

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the City of Vancouver's coat of arms. The crest is a shield divided into four quadrants. The top-left quadrant shows a sailing ship on wavy lines representing water. The top-right quadrant depicts a stag's head with large antlers. The bottom-left quadrant contains a beaver. The bottom-right quadrant shows a grizzly bear standing on its hind legs. Above the shield is a crown with four maple leaves. A banner at the bottom of the shield reads "CITY OF VANCOUVER".

## **Agenda Item 5**

### **Review of Transport Planning**

**Falkirk Council**

**Title: Review of Transport Planning**  
**Meeting: Executive**  
**Date: 28 November 2023**  
**Submitted By: Director of Place Services**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to make several recommendations following a review of Transport Planning to assist the Council to become more financially sustainable in the coming years.
- 1.2 The recommendations in this report, support the 2022-27 Falkirk Council Plan's strategic priority of supporting a thriving economy and green transition. They also support the Council Plan enabler of financial sustainability.

**2. Recommendations**

**2.1. It is recommended that Council Executive:**

- (1) notes the content of the report;
- (2) agrees to amalgamate Bus Services F2 and F29 from 1 April 2024;
- (3) agrees to introduce a trial demand responsive transport service in the Whitecross/Standburn/Wallacestone area from 1 April 2024;
- (4) agrees to withdraw the TaxiCard scheme from 1 April 2024;
- (5) agrees to introduce charges for Shopmobility from 1 April 2024;
- (6) notes the suggested Taxi/Private Hire Car Operator licence application fee changes and that these will be subject to a full public consultation;
- (7) agrees to retain the Dial-a-Journey service in its current form; and
- (8) agrees to retain the School Crossing Patrol service in its current form.

**3. Impact on Climate Change Targets**

- 3.1 Any withdrawal of supported bus services may lead to increased car use which could negatively impact on the Council's climate change targets. Mitigations in this report including amalgamating existing bus services and converting some bus services to demand responsive transport services to maintain public transport links to all settlements currently served by traditional

bus services. In addition, the use of smaller vehicles to provide demand responsive transport services will result in less emissions than a traditional bus service operating using larger vehicles and a fixed timetable.

#### **4. Background**

##### Local Bus Services - Update

- 4.1 Falkirk Council currently spends £1.182m per annum providing supported local bus services. This is a non-statutory function – bus services in Scotland operate in a deregulated commercial environment.
- 4.2 In June 2023, McGills advised Falkirk Council that they had undertaken a review of their commercial bus services and had identified a number of timetable revisions to improve punctuality, revisions to some service frequencies, revisions to bus routes and their intention to withdraw Service 6 (Falkirk to Tamfourhill) which they considered no longer be commercially viable. These changes took effect from 14 August 2023.
- 4.3 Due to the cost of replacing Service F6, and following cross-party discussions, the Transport Planning Unit negotiated with McGills to revise the current F14 (Falkirk to Middlefield) service, which allowed a two-hourly service to Tamfourhill to be provided. The change resulted in the frequency of service to Finistere Avenue/Kemper Avenue being reduced from hourly to two-hourly and due to the additional mileage, there is an additional cost of £0.008m per annum.
- 4.4 In June 2023, Prentice Westwood advised Falkirk Council that they were unable to continue providing the supported Service F1 operating between Linlithgow and Maddiston via Whitecross as it was no longer commercially viable. Prentice Westwood have operated this contract on behalf of Falkirk Council since August 2023 at a cost of £0.075m per annum. This service was due to cease operation in September 2023.
- 4.5 The Transport Planning Unit issued tenders in June 2023 to assess the cost of replacing Service F1 as is (Monday-Saturday, every 60 mins, 0900-1800).
- 4.6 In order to maintain a bus service to Whitecross, the Transport Planning Unit negotiated with Prentice Westwood to continue operating the current service until a long-term solution to providing cost-effective transport services could be implemented. The full-year cost of this arrangement is c£0.02m per annum. This would change from 1 April 2024 if the recommendations of this report were accepted.
- 4.7 Until 30 September 2023, West Lothian Council contributed 19.9% towards the cost of two supported services contracted by Falkirk Council (Service F45: Linlithgow-Bo'ness and Service F49: Linlithgow-Blackness-Bo'ness). This financial support equated to £0.039m per annum.
- 4.8 In June 2023, West Lothian Council advised Falkirk Council that due to budgetary pressures, they would cease their financial support for these services from 30 September 2023. To maintain the services this is costing the Council an additional £0.039m.

- 4.9 In September 2023, McGills announced that they were withdrawing all local bus services from the West Lothian Council area by the end of 2023 as they are not financially viable due to competition from other bus operators and rail services along with difficulties recruiting and retaining drivers. Whilst this does not impact any bus services operating into the Falkirk Council area, the recruitment and retention of bus drivers is a national issue and increases in wages to try to mitigate this problem have further increased cost pressures on operators.
- 4.10 Officers do not believe there is any current threat to bus services in the Falkirk Council area as a result of the decision that McGills have made in West Lothian Council area.
- 4.11 There has been a significant increase in the cost to the Council of providing supported bus services in recent years, which is due to several factors:
- A long-term decline in passenger numbers, exacerbated by Covid-19. Across Scotland, adult fare paying passengers are currently at c90% of pre-Covid-19 levels and concessionary passengers are currently at c80% of pre-Covid-19 levels (this includes over 60s, disabled and under 22s). It should be noted that the Under 22 scheme was introduced in January 2022 and whilst it has resulted in many journeys being made, this has not offset the steep decline in the overall number of journeys being made by other concessionary card holders. Prior to Covid-19, over 60s and disabled concessions accounted for c65% of journeys undertaken in the Falkirk Council area.
  - A rise in operational costs – fuel, energy, wages (inflationary pressure plus having to increase wages to mitigate industry wide driver shortages), insurance etc.
  - A rise in the cost of vehicles (particularly low/zero emission) and spare parts.
  - A reduction in funding for bus operators from Transport Scotland – the Network Support Grant Plus was withdrawn on 31 March 2023 which led to most major bus operators increasing fares and withdrawing services.
- 4.12 Prior to 2022, Falkirk Council previously tendered the supported bus service network in 2016. As a result of several service reductions and withdrawals due to budget reductions between 2016 and 2022 it is not possible to provide a direct assessment of the rise in costs, however for services which remained relatively unchanged, the overall cost increase from 2016 to 2022 was £0.25m (33% versus an inflation rate of 19% over the same period).
- 4.13 The Transport Planning Unit does not have budget to replace any commercial services that are withdrawn in future. The Unit will also be unable to maintain the current level of supported bus services going forward due to tender prices increasing significantly above the rate of inflation.

