young people who have a disability or additional learning need attending mainstream education would be assessed individually for transport on a discretionary basis. Children attending one of the special schools within the county borough are not considered as part of these proposals, so there is no change to their current provision.</p>	<p>Current passenger information and Council policy.</p> <p>Whilst pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) are assessed by distance criteria, in practice SEN pupils would not be affected by this proposed policy change as their transport is based upon their</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>The Council's school transport policy states that free transport to and from school may be provided on medical grounds e.g. chronic illness or temporary incapacity for short but continuous periods. This is not subject to change under the proposals.</p> <p>There is some indicative evidence to suggest that this proposal may have a bigger impact, or present increased pressures on parents with disabilities or long-term health issues, especially where they have children of primary school age.</p> <p>The alternative option proposed in section 14 of the cabinet report would mitigate this negative impact.</p>	<p>individual need. The discretionary elements of SEN transport (pre-school, post 16, etc.) would continue.</p> <p>A walking route is considered to be available if it is safe for the learner to walk the route alone or, if appropriate for the age of the learner, accompanied by an appropriate adult. Pupils of primary age would not be considered appropriate to walk a route unaccompanied.</p>
<p>Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they</i></p>	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest that children and young people who are transgender or gender neutral will be disproportionately impacted by the proposals.	The proposal is to provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport above statutory

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<i>were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)</i>			distance only, regardless of gender.
Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i>	Neutral	No impact	The proposals will affect children and young people of school age in the county borough.
Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant/on maternity leave)</i>	Neutral	No impact.	The proposals will affect children and young people of school age in the county borough. The Council will continue to offer transport on medical grounds where deemed appropriate by medical practitioners.
Race <i>(ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)</i>	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based on race or ethnicity.	The proposal is to provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only, regardless of race or ethnicity.
Religion or Belief	Neutral	Learners attending the faith schools (primary and secondary) will maintain	The proposal is to provide mainstream English, Welsh

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<i>(people with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs)</i>		<p>home to school transport under the proposed statutory walking distances providing the faith school is determined to be their nearest available school.</p> <p>Pupils generally travel further to Faith/Welsh Medium schools, although the proposed changes will be applied equally to English and Welsh medium education provision as Faith education.</p>	<p>and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only, regardless of religion or belief.</p>
Sex <i>(women and men, girls and boys)</i>	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based on sex.	The proposal is to provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only, regardless of sex.
Sexual Orientation <i>(bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight)</i>	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based on sexual orientation.	The proposal is to provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport above statutory

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			distance only, regardless of sexual orientation.

In addition, due to Council commitments made to the following groups of people we would like you to consider impacts upon them:

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Armed Forces Community <i>(anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)</i>	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based on whether a member a member of the Armed Forces Community or not.	The proposal is to provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only, regardless of whether a member of the Armed Forces Community or not.
Carers <i>(anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)</i>	Negative	Whilst it is not wholly possible to qualify the extent of the impact on Carers, (i.e. whom they are providing care for and how they are providing caring responsibilities), it is nevertheless acknowledged	The proposal is to provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only, regardless of whether a Carer or not.

		<p>that existing data suggests that the proposed policy change will affect 19 out of a total of 171 registered young carers.</p> <p>The alternative option proposed in section 14 of the cabinet report may mitigate this negative impact.</p>	
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If the initial screening test has identified negative impacts then a full equality impact assessment (section 4) **must** be undertaken. However, if after undertaking the above screening test you determine a full equality impact assessment is not relevant please provide an adequate explanation below:

N/A

Are you happy you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision?

Yes

No

Name: Geraint Roberts

Position: Integrated Transport Manager

Date: 26/2/2024

Please forward a copy of this completed screening form to the Diversity and Inclusion Team.

PLEASE NOTE – there is a separate impact assessment for Welsh Language. This must also be completed for proposals.

Section 3 Socio-economic Duty needs only to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. Definition of a 'strategic nature' is available on page 6 of the [Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty](#) Welsh Government Guidance.

SECTION 3 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY (STRATEGIC DECISIONS ONLY)

The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services.

