

Budget EqIA 20: Bus fares and subsidies

This is an Equality Impact Assessment of the **Bus fares and subsidies** saving in the budget. Under equality legislation, the Council has a legal duty to pay '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.

The duty to pay 'due regard' is required to be demonstrated in the decision making and the implementation process. Assessing the potential equality impact of proposed projects that are part of the programme is the means by which we show 'due regard'.

1. The Decision

- Reduction of bus subsidies resulting in loss of subsidised services except for routes 33 and 21 (to villages north of Wolverton and Newport Pagnell) and routes 11/12, 13 and 18, and parts of routes 24/25. There are also reductions in evening and Sunday journeys on routes 2,4 & 8 and loss of other local links.
- Concessionary Fares - reduction in subsidy of senior non statutory peak travel concession to 'half fare'
- Concessionary Fares - reduction in junior fares concessions to 'half fare'.

2. Key Issues

This assessment will review the main changes in the policy.

2.1 How likely is it affect people with protected characteristics?

Older People will have to pay half-fare if they travel at peak time. While, Young People will now have to pay half-fare at all times. The reduction in bus routes is not being extended to the rural areas of the Borough.

2.2 How does Milton Keynes compare with neighbouring local authorities?

	Northants	Bucks	Bedford	Central Beds	Luton
Bus subsidies – budget in 2014/15	£1.35m	?	?	?	Nil
Bus subsidies – likely budget for 2015/16	£1.35m	?	?	?	Nil

Concessionary Fares – do you offer any discretionary additions to the ENCTS statutory scheme (eg per 0930 at half fare etc)?	No	Yes (free travel from 9am)	Yes (free within borough at all times)	Yes (free within borough at all times);	No
Concessionary Fares – do you have a concessionary fare scheme for under 19s? If yes, what is the discount?	No	Discounted travel for 16/17 year olds after 9am and at weekends	No	No	No

Luton does not provide Bus subsidies while other authorities provide some on a needs basis. This is in line with Milton Keynes policy.

Concessionary Fares for older people two authorities do not provide subsidies, while two provide a full subsidy, the Milton Keynes policy is in line with the rest of Buckingham.

Concessionary Fares for young people few authorities have a general subsidy.

Recommendation

This decision may adversely impact some younger people. However, those who require transport for such purposes as education should be eligible for support, which some may not be taking up, because of the low fare regime.

Appendix 1

Decision Title: Reduce library opening hours in the community libraries by 25% whilst retaining CMK opening hours. (This option includes funding of £17k to provide Saturday and Sunday Mobile Library Operations in addition to retaining the 5 day a week mobile operations.)	
Date: 8/12/2014	Author: Paul Sanders

A. Answer the following

<p>a) Is this a “key decision” as defined by the Forward Plan (see here for a wider definition), a major planning decision or one that affects a sizeable number of staff? (Significant)</p> <p>By sizeable we mean a decision that is a general change for all staff even if it effects only some, a decision that would affect over 50 people or a decision that is specifically about a protected characteristic</p>	Yes
<p>b) Does the decision affect people with one or more of the equality protected characteristics? (Relevant)</p> <p>Protected Characteristics are: Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Gender, and /or Sexual Orientation. Locally we have added Deprived / Socio Economic Disadvantage Groups</p>	Yes

B. The Assessment

1. How will the decision be made and who will be involved?
Cabinet
2. What is the aim of this decision and what changes will occur?
To contribute to council wide saving targets by reducing staffing costs in in the Library service budgets
3. Who is affected by this area of work and/or the changes?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library customers • Library staff

4(a) Thinking positively, which groups of people benefit (or could potentially benefit) from this decision? (Place an and provide information & evidence)

Protected Characteristic (as defined in the Equality Act)	YES	NO	UNCLEAR	Information and evidence Hyperlinks, References and Notes
Age		X		
Disability		X		
Race		X		
Gender or Gender Reassignment		X		
Sexual Orientation		X		
Religion/Belief		X		
Pregnancy and Maternity		X		
Deprived / Socio Economic Disadvantage Groups		X		

(b) Summarise how equality of opportunity is advanced, or/and how good community relations are fostered, by the decision?

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5(a) Being sensitive to the issues that some people may face, which groups of people will (or could potentially) experience adverse effects following this decision?

Protected Characteristic (as defined in the Equality Act)	YES	NO	UNCLEAR	Information and evidence Hyperlinks, References and Notes
Age		X		
Disability		X		
Race		X		
Gender or Gender Reassignment		X		
Sexual Orientation		X		
Religion/Belief		X		
Pregnancy and Maternity		X		
Deprived / Socio Economic Disadvantage Groups	X			People from disadvantaged groups depend on libraries to a greater extent than the general population.

6(a) What types of engagement and/or consultation are relevant to the decision?

Protected Characteristic (as defined in the Equality Act)	YES	NO	UNCLEAR	Information and evidence Hyperlinks, References and Notes
Age				
Disability				
Race				
Gender or Gender Reassignment				
Sexual Orientation				
Religion/Belief				
Pregnancy and Maternity				
Deprived / Socio Economic Disadvantage Groups	X			

(b) For planning purposes, list areas where more information is needed.