## **5. Considerations**

### **Local Bus Services and Local School Bus Services - Background**

- 5.1 Bus services in Scotland are deregulated and operate in a commercial marketplace - there is no statutory obligation for local authorities to provide bus services.

- 5.2 Commercial local bus services in the Falkirk Council area are primarily provided by McGills with some express coach services provided by Scottish Citylink and Stagecoach.
- 5.3 There is virtually no competition for local bus service contracts in the Falkirk Council area with many contracts only attracting one or two bidders.
- 5.4 Falkirk Council's "Policy for the Procurement of Public Transport Services" (May 2006) states that *"It will not be financially possible for the Council to accede to all identified needs for the provision of supported bus services to meet social necessity or desirability."*
- 5.5 The policy further specifies that *"The Council may secure bus services, subject to sufficient estimated or actual demand in accordance with the following priorities"*:
- Priority 1: *Supporting travel to schools for non-entitled children, where resources (operational and financial) permit; and providing a basic level of access for communities to centres of employment, shops and other facilities in areas where without Council intervention, there would be no alternative public transport options.*
  - Priority 2: *Providing services which link settlements or communities directly in circumstances where travel on the commercial networks, though possible, entails circuitous routeing and change of vehicles with poor connections; Supporting services to complement the restraint of private vehicles in Falkirk town centre; Providing any other socially desirable services that have been ratified by the Council; Subject to resources and cost effectiveness, the Council will consider serving significant new areas of development; and The Council will consider giving financial support to encourage more integration with rail services in the Falkirk area.*
- 5.6 As of October 2023, Falkirk Council provides 14 supported local bus services at a total cost of £1.18m per annum. These are detailed in Appendix A (1.1)
- 5.7 In addition to the above, Falkirk Council contribute c£0.02m to Fife Council towards the cost of operating Service 28 (Fife – Skinflats – Falkirk). This represents good value for money, as any withdrawal by Fife provision would be costly to replace and/or find an alternative service.
- 5.8 The total available budget for bus service support is £1.603m per annum (including recharges) and current annual expenditure is predicted to be £1.63m (including developer contributions, recharges, and a contribution towards the Dial-a-Journey service) resulting in a current net overspend of £0.027m per annum. In the short-term this overspend is being covered by underspends in other areas of Place Services, but this is not a sustainable position. If Elected Members do not agree to the recommendations in this report, additional resources will need to be allocated to the bus service support budget in the Council's budget for 2024/25 to cover this overspend.
- 5.9 Available passenger data is shown in Appendix A (1.2)

- 5.10 It is predicted that 623,155 journeys will be made on supported bus services over a 12-month period - 11% are adult fare payers (i.e. an adult single or return is purchased at the time of travel), 52% are over 60s or disabled persons pass holders, 17% are under 22 pass holders and 20% are other ticket types including 10-journey, weekly, monthly etc season tickets.
- 5.11 Prior to the launch of the under 22 concession in January 2022, approximately 65% of passengers were holders of an over 60s or disabled person's concession card. This figure has dropped to 52% following the introduction of the under 22 scheme, with 69% of all passengers using one of the three concessionary schemes. Transport Scotland reimburse bus operators at different rates for over 60s and disabled persons and under 22s (under 16 and 16 and over), so uptake of the under 22 scheme has not offset the decline in reimbursement for the over 60s/disabled post-Covid-19 where passenger numbers are at c80% of pre-Covid-19 levels.
- 5.12 Falkirk Council's "Policy for the Procurement of Public Transport Services" (May 2006) states that "*The Council will normally confine its funding to journeys which have an average of at least four passengers*".
- 5.13 Average usage per journey is shown in Appendix A (1.3)
- 5.14 Costs per mile and costs per passenger are shown in Appendix A (1.4)

#### Options for Reducing Expenditure on Local Bus Services

- 5.15 Falkirk Council is facing a budget gap of £64m. The Director of Place Services has allocated savings targets to each area within Place Services in order to contribute to reducing this budget gap. The Transport Planning team has been asked to consider how £0.30m per annum could be saved from transport budgets and this report outlines ways that this target could be met.
- 5.16 Options for reducing expenditure on local bus services include:
- Ceasing to provide financial support for bus services;
  - Withdrawing support for bus services where passengers have an alternative;
  - Amalgamating some supported bus services to maintain transport links at lower cost;
  - Converting some bus services to demand responsive transport services;
  - Working with current operators of supported bus services to see if services can be amended to maintain a basic level of service at reduced cost.

#### Option 1- Ceasing All Financial Support for Bus Services

- 5.17 Ceasing to provide financial support for bus services would save £1.18m per annum. All local bus service contracts have a 3-month notice period, so assuming a saving was required from 1 April 2024, notice would need to be given to current contractors by 31 December 2023.

- 5.18 This option would result in several areas having no bus services and no public transport alternatives (Whitecross, Standburn, Wallacestone, Limerigg, Airth, Letham, Dunmore, South Alloa, Fankerton, Blackness) apart from taxis.
- 5.19 This option would result in several other areas having no bus service but would benefit from alternative bus services available within 1 mile (Middlefield/The Bog, Calendar Park, Finistere Avenue, Westquarter, Tamfourhill).
- 5.20 This option would maintain a service in some areas (California, Avonbridge, Slamannan, Maddiston, Dunipace, Banknock) but lead to a reduction in level of service - for example withdrawal of morning/evening journeys.

Option 2- Withdrawing support for bus services where passengers have an alternative.

