

2016/17 Budget Proposals: Equality Impact Assessment

CS/27 Community Transport: Review funding to community groups

Purpose of the Equality Impact Assessment:

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a [Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#) requiring public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Consideration must be given to the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act. Assessments should 'consider relevant evidence relating to persons with relevant protected characteristics in relation to such assessments of impact'.

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is to ensure that policies, functions, plans or decisions (hereafter referred to as 'policy' do not create unnecessary barriers for people protected under the Act, and that negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and opportunities for positive impact are maximised.

Screening is a short exercise to determine if a policy is relevant to equality and whether a full equality impact assessment (EQIA) should be carried out.

Question	Answer
Please list the name(s) of those who are completing this assessment	Stephen Graham, Corporate Improvement Team Ivor Souter, Transport Coordination Unit Alison Clark/Rosemary MacKinnon, Policy Unit
Describe the policy/practice being assessed	<p>The Highland Council supports twenty-two Third Sector organisations to provide community transport services across the Highlands. This enables the provision of transport services in areas where there is little public transport and/or enables particular groups of people to be supported where there is a lack of suitable transport provision. During 2015/16 the Highland Council budget for supporting community transport was £416,961.</p> <p>Applications are being made for community transport grants for the 3-year period 2016/17 – 2018/19. Community Services Committee of 5th November 2015 approved a budget of £376,000 for each of the three years. Existing grant recipients and new applicants are entitled to apply – there is no presumption that existing recipients will be supported ad infinitum.</p> <p>Community Services Committee of 4th February 2016 will make the formal decisions on which projects are to be supported and at what</p>

Question	Answer
	grant level.
<p>What existing sources of information have you gathered to help identify how people covered by the protected characteristics may be affected by this policy or service? Consider staff and service users.</p>	<p>The Highland Council’s Transport Unit has a close working relationship with the community transport sector and has a firm sense of its purpose and value. The programmed review meetings and on-going liaison provides a significant insight to the groups of people using and benefitting from community transport services.</p> <p>From these engagements it is clear that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of beneficial services are provided within the operating localities of the community transport providers – for instance, helping people to visit friends and family, to attend lunch clubs and other social activities; enabling people to attend healthcare appointments; and to undertake their shopping. • Residents of rural areas value the support provided by community transport services. It is not only rural dwellers, however, that need such benefits; community transport often utilise more accessible vehicles and the door-to-door transport is beneficial for those too infirm (through age or ailment) to walk beyond a short distance. • Older people, disabled people, those with lower incomes, those living in areas with relatively little public transport provision, the socially isolated, and those requiring accessible vehicle transport, are principal beneficiaries of community transport. <p>Within the Highland Council document 'Working towards a Fairer Highland: Equality Outcomes' April 2013, Revised April 2015 which sets out the Council’s equality outcomes and which aim to contribute towards a fairer, more inclusive Highland, there is a specific target outcome which has particular relevance for how people may be affected by changes in community transport provision:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Level Outcome 1: People are, and feel, free to live their lives without harassment and discrimination, and can take part in community life. Protected characteristics: All
<p>Are there gaps in evidence that make it difficult to judge if the existing or proposed policy might affect different groups of people? If so, what are the gaps and how can this be addressed?</p>	<p>The evidence is sufficient to understand that change to community transport support is likely to have impacts.</p>
<p>What involvement, engagement or consultation has taken place as part of the development or review</p>	<p>Community Services Committee papers of 20th August and 5th November 2015 sought and received approval for the development of the community transport grants process.</p>