Please consider these additional vulnerable groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Students
- Single adult households

- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales
- People with low literacy and numeracy
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People misusing substances
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People involved in the criminal justice system

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Low Income/<u>Income Poverty</u> <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i>	Negative	<p>There is some indicative evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based on low income or in income poverty.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that there will be some families that will not be able to afford the appropriate clothing and footwear to be able to undertake longer walking journeys.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that there will be additional financial cost to parents / guardians should they decide to transport their child(ren) to school at their own expense.</p>	<p>The proposals will affect children and young people of school age in the county borough.</p> <p>A number of comments receive through the public consultation highlighted impacts on socio-economic factors, including the affordability of appropriate clothing that is suitable for all weather conditions.</p>
Low and / or No Wealth <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i>	Neutral	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based on low and/or no wealth.</p> <p>However, it is acknowledged that there will be additional financial cost to parents / guardians should they decide to transport their child(ren) to school at their own expense.</p>	<p>The proposals will affect children and young people of school age in the county borough.</p>

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<u>Material Deprivation</u> <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i>	Neutral	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based material deprivation.</p> <p>However, it is acknowledged that there will be additional financial cost to parents / guardians should they decide to transport their child(ren) to school at their own expense.</p>	The proposals will affect children and young people of school age in the county borough

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<u>Area Deprivation</u> <i>(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport))</i>	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based on area deprivation.	The proposals will affect children and young people of school age across the county borough
Socio-economic background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i>	Negative	<p>There is some indicative evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based on socio-economic background.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that this proposal may have a bigger impact, or present increased pressures on single parents or working families, especially where they have children of primary school age.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that there will be additional financial cost to parents / guardians should they decide to transport their child(ren) to school at their own expense.</p> <p>The alternative option proposed in section 14 of the cabinet report would mitigate this negative impact.</p>	<p>The proposals will affect children and young people of school age in the county borough.</p> <p>A walking route is considered to be available if it is safe for the learner to walk the route alone or, if appropriate for the age of the learner, accompanied by an appropriate adult. Pupils of primary age would not be considered appropriate to walk a route unaccompanied.</p>
Socio-economic disadvantage	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate	The proposals will affect children and young people of

<p><i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i></p>		<p>impact upon learners based on socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>However, it is acknowledged that there will be additional financial cost to parents / guardians should they decide to transport their child(ren) to school at their own expense.</p>	<p>school age in the county borough</p>
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SECTION 4 – FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

You should use the information gathered at the screening stage to assist you in identifying possible negative/adverse impacts and clearly identify which groups are affected.

- 4.a) In terms of disproportionate/negative/adverse impacts that the proposal may have on a protected group, outline the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate the impact for each group identified. **Attach a separate action plan where impacts are substantial.**

Protected Characteristic - Age. The proposals will affect children and young people of school age in the county borough. The alternative option proposed in section 14 of the cabinet report would reduce this negative impact as it would maintain the discretionary element of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith).

Protected Characteristic - Disability. There is some indicative evidence to suggest that this proposal may have a bigger impact, or present increased pressures on parents with disabilities or long-term health issues, especially where they have children of primary school age. The alternative option proposed in section 14 of the cabinet report would mitigate this negative impact as it would maintain the discretionary element of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith).

Protected Characteristic - Carer. Whilst it is not wholly possible to qualify the extent of the impact on Carers, (i.e. whom they are providing care for and how they are providing caring responsibilities), it is nevertheless acknowledged that existing data suggests that the proposed policy change will affect 19 out of a total of 171 registered young carers. The alternative option proposed in section 14 of the cabinet report would mitigate this negative impact as it would maintain the discretionary element of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith).

- 4.b) If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.

N/A

- 4.c) Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning, in particular, the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users/staff.

Data used is school bus passenger information from February 2024.

- 4.d) Give details of how you engaged with service users/staff on the proposals and the steps taken to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group. Explain how you have used feedback to influence your decision.

A comprehensive public consultation exercise was conducted with all key stakeholders such as pupils, parents, carers, transport providers and Elected Members. The consultation originally ran from Monday 27th November 2023 until 5pm Monday 8th January 2024. Recognising the significance of the proposal for pupils who use and will use home to school transport now or in the future, the consultation was extended for a further three-week period, from Thursday 18th January until 5pm Thursday 8th February 2024. This period provided a further opportunity for those potentially impacted to take part in the consultation. In total the consultation therefore ran for a period of nine weeks.