- 5.21 This option would remove supported bus services where passengers have an alternative, which would result in them having to walk up to 1 mile to access a bus stop, or where a later departure time is available.
- 5.22 Services withdrawn under this option would include:
- Service F14: Tamfourhill/Falkirk – The Bog/Middlefield – The Kelpies. Passengers could access alternative services in High Station Road (for Kemper Avenue), Windsor Avenue (for Tamfourhill), Grangemouth Road/Grahams Road (for Middlefield/The Bog). Passengers from Finistere Avenue would need to walk into Falkirk town Centre. This would save £0.093m per annum.
  - Service F16: Falkirk – Callendar Park – Westquarter. Passengers could access alternative services in Callendar Road (Callendar Park) or walk into Falkirk town centre, Redding Road/Polmont Road (Westquarter). This would save £0.076m per annum.
  - Service F1 (Maddiston – Falkirk). Withdrawal of these two early morning journeys would require passengers to use later departures. This would save £0.012m per annum.
  - Service F1 (Dunipace – Falkirk). Withdrawal of this Saturday morning journey would require passengers to use later departures. This would save £0.002m per annum.
- 5.23 The total potential saving from withdrawing support for bus services where passengers have an alternative is £0.183m per annum.

Option 3- Amalgamating some supported bus services to maintain transport links at lower cost.

- 5.24 This option would amalgamate existing contracts to maintain transport links, although the level of service may decrease as a result.
- 5.25 There are currently two supported bus services which have the potential for a successful amalgamation:
- Service 2, which provides some Falkirk – Slamannan journeys (the remainder being commercial) and all Slamannan – Limerigg journeys;

- Service 29, which provides some Falkirk – Shieldhill – California – Avonbridge journeys, the remainder being commercial.

5.26 The current annual cost of these two supported services combined is £0.25m per annum. It is estimated that amalgamating these services has the potential to save £0.075m per annum.

Option 4- Converting some bus services to demand responsive transport services.

5.27 This option would withdraw traditional bus services and replace them with demand responsive transport. Whilst the specification for any demand responsive services in the Falkirk Council area is yet to be confirmed, it is likely that the following model would be used:

- Demand responsive transport would operate on a fixed route, the same or similar to the traditional bus services which they replace.
- The service would only operate on demand with passengers required to book in advance, via telephone, a mobile phone app or a computer:
  - Passengers would need to book at least 2 hours in advance of wanting to travel.
  - Passengers would be able to book journeys up to a month in advance.
  - Passengers could make block bookings, so for example if a passenger wanted to use the service to travel to/from work, they would be able to book suitable journeys for a whole month.
  - Passengers would pay a normal bus fare or use their concessionary pass (over 60s, disabled or under 22) like a traditional bus service.
  - Depending on the software used for online bookings, it may be possible to pay for journeys in advance.
  - It is hoped that vehicles would be able to be tracked in real-time via the app.

5.28 The following areas have been identified as having good potential for demand responsive transport services as a result of low passenger numbers where a taxi or minibus could replace a traditional bus service:

- Whitecross
- Standburn
- Wallacestone
- Blackness

5.29 Blackness is currently served by Service F49 which operates in conjunction with a school contract (the number of school pupils requires a bus to be used). The marginal cost of providing the F49 service utilising the vehicle providing the school journeys is £0.05m per annum. As a result, withdrawing Service F49 would result in an increase to the cost of providing the school journeys and it is unlikely that any overall saving could be achieved by converting Service F49 to a demand responsive service.



- 5.30 Whitecross is currently served by Service F1 operating from Linlithgow to Maddiston via Whitecross. As of October 2023, the cost of providing this service is £0.095m per annum.
- 5.31 Wallacestone and Standburn are currently served by Service F25 operating from Falkirk to California via Wallacestone and Standburn. This service also serves Gilston Crescent in Polmont and Reddingmuirhead. This service costs £0.15m per annum.
- 5.32 It is proposed to withdraw Services F1 and F25 and replace them with a demand responsive taxi or minibus on the following basis:
- The service would operate in a defined geographic area (Whitecross, Standburn and Wallacestone/Reddingmuirhead).
  - The service would operate hourly on-demand, Monday to Saturday 0800-1800 and would take passengers to a suitable point to connect with commercial bus services operating to Polmont Station, Meadowbank Health and Falkirk to provide access to rail services, medical appointments and shops etc.
  - Whitecross currently has an hourly bus service to Maddiston to connect with commercial services to/from Falkirk and Wallacestone/Standburn currently have a two-hourly service to Falkirk. An hourly demand responsive transport service would represent an improvement in frequency for residents of Wallacestone/Standburn.
  - Gilston Crescent, currently served by Service F25, would not be included in the demand responsive transport service on the basis that passengers can access alternative service from the A803/Polmont Main Street or Salmon Inn Road.
- 5.33 The total cost of Service F1 and F25 is £0.245m per annum. It is estimated that replacing these services with demand responsive transport has the potential to save between £0.125 to £0.20m per annum.

#### Demand Responsive Transport Pilot

- 5.34 At the Executive on 15 March 2022, Elected Members asked officers to explore a role for taxi/private hire vehicles in delivering demand responsive transport. The proposal outlined in Section 5.32 of this report would provide an opportunity for taxi/private hire operators to provide this service on behalf of Falkirk Council. Discussions have taken place with other local authorities who operate similar schemes to learn best practice and the trial would be closely monitored and used to develop a Demand Responsive Strategy which would be used as a template to roll out similar services in other areas in the future.

### Total Potential Savings

- 5.35 The potential savings that could be achieved as detailed in options above are as follows:

Option 2- Withdrawing support for bus services where passengers have an alternative - £0.175m per annum;

Option 3- Amalgamating some supported bus services to maintain transport links at lower cost – £0.075m per annum;

Option 4- Converting some bus services to demand responsive transport services – £0.125m to £0.2m per annum.

- 5.36 Recommended Savings to progress:

<u>Option</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Annual Saving</u>
Option 3	Amalgamate F2 and F29	£0.075m
Option 4	Convert F1 and F25 to DRT	£0.125m-£0.2m
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£0.2m to £0.275m</b>

### TaxiCard

- 5.37 Falkirk Council's TaxiCard scheme was inherited from Central Regional Council in 1996. When the scheme was introduced, there were no low-floor/wheelchair accessible buses in the Falkirk area – whereas all buses are now accessible. Originally the scheme offered a discount of up to £2 on a maximum of 12 journeys per week, this was reduced to 6 journeys per week from April 2010 as part of a budget saving. The £2 per journey subsidy has remained unchanged since the scheme was introduced and was set when the taxi tariff was significantly lower. Members of the scheme are required to book journeys in advance by telephone the day before they wish to travel. The booking service for TaxiCard is operated by Dial-a-Journey under contract to Falkirk Council.