Question	Answer
of this policy? How has it informed the assessment of how people covered by protected characteristics may be affected?	Development of the community transport grants process was additionally undertaken with significant input from the Community Transport Association and Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership. It was also discussed within the Transport Programme Board which, in addition to the two aforementioned external organisations, also comprised Highland Third Sector Interface, Voluntary Action Lochaber, NHS Highland and Scottish Ambulance Service.
Having considered the information gathered (including involvement and consultation) how would you assess the likely impact of the policy?	<p>There are certain aspects of context which are important to factor into considerations of potential or likely impacts:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy seeks to reduce the level of expenditure supporting the provision of community transport. During 2015/16 the Highland Council budget for supporting community transport was £416,961. During the next three years 2016/17 - 2018/19 there will be £376,000 available per year for community transport grants. • The grants will be issued for the 3-year period permitting those receiving a community transport grant to deliver their services with greater certainty and providing them with more leverage to encourage other potential funders to offer financial support. • Proposals to deliver community transport services stem from within communities, not from within The Highland Council. Communities are therefore using local knowledge and perspective to determine where best advantage to their communities can be served. <p>The policy is likely to have impacts ranging from: potentially positive should a project not previously supported receive a grant; and potentially negative should a current grant recipient receive a lower grant than currently received (although dependent upon other sources of finance available to such a group, the correlation is by no means certain and direct).</p> <p>There is no statutory obligation on Highland Council to support community transport services. Within the 'Highland First' document published by the current Independent Administration of The Highland Council, it is stated that "The Council recognises the importance of community transport and will work with our partners to find the best local solutions on how to deliver community transport provision across the Highlands."</p> <p>As positive an impact as possible will be sought for the Highlands.</p>
Identify which groups covered by the protected characteristics are affected. Briefly explain why and	The policy is relevant to all members of a community, with particular relevance for the following groups: age; disability; race and socioeconomic.

Question	Answer
<p>include both negative and positive impacts.</p>	<p>These groups are more likely to value community transport services because they are :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less likely to own a car. • Less likely to wish to/be able to drive (whether too young, too old or through health impairment). • More likely to require assistance to experience social inclusion and access local services and facilities. • More likely to find it difficult to use public transport and taxi services for physical and/or financial reasons. <p>Community transport services are most frequently orientated towards these groups of people to help them have better life experiences.</p>
<p>If you have identified, or if there is the potential for, adverse or negative impact, which will disadvantage any particular group(s) can this be justified without changing the policy? If so, please give your reasons.</p>	<p>The context for justifying the potential impact is described below.</p> <p>Highland Council has a substantial funding deficit. For 2016/17 alone it is £37.966million. Community Services Directorate, which administers community transport grants through its Transport Unit, has to contribute towards the savings necessary to keep future expenditure in line with revenue funding.</p> <p>Community Services Committee which oversees the service delivery of Community Services Directorate has approved the reduction to future expenditure on community transport.</p> <p>To ensure that the available funds are effectively applied it has been agreed by Committee that funding should be prioritised to support applications which seek to deliver practical transport solutions in their communities and provide additionality to existing services.</p> <p>Applications will be assessed against specific criteria:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit to the community or specific group within the community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demonstrate no or very limited appropriate public transport in proposed project operating area, and that any existing transport does not meet the needs being targeted by the project. ○ Type of support being introduced to the community against proof of need – range of who will benefit and what community requirements will be served (e.g. enabling young people to socialise, allowing people to access work and permitting early morning travel, etc.). ○ Flexibility of operating periods (e.g. to address identified needs at the specific times of the day/evening they will have most impact). ○ Use of accessible vehicles (describing extent of

Question	Answer
	<p>accommodating features).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Environmentally beneficial features. ● Project impact maximisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How the applicant/project will engage with the target client groups within the community. ○ How the applicant/project will engage with other bodies, agencies and groups to boost impact. ○ Clear identification of activity, milestone (that is, key progress indicators) and target factors. ● Promoting a fairer, more inclusive Highland How the project proposal will progress The Highland Council equality aims of promoting a fairer, inclusive Highland. ● Other sources of funding being available to create and sustain the project and activity during the funding period.
<p>If the impact cannot be justified, what action will be taken to remove, mitigate or reduce adverse impact? Please identify the action(s).</p>	<p>The grant application form seeks information to specify activities, milestones and targets to define the focus of proposals. Applications, as described above, will be evaluated against a common set of criteria. The available funds will be carefully allocated to ensure the best coverage of projects possible. Recommendations will be put to Community Services Committee on 4th February 2016 for their consideration and decisions.</p>
<p>Please provide details of arrangements to monitor and review the policy and any mitigating actions.</p>	<p>Letters of grant award will be issued to accord with Community Services Committee approvals.</p> <p>The award letters will detail the purposes being supported by the grant being offered. Conditions of reporting against specified activities, milestones and targets will be laid out. Review meetings will be scheduled and an open channel maintained for on-going liaison. Grants will be disbursed in phases and against aspects of performance and expenditure.</p> <p>This monitoring will be undertaken by the Council's Transport Unit.</p>
<p>Please state where the EQIA will be published</p>	<p>The EQIA will be published at:</p> <p>http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/404/equality_impact_assessments</p>

This assessment formed part of the report to [Community Services Committee on 04 February 2016](#).