The consultation had a dedicated page on the Council's consultation section of its website which provided details of the proposal and a link to the consultation survey. Consultees were also referred to the initial Equality and Welsh Language impact assessments considered by Cabinet prior to initiating the consultation exercise.

A 'frequently asked questions' sheet was developed to provide further information to consultees.

An email was sent to all schools who could be potentially impacted by the proposal to Headteachers and Chair of Governors to be forwarded on to all parents and carers. Further emails were sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation in the online survey, including public transport operators. School Councils, headteachers and school and college governors were also invited to submit their views on any proposed new policy.

Respondents were also given the option to write in using a dedicated email address HTSConsultation@rctcbc.gov.uk, and a telephone option was also in place through the Council's contact centre.

The Council held 8 public engagement events at venues throughout the County Borough, where officers were on hand to answer any questions on the proposal and encourage or assist people to take part in the survey.

The consultation was widely promoted in the Press and via social media including the Council's Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter) accounts.

Consultees were therefore able to respond to the consultation through various channels including an online survey/questionnaire, a dedicated consultation email address, a freepost postal address, a telephone option and providing feedback at the local engagement sessions.

The Council's YEPs team developed a young person's version of the proposal and shared with youth forum members. The consultation was undertaken by sharing relevant information with young people through a social media group for youth forum.

members and they were asked to complete a survey following this. The results of any consultation will be reported back to Cabinet in order for it to determine whether, and if so, how it wishes to progress with implementation of the proposed new policy.

4.e) Are you satisfied that the engagement process complies with the requirements of the Statutory Equality and Socio-economic Duties?

Yes

No

SECTION 5 – MONITORING AND REVIEW

5a) Please outline below how the implementation of the proposal will be monitored:

The implementation of the proposal will be monitored through reviewing the eligibility of pupils impacted. This will be done by reviewing the safety of walking routes to schools, and through assessing eligibility as a result of medical needs. Attendance levels at schools, and any impact as a result of the proposal will be periodically reviewed.

5b) When is the evaluation of the proposal due to be reviewed?

After the end of the first academic year (2025/26).

5c) Who is responsible for the monitoring and review of the proposal?

The Integrated Transport Unit and Education and Inclusion Services.

5d) How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals?

The results of the monitoring will determine whether further amendments of the Council's School Transport policy requires review to help meet it's statutory duties.

SECTION 6 – REVIEW

As part of the Impact Assessment process all proposals that fall within the definition of ‘Key Decisions’ must be submitted to the Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your proposal is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Decision please forward your impact assessment to Councilbusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for a Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. The EqlA guidance document provides more information on what a Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that you can demonstrate how you have considered equality and socio-economic outcomes. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below

Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
The review panel comments have been incorporated within this assessment.	7 th March 2024	Final decision to be made by Cabinet. Additional options for consideration as a result of the review have been included within the Cabinet Report.
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
The review panel comments have been incorporated within this assessment.	7 th March 2024	Final decision to be made by Cabinet. Additional options for consideration as a result of the review have been included within the Cabinet Report.

SECTION 6 – SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSAL

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment. This summary should be included in the equality and socio-economic impact section of the Cabinet report template. The impact assessment should be published alongside the report.

This assessment has found that there are three negative and eight neutral equality and diversity implications, based on protected characteristics, associated with the preferred option consulted upon. Furthermore, the assessment has found that there are two negative and four neutral socio-economic impacts. These risks could be mitigated by a range of actions as detailed in this report and with the alternative option explored in further detail at Section 14 of the cabinet report.

SECTION 7 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer: G ROBERTS

Name: GERAINT ROBERTS

Position: INTEGRATED TRANSPORT MANAGER

Date: 12/3/2024

I recommend that the proposal:

- Is implemented with no amendments
- Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
- Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on protected groups or socio-economic disadvantage

Head of Service/Director Approval: S WILLIAMS

Name: STEPHEN WILLIAMS

Position: DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS, STREETCARE, AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Date: 12th March 2024

Please submit this impact assessment with any SLT/Cabinet Reports.