- 5.38 The number of journeys made by TaxiCard has decreased by 47% in recent years – from 1,466 per month in 2018/19 to 775 per month in 2022/23.

All journeys made by TaxiCard users from June 2023 to August 2023 were analysed with the following results:

- There were 2,205 journeys undertaken
- There were 126 unique service users
- 22 service users made 49% of the journeys
- 66 service users made 89% of the journeys
- The majority of journeys made were for shopping, hairdressers, social purposes (pubs, clubs, coffee shops/cafes etc), with some use for doctors, dentist, hospital and day centre visits.

- 5.39 TaxiCard users who booked a journey during September 2023 were offered the opportunity to complete a questionnaire about the service. Four responses were received:

- Three respondents were also members of Dial-a-Journey;
- None of the respondents were wheelchair users;
- Two respondents said that they would continue to use taxis.

- 5.40 Anecdotally some of the reasons cited for the decline in TaxiCard use are:
- Inconvenience of having to book journeys in advance;
  - The £2 per subsidy is relatively small compared to current taxi fares.
- 5.41 Dial-a-Journey report that it can be hard to arrange taxis at peak times meaning that some scheme members cannot book a taxi at the time that they want to travel.
- 5.42 The total cost of providing the TaxiCard service in 2021/22 was £0.047m which comprised £0.028m for the booking service and £0.018m for the passenger subsidy. This meant more funding went on the administration of the scheme than went on subsidising resident travel which does not appear to provide good value to the community.
- 5.43 Withdrawing the TaxiCard scheme would mean that current members would still be able to use taxis, but rather than pre-booking a taxi via Dial-a-Journey and receiving a £2 subsidy per journey, they would contact their preferred taxi operator directly and pay the full fare. Alternatively, TaxiCard members could use Dial-a-Journey to travel.
- 5.44 Given the declining usage and administrative costs, it is recommended that the TaxiCard scheme is withdrawn which would generate an ongoing financial saving of £0.047m per annum.
- 5.45 At the Executive on 15 March 2022, Elected Members instructed officers to consider a number of issues raised by the Policy Development Panel: Review of Taxi Policies which included the Council's EV charging infrastructure plan, potential for a reduced EV tariff scheme for taxis and private hire vehicles, potential for a reduction in licence fees in targeted categories, exploration of an enhanced role for taxis and private hire vehicles in the delivery of demand response services and a review of the TaxiCard scheme.
- 5.46 The Council's current network of EV chargers includes dedicated chargers at Meeks Road and additional dedicated chargers will be considered where appropriate.
- 5.47 At the Executive on 14 February 2023, Elected Members agreed to set the tariff for Falkirk Council owned EV charge points at the market rate, which applies to all electric vehicles.
- 5.48 It would be appropriate for Licencing to consider any potential for reduced fees in targeted categories.

As a means to incentivise the transition towards an Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) licensed taxi and private hire car fleet and increase the number of licensed Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV), Licensing have suggested the following targeted licence fee changes:-

- Applications for new taxi/private hire car operator licences for fully electric vehicles are reduced by 50%. Renewal applications are reduced by 50%

- Applications for the renewal of taxi/private hire car operator licences for Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) saloon vehicles are increased by 50%
- Applications for new taxi/private hire car operator licences for Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV) will be reduced to no fee being applicable for first grant. Renewal applications for WAV are reduced by 50%

Any changes to licence fees would be subject to a full public consultation. The consultation would also include the other issues identified by the Policy Development Panel: Review of Taxi Policies.

- 5.49 This report recommends that traditional bus services in the Whitecross and Standburn areas are replaced with demand responsive services which could be operated by taxis/private hire vehicles. Should this trial be successful it is anticipated that proposals for demand responsive services in other areas will come forward which will provide further opportunities for the taxi/private hire trade.
- 5.50 The TaxiCard scheme has been reviewed and it is recommended that the scheme be discontinued from 1 April 2024.

#### Shopmobility

- 5.51 Falkirk Council's Shopmobility scheme operates from the Howgate Centre and is operated by Dial-a-Journey under contract. The scheme offers a loan of mobility scooters and electric/manual wheelchairs, which are owned and maintained by Dial-a-Journey.
- 5.52 The number of loans has decreased significantly (44%) in recent years – from 3,499 per annum in 2018/19 to 1,956 per annum in 2022/23.
- 5.53 Shopmobility users who booked a journey during September 2023 were offered the opportunity to complete a questionnaire about the service. Twenty-two responses were received:
- Twenty-one respondents were also a member of Dial-a-Journey;
  - Fifteen respondents travelled into Falkirk by taxi;
  - Eight respondents had their own mobility scooter but had concerns about the battery range;
  - Nine respondents had their own mobility scooter but can't get it in their car or onto a bus/train.
- 5.54 The cost of providing the Shopmobility service in 2022/23 was £0.065m, which equates to £33.61 per hire.
- 5.55 Stirling Council as an example has introduced charging for Shopmobility on the following basis:
- For Stirling Council residents:
    - £5 annual membership fee;
    - £1 per hour hire charge
  - For non-Stirling Council residents:
    - £1.50 per hour hire charge

Evidence from monitoring how well this new arrangement is working is not currently available, however officers will continue to monitor.

- 5.56 It is recommended that charges for Shopmobility are introduced from 1 April 2024 on the above basis which would generate additional revenue. The success of the new scheme would be reviewed in October 2024 to determine what impact charges have had on the sustainability of the service.