Should the decision be made to go ahead with this proposal further work will be needed locally to minimise the adverse effects particularly on disadvantaged groups.

7. How are people likely to be affected (positive and negative) by this decision? (Identify the range of options and the effects of each)

Reducing the library opening hours will necessarily reduce people's range of choice. 24/7 access will, however, be provided through the library website.

8. Address the impact (Mark with an)

A No major change needed	
B. Continue with the decision despite having identified some potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities	X
C. Adjust or amend the decision	
D Stop the decision	

(b) Explain the rationale for what you marked above with details of any mitigating activity

The decision may be necessary to provide budget savings.

In 2012-13 88.1% of adults viewed their library opening hours as good/very good (CIPFA Public Library Statistics.) This figure was 88.7% in 2011-12.

In 2011-12 library users under 16 were surveyed and 85.2% viewed the library to have convenient opening hours. (CIPFA Public Library Statistics.)

As part of this proposal the mobile library hours will be increased. The mobile library visits those estates identified as most deprived.

The Home Library Service which exists to serve housebound people will not be affected by this reduction. This service is primarily used by people who are disabled and older residents. One of the criteria for this service is that a resident is not able to get to a library because of a disability.

9. Outline the next steps (add an action plan if necessary) and when and how will this policy or decision be reviewed (Include any mitigating work)

Promote available library services especially those targeted at disadvantaged groups. Promote 24 hour services providing access to book renewals and reservations, online and e-lending services.

Appendix 2

Decision Title: Further reductions to library staffing as a result of Self Service with the aim for all self-service transactions to be 80-90% rather than 30-40%	
Date:8/12/2014	Author: Paul Sanders

A. Answer the following

<p>c) Is this a “key decision” as defined by the Forward Plan (see here for a wider definition), a major planning decision or one that affects a sizeable number of staff? (Significant)</p> <p>By sizeable we mean a decision that is a general change for all staff even if it effects only some, a decision that would affect over 50 people or a decision that is specifically about a protected characteristic</p>	Yes
<p>d) Does the decision affect people with one or more of the equality protected characteristics? (Relevant)</p> <p>Protected Characteristics are: Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Gender, and /or Sexual Orientation. Locally we have added Deprived / Socio Economic Disadvantage Groups</p>	Yes

B. The Assessment

1 How will the decision be made and who will be involved?
Cabinet
2. What is the aim of this decision and what changes will occur?
<p>Following the Report to Cabinet Procurement Committee [3 December 2013: Award of contract to Supply Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) self-service systems to Milton Keynes Libraries (REF: CU2397)] a programme is in place to introduce self-service in all libraries by March 2016.</p> <p>The concept is very similar to self-service machines in supermarkets and ATL machines used by high street banks. The introduction of RFID in all libraries is a key element in refocusing of customer service. It will streamline working practices and reduce staff time in issuing and returning library items. Staff will be available to concentrate on providing value added services. The aim is to achieve over 90% of all library transactions via the self-service system in the first year of its operation. The technology will allow savings to be made across the service whilst maintaining opening hours.</p>

3. Who is affected by this area of work and/or the changes?

- Library customers
- Library staff

4(a) Thinking positively, which groups of people benefit (or could potentially benefit) from this decision? (Place an and provide information & evidence)

Protected Characteristic (as defined in the Equality Act)	YES	NO	UNCLEAR	Information and evidence Hyperlinks, References and Notes
Age	X			Younger people may feel more comfortable with self-service technology as they have grown up in a computer centric time.
Disability	X			The kiosks are all DDA compliant regarding their height
Race	X			Self service instructions can be displayed in languages other than English.
Gender or Gender Reassignment	N/A			
Sexual Orientation	N/A			
Religion/Belief	N/A			
Pregnancy and Maternity	N/A			
Deprived / Socio Economic Disadvantage Groups	N/A			

(b) Summarise how equality of opportunity is advanced, or/and how good community relations are fostered, by the decision?

There will be benefits for both customers and staff. For example, customers will experience enhanced levels of confidentiality when borrowing items with self service facilities that are easy to use and inclusive. They will also be able to manage financial transactions independently. For those who have limited time, they can self serve rather than wait for the attention of a member of staff. The removal of traditional counters will bring improvements to floor layout, creating more welcoming public spaces and better areas for stock display.

Staff will not need to carry out repetitive counter tasks but will be able to interact more effectively with customers especially about recommendations for reading and more complex enquiries. They will continue to provide support for those with specific access needs.

For example, helping visually impaired readers choose audio books. More effective strategic decision making for stock management will be possible through the enhancements to the quality of information provided by RFID technology.

5(a) Being sensitive to the issues that some people may face, which groups of people will (or could potentially) experience adverse effects following this decision?				
Protected Characteristic (as defined in the Equality Act)	YES	NO	UNCLEAR	Information and evidence Hyperlinks, References and Notes
Age	X			Older customers may be more used to a face-to-face service rather than self-service. However the technology is simple and intuitive to use.
Disability	X			Severely visually impaired people will not be able to use the machines without assistance. Staff will still be available to assist these customers either at the counter or at the machines themselves.
Race		X		
Gender or Gender Reassignment		X		
Sexual Orientation		X		
Religion/