#### Dial-a-Journey

- 5.57 Dial-a-Journey provides door-to-door transport services for people with mobility difficulties who cannot use conventional public transport. The scheme is operated under contract to Falkirk Council by Order of Malta Dial-a-Journey. Passengers are given assistance from their door to the bus and from the bus to their destination and may take an escort with them if required and pay a fare to travel. The vehicles used are wheelchair accessible and mobility scooters can also be transported.
- 5.58 The number of passengers conveyed has decreased by 12% in recent years – from 6,491 per annum in 2018/19 to 5,692 per annum in 2022/23.
- 5.59 Dial-a-Journey users who booked a journey during September 2023 were offered the opportunity to complete a questionnaire about the service. Twelve responses were received:
- Seven respondents were wheelchair users.
  - Eleven respondents required assistance to board/alight a vehicle.
  - Eight respondents required an escort whilst travelling.
  - Eleven respondents said that Dial-a-Journey was their only means of travelling.
- 5.60 The cost of the Dial-a-Journey service in 2022/23 is fixed £0.165m per annum which equates to a subsidy of £29.16 per journey. Clearly greater use would reduce the cost per journey.
- 5.61 Officers will continue to explore improvements to this service and the potential impact on introducing a membership arrangement similar to the Shopmobility proposed arrangements.
- 5.62 It is recommended that the Dial-a-Journey service is retained due to the needs and mobility of service users which in many cases prevents them from using wheelchair accessible taxis. In addition, Dial-a-Journey offers a door-to-door service, with staff assisting service users from their home to the vehicle and from the vehicle to their destination, which in some cases may be some distance. Withdrawal of the Dial-a-Journey service is likely to leave many service users with no alternative transport. Officers will continue to work closely with Order of Malta Dial-a-Journey to ensure that the service is operating as efficiently as possible.

#### School Crossing Patrols

- 5.63 Following review, it is recommended that no changes are made to the school crossing patrol service at this time.

## **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 Consultation has taken place on these proposals with users of Dial-a-Journey, Shopmobility and TaxiCard who used the services in September 2023. Dial-a-Journey operate the Shopmobility service on behalf of Stirling Council and have systems in place to deal with the introduction of a membership charge and hourly charge for hiring equipment. Discussions with operators of services to be amalgamated will take place following a decision by elected members and the resulting service is likely to have to be retendered, similarly any introduction of a demand responsive service will have to be retendered to allow both bus and taxi/PHC operators the opportunity to express interest.

## **7. Implications**

### **Financial**

- 7.1 There is no available budget within Place Services to cover the additional expenditure resulting from commercial bus service changes, contractual changes and changes to cross-boundary funding identified in this report which would need to be sourced from elsewhere.
- 7.2 This report identifies areas where savings could be made with a low impact, for example by replacing traditional subsidised bus services with demand responsive transport services, amalgamating existing subsidised bus services, withdrawing TaxiCard and introducing charges for Shopmobility.
- 7.3 Falkirk Council is facing a budget gap of £64m and the savings of £0.32m per annum recommended in this report will help to directly improve this position. Transport Planning currently spends £1.23m per annum on local bus services and TaxiCard and the proposed savings represent a reduction in expenditure in these service areas of 26%.

### **Resources**

- 7.4 The recommendations in this report can be implemented by existing staff resources with the Transport Planning Unit. There are no staffing reduction implications within the Transport Planning Unit.

### **Legal**

- 7.5 There are no legal implications arising from this report. Any procured service provision will follow current procurement guidelines.

### **Risk**

- 7.6 There is a risk that residents will be disappointed and confused by the removal of their local bus services. This will be mitigated by promotion of the available alternatives and full explanations of the reasons why we are taking

this action. This will be distributed in the local media, on social media, via leaflet drops, notices on affected bus services ahead of any change and information at bus stops in affected areas.

- 7.7 There is a risk that TaxiCard users will be unable to afford to use taxis to get around following withdrawal of the scheme. This risk appears unlikely given the £2 subsidy makes up a small percentage of the overall cost. TaxiCard users who can travel by bus and qualify for over 60s, disabled or under 22 concessions would be able to travel free of charge. The Dial-a-Journey service will also be retained and can be used for accessibility journeys.
- 7.8 There is a risk that Shopmobility users may not use the service if an annual membership fee and hourly hire charge are introduced. This risk is mitigated based on the evidence of other areas where similar charges have been introduced.

### **Equalities**

- 7.9 The report proposes to withdraw the TaxiCard scheme which would result in the loss of the £2 subsidy per journey for service users and introduce a small annual charge (£5) and hourly loan fee (£1) for Shopmobility users. Although this may impact some service users, given that these sums are relatively small, mitigation is not proposed. Appendix B contains the full EPIA for this report.

## **8. Conclusions**

This report identifies the position regarding transport services provided by Falkirk Council and several potential measures that could be implemented to make financial savings. It is recommended that:

- Services F2 and F29 be amalgamated to provide a more efficient bus service in the upper Braes area;
- Services F1 and F25 be withdrawn and replaced by a demand responsive transport service;
- The TaxiCard scheme be withdrawn, and
- An annual membership fee and hourly hire charges be introduced for the Shopmobility service.

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### **Director of Place Services**

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**Date:** 15 November 2023

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Passenger Data

Appendix B - EPIA

## **List of Background Papers:**

**None**



## Appendix A

- 1.1 As of October 2023, Falkirk Council provides 14 supported local bus services at a total cost of £1.18m per annum. These operate Monday to Saturday (except for Service X38 which is 100% funded by NHS Forth Valley) and are provided by bus operators under competitively tendered contracts. A list of these services is shown below:

Contract Number	Service Number	Route	Days	Annual Cost
F22/BUS/LB/500	F1	Maddiston - Falkirk	Mon-Sat	£12,064.00
F22/BUS/LB/501	F1	Dunipace - Falkirk	Sat	£1,820.00
F22/BUS/LB/502	F1	Maddiston - Linlithgow	Mon-Sat	£95,056.00
F22/BUS/LB/505	35	Falkirk - Croy	Mon-Sat	£30,680.00
F22/BUS/LB/507	F8	Falkirk - FVRH- Fankerton	Mon-Sat	£139,880.00
F22/BUS/LB/508B	F14	Falkirk - The Kelpies	Mon-Sat	£85,280.00
F22/BUS/LB/509	F16	Falkirk - Airth - Stirling	Mon-Sat	£154,440.00
F22/BUS/LB/510B	F2	Falkirk - Limerigg	Mon-Sat	£121,160.00
F22/BUS/LB/511B	F16	Westquarter - Falkirk	Mon-Sat	£75,920.00
F22/BUS/LB/512	F25	Falkirk - California	Mon-Sat	£148,720.00
F22/BUS/LB/513	X38	Falkirk - Stirling	Mon-Sun	£15,080.00
F22/BUS/LB/514B	F29	Falkirk - Avonbridge - Bathgate	Mon-Sat	£103,480.00
F22/BUS/LB/516A	F45	Bo'ness - Linlithgow	Mon-Sat	£146,680.00
F22/BUS/LB/517	F49	Bo'ness - Blackness- Linlithgow	Mon-Fri	£50,817.00
				<b>£1,181,077.00</b>

- 1.2 Passenger data has been annualised to allow calculation of cost per mile/per passenger statistics.

Contract Number	Service Number	Route	Adult	Over 60 and Disabled	Under22	Other	Total
F22/BUS/LB/500	F1	Maddiston - Falkirk (Mon-Sat)	153	517	179	2262	3112
F22/BUS/LB/501	F1	Dunipace - Falkirk (Sat)	47	190	62	491	790
F22/BUS/LB/502	F1	Maddiston - Whitecross - Linlithgow (Mon-Sat)	13548	3476	380	228	17632
F22/BUS/LB/505	F35	Falkirk - Kilsyth (Mon-Sat)	913	3026	3253	2353	9545
F22/BUS/LB/507	F8	Falkirk - Fankerton (50% NHSFV Funded) (Mon-Sat)	13148	78530	29182	40607	161468
F22/BUS/LB/508B	F14	Falkirk - Middlefield - The Kelpies (Mon-Sat)	3965	51836	3401	4664	63866
F22/BUS/LB/509	F16	Falkirk - Airth - Stirling (Mon-Sat)	16944	73018	35170	38997	164130
F22/BUS/LB/510B	F2	Falkirk - Slamannan - Limerigg (Mon-Sat)	1357	14854	9105	10075	35391
F22/BUS/LB/511B	F16	Falkirk - Callendar Park - Westquarter (Mon-Sat)	1401	34934	8497	8700	53531
F22/BUS/LB/512	F25	Falkirk - Wallacestone - Standburn - California (Mon-Sat)	1667	23907	4711	5426	35711
F22/BUS/LB/513	X38	Falkirk - Stirling (100% NHSFV Funded) (Mon-Sun)	653	634	1071	1074	3432
F22/BUS/LB/514B	F29	Falkirk - California - Avonbridge (Mon-Sat)	1552	5647	6201	6880	20280
F22/BUS/LB/516A	F45	Bo'ness - Linlithgow (Mon-Sat)	8502	28254	4969	5218	46943
F22/BUS/LB/517	F49	Bo'ness - Blackness - Linlithgow (Mon-Sat)	3244	3947	104	28	7323
			67094	322772	106286	127003	623155
			11%	52%	17%	20%	100%

1.3 Average usage per journey exceeds four passengers per journey, except for Service F1 (average 2.83) and Service F49 (Average 3.51).

Contract Number	Service Number	Route	Average Usage Per Journey
F22/BUS/LB/500	F1	Maddiston - Falkirk (Mon-Sat)	5.44
F22/BUS/LB/501	F1	Dunipace - Falkirk (Sat)	15.20
F22/BUS/LB/502	F1	Maddiston - Whitecross - Linlithgow (Mon-Sat)	2.83
F22/BUS/LB/505	F35	Falkirk - Kilsyth (Mon-Sat)	7.65
F22/BUS/LB/507	F8	Falkirk - Fankerton (50% NHSFV Funded) (Mon-Sat)	19.90
F22/BUS/LB/508B	F14	Falkirk - Middlefield - The Kelpies (Mon-Sat)	8.53
F22/BUS/LB/509	F16	Falkirk - Airth - Stirling (Mon-Sat)	18.79
F22/BUS/LB/510B	F2	Falkirk - Slamannan - Limerigg (Mon-Sat)	4.36
F22/BUS/LB/511B	F16	Falkirk - Callendar Park - Westquarter (Mon-Sat)	7.80
F22/BUS/LB/512	F25	Falkirk - Wallacestone - Standburn - California (Mon-Sat)	8.80
F22/BUS/LB/513	X38	Falkirk - Stirling (100% NHSFV Funded) (Mon-Sun)	5.50
F22/BUS/LB/514B	F29	Falkirk - California - Avonbridge (Mon-Sat)	5.57
F22/BUS/LB/516A	F45	Bo'ness - Linlithgow (Mon-Sat)	11.72
F22/BUS/LB/517	F49	Bo'ness - Blackness - Linlithgow (Mon-Sat)	3.51

1.4 Cost per mile varies from £1.22 to £5.97 (average £2.31) and the cost per passenger varies from £0.87 to £6.94 (average £1.90).

Contract Number	Service Number	Route	Annual Cost	Cost Per Mile	Cost Per Passenger
F22/BUS/LB/500	F1	Maddiston - Falkirk (Mon-Sat)	£12,064	£3.40	£3.88
F22/BUS/LB/501	F1	Dunipace - Falkirk (Sat)	£1,820	£4.07	£2.30
F22/BUS/LB/502	F1	Maddiston - Whitecross - Linlithgow (Mon-Sat)	£95,056	£3.63	£5.39
F22/BUS/LB/505	F35	Falkirk - Kilsyth (Mon-Sat)	£30,680	£1.77	£3.21
F22/BUS/LB/507	F8	Falkirk - Fankerton (50% NHSFV Funded) (Mon-Sat)	£139,880	£1.22	£0.87
F22/BUS/LB/508B	F14	Falkirk - Middlefield - The Kelpies (Mon-Sat)	£85,280	£2.62	£1.34
F22/BUS/LB/509	F16	Falkirk - Airth - Stirling (Mon-Sat)	£154,440	£1.48	£0.94
F22/BUS/LB/510B	F2	Falkirk - Slamannan - Limerigg (Mon-Sat)	£121,160	£5.97	£3.42
F22/BUS/LB/511B	F16	Falkirk - Callendar Park - Westquarter (Mon-Sat)	£75,920	£3.08	£1.42
F22/BUS/LB/512	F25	Falkirk - Wallacestone - Standburn - California (Mon-Sat)	£148,720	£2.63	£4.16
F22/BUS/LB/513	X38	Falkirk - Stirling (100% NHSFV Funded) (Mon-Sun)	£15,080	£1.88	£4.39
F22/BUS/LB/514B	F29	Falkirk - California - Avonbridge (Mon-Sat)	£103,480	£2.58	£5.10
F22/BUS/LB/516A	F45	Bo'ness - Linlithgow (Mon-Sat)	£146,680	£3.32	£3.12
F22/BUS/LB/517	F49	Bo'ness - Blackness - Linlithgow (Mon-Sat)	£50,817	£2.68	£6.94

# Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00607 (Version 1)

## SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

<b>Service &amp; Division:</b>	Place Services Growth, Planning & Climate	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b>	Chris Cox
		<b>Team:</b>	Transport Planning
		<b>Tel:</b>	01324 504723
		<b>Email:</b>	christopher.cox@falkirk.gov.uk
<b>Proposal:</b>	Review of Transport (Executive, 28 November 2023)	<b>Reference No:</b>	

What is the Proposal?	Budget & Other Financial Decision	Policy (New or Change)	HR Policy & Practice	Change to Service Delivery / Service Design
	Yes	No	No	Yes
Who does the Proposal affect?	Service Users	Members of the Public	Employees	Job Applicants
	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Other, please specify:</b>				

### Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):

27/10/2023	Review of Transport services provided by Transport Planning (local bus support, Dial-a-Journey, TaxiCard, Shopmobility) with the aim of streamlining service provision and generating a budget saving.
31/10/2023	It is proposed that the TaxiCard scheme is withdrawn. This would remove the £2 per journey subsidy however existing service users would still be able to use taxis.
31/10/2023	It is also proposed amalgamate two existing local bus services which would preserve services to areas in the Upper Braes but in a more financially efficient manner. The proposal to replace two other bus services with demand responsive transport would see a similar or better level of service in the areas affected.
31/10/2023	Finally, it is also proposed to introduced an annual membership fee and hire charge for Shopmobility.

**SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

For budget changes ONLY please include information below:			Benchmark, e.g. Scottish Average
Current spend on this service (£'0000s)	Total:	£1.23m	
Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s)	Per Annum:	£0.32m	
Increase to this service budget (£'000s)	Per Annum:		
If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete.	Current Annual Income Total:		
	Expected Annual Income Total:		
If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved?	Start Date:	01/04/2024	
	End Date (if any):		

**SECTION THREE: EVIDENCE**

Please include any evidence or relevant information that has influenced the decisions contained in this EPIA. (This could include demographic profiles; audits; research; health needs assessments; national guidance or legislative requirements and how this relates to the protected characteristic groups.)

**A - Quantitative Evidence**

This is evidence which is numerical and should include the number people who use the service and the number of people from the protected characteristic groups who might be affected by changes to the service.

There are four services included in the Review of Transport:

Local bus service support - c598,000 journeys are expected to be made in 2023/24, No data is recorded on the number of individual users, but data on the type of ticket used to travel shows that 8% of journeys are made by adult farepayers, 18% of journeys made are by holders of an under-22 pass, 53% of journeys are made by holders of an over 60 or disabled pass and 21% of journeys are made by holders of other types of pass (for example season ticket, 10-journey ticket, return etc). Based on the data available, 53% of journeys are made by people in protected groups (age/disability). It should be noted that local bus services are provided for all members of the communities that they serve and are not targeted at any specific protected group.

TaxiCard - c9300 journeys by holders of TaxiCards are expected to be made in 2023/24. TaxiCard holders must have a mobility problem to join the scheme, therefore would be in a protected group (disability).

Shopmobility - c1956 hires of wheelchairs/mobility scooters are expected to be made in 2023/24. Shopmobility users have mobility problems therefore would be in a protected group (disability).

Dial-a-Journey - c5692 journeys by members of Dial-a-Journey are expected to be made in 2023/24, Dial-a-Journey members must have a mobility problem to join the scheme, therefore would be in a protected group (disability).

**B - Qualitative Evidence**

This is data which describes the effect or impact of a change on a group of people, e.g. some information provided as part of performance reporting.

**Social - case studies; personal / group feedback / other**

Consultation has taken place with users of Dial-a-Journey, TaxiCard and Shopmobility who used these services in September 2023. Although the response rate was low, it is clear from those service users who did respond that they do rely on these services to get out and about and in many cases would not have any alternative means of travel if the services were withdrawn. Consequently, it is not proposed to withdraw Dial-a-Journey and Shopmobility (although an annual membership fee and hire charge are proposed for Shopmobility). It is proposed that the TaxiCard scheme is withdrawn, however this would remove the £2 per journey subsidy - existing service users would still be able to use taxis.

Consultation has not taken place with users of local bus services, The proposals contained in the report would amalgamate two existing local bus services which would preserve services to areas in the Upper Braes but in a more financially efficient manner. The proposal to replace two other bus services with demand responsive transport would see a similar or better level of service in the areas affected.

<b>Best Judgement:</b>	
<b>Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?</b>	No
<b>Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?</b>	Some best judgement on demand responsive transport provided by Transport Planning Unit staff, based on experience and following discussions with other Scottish local authorities who have made similar changes in recent years. Best judgement regarding amalgamation of bus services taken by Transport Planning Unit staff based on experience and the current state of the local bus service market in Scotland.
<b>What gaps in data / information were identified?</b>	The specific protected characteristics of service users were not known however the usage data has allowed reasonable inferences to be made.
<b>Is further research necessary?</b>	No
<b>If NO, please state why.</b>	We hold the information required to be confident in the report's recommendations.

**SECTION FOUR: ENGAGEMENT**

Engagement with individuals or organisations affected by the policy or proposal must take place

Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?	Yes	
If YES, please state who was engagement with.	Users of Dial-a-Journey, Shopmobility and TaxiCard.	
If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.		
How was the engagement carried out?	What were the results from the engagement? Please list...	
Focus Group	No	
Survey	Yes	<p>TaxiCard - 0% of the respondents were wheelchair users; 75% of respondents were also members of Dial-a-Journey; 50% of the respondents would continue to use taxis if the service was withdrawn.</p> <p>Shopmobility - 95% of the respondents were also users of Dial-a-Journey; 36% of respondents had their own mobility scooter but had concerns about battery range; 41% of respondents had their own mobility scooter but were unable to get it into their car.</p> <p>Dial-a-Journey - 58% of respondents were wheelchair users; 92% of respondents required assistance boarding/alighting the vehicle; 67% of respondents required an escort whilst travelling; 92% of respondents stated that Dial-a-Journey was their only way of travelling.</p>
Display / Exhibitions	No	
User Panels	No	
Public Event	No	
Other: please specify		
Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?	Yes	

<b>Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?</b>	No
<b>Is further engagement recommended?</b>	No



## SECTION FIVE: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

**Equality Protected Characteristics:** What will the impact of implementing this proposal be on people who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 or are likely to be affected by the proposal / policy / project? This section allows you to consider other impacts, e.g. poverty, health inequalities, community justice, carers etc.

Protected Characteristic	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide evidence of the impact on this protected characteristic.
<b>Age</b>			✓	<p>90% of TaxiCard holders are over 60. Withdrawal of the scheme would mean that current members would lose the £2 per journey subsidy from 1 April 2024.</p> <p>No age information is held for Shopmobility users but it is assumed that the majority are over 60. Introduction of an annual membership fee and hire charge would mean that service users would have to pay from 1 April 2024.</p>
<b>Disability</b>			✓	<p>100% of TaxiCard holders have mobility issues. Withdrawal of the scheme would mean that current members would lose the £2 per journey subsidy from 1 April 2024.</p> <p>100% of Shopmobility users have mobility issues. Introduction of an annual membership fee and hire charge would mean that service users would have to pay from 1 April 2024.</p>
<b>Sex</b>	✓			No gender information is held. The proposals in the report would not have any impact on service users based on their gender.
<b>Ethnicity</b>	✓			No ethnicity information is held. The proposals in the report would not have any impact on service users based on their ethnicity.
<b>Religion / Belief / non-Belief</b>	✓			No religion information is held. The proposals in the report would not have any impact on service users based on their religion.
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	✓			No sexual orientation information is held. The proposals in the report would not have any impact on service users based on their sexual orientation.
<b>Transgender</b>	✓			No transgender gender information is held. The proposals in the report would not have any impact on service users based on their transgender status.
<b>Pregnancy / Maternity</b>	✓			No pregnancy/maternity information is held. The proposals in the report would not have any impact on service users based on their pregnancy/maternity status.

**Public Sector Equality Duty: Scottish Public Authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance quality of opportunity and foster good relations. Scottish specific duties include:**

				status.
<b>Poverty</b>			✓	No poverty information is held. The withdrawn of the TaxiCard scheme and introduction of a membership fee and hire charges for Shopmobility may impact people suffering from poverty.
<b>Care Experienced</b>	✓			No care experience information is held. The proposals in the report would not have any impact on service users based on their care experience status.
<b>Other, health, community justice, carers etc.</b>	✓			This information is not held.
<b>Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)</b>				

	<b>Evidence of Due Regard</b>
<b>Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):</b>	The proposals recommended within the report do not present an opportunity to further eliminate unlawful discrimination. Services will continue to be provided to those who need them, albeit at a moderately high cost due to the removal of a subsidy.
<b>Advance Equality of Opportunity:</b>	The proposals recommended within the report do not affect equal access to services, acknowledging that the removal of the subsidy may have impacts on those experiencing the effects of poverty.
<b>Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):</b>	The proposals recommended within the report do not impact relations between different protected characteristic groups.

**SECTION SIX: PARTNERS / OTHER STAKEHOLDERS**

Which sectors are likely to have an interest in or be affected by the proposal / policy / project?		Describe the interest / affect.
<b>Business</b>	Yes	Taxi and bus operators who may lose work due to proposed changes, although the recommendations in the report also include new opportunities.
<b>Councils</b>	No	
<b>Education Sector</b>	No	
<b>Fire</b>	No	
<b>NHS</b>	No	
<b>Integration Joint Board</b>	No	
<b>Police</b>	No	
<b>Third Sector</b>	No	
<b>Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.</b>		

## SECTION SEVEN: ACTION PLANNING

**Mitigating Actions:** If you have identified impacts on protected characteristic groups in Section 5 please summarise these in the table below detailing the actions you are taking to mitigate or support this impact. If you are not taking any action to support or mitigate the impact you should complete the No Mitigating Actions section below instead.

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes

### No Mitigating Actions

**Please explain why you do not need to take any action to mitigate or support the impact of your proposals.**

The report proposes to withdraw the TaxiCard scheme which would result in the loss of the £2 subsidy per journey for service users, and introduce a small annual charge (£5) and hourly loan fee (£1) for Shopmobility users. Although this may impact some service users, given that these sums are relatively small, mitigation is not proposed.

**Are actions being reported to Members?**

Yes

**If yes when and how ?**

Executive, 28 November 2023

**SECTION EIGHT: ASSESSMENT OUTCOME**

Only one of following statements best matches your assessment of this proposal / policy / project. Please select one and provide your reasons.

No major change required	No	
The proposal has to be adjusted to reduce impact on protected characteristic groups	No	
Continue with the proposal but it is not possible to remove all the risk to protected characteristic groups	Yes	The Review of Transport has considered the impact on service users and the recommendations contained in the report maintain services with the least possible impact.
Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation	No	

**SECTION NINE: LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF**

Lead Officer:

Signature:		Date:	27/10/2023
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**SECTION TEN: EPIA TASK GROUP ONLY**

<b>OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA:</b>		<b>Has the EPIA demonstrated the use of data, appropriate engagement, identified mitigating actions as well as ownership and appropriate review of actions to confidently demonstrate compliance with the general and public sector equality duties?</b>	Yes
<b>ASSESSMENT FINDINGS</b>			
<b>If YES, use this box to highlight evidence in support of the assessment of the EPIA</b>  <b>If NO, use this box to highlight actions needed to improve the EPIA</b>		The assessment has been informed by public engagement with affected users and extensive data on the level of service utilisation. The proposals recommended within the report were adjusted to take account of the outcomes of the engagement exercise, and still deliver benefits for the Council and it's communities.	
<b>Where adverse impact on diverse communities has been identified and it is intended to continue with the proposal / policy / project, has justification for continuing <u>without making changes been made</u>?</b>		Yes	If YES, please describe: The report proposes to withdraw the TaxiCard scheme which would result in the loss of the £2 subsidy per journey for service users, and introduce a small annual charge (£5) and hourly loan fee (£1) for Shopmobility users. Although this may impact some service users, given that these sums are relatively small, mitigation is not proposed.

LEVEL OF IMPACT: The EPIA Task Group has agreed the following level of impact on the protected characteristic groups highlighted within the EPIA		
LEVEL		COMMENTS
HIGH	Yes / No	
MEDIUM	Yes	Medium impact. Some negative impacts have been identified however services will continue to be available to those who need them.
LOW	Yes / No	

**SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF**

<b>Director / Head of Service:</b>			
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	31/10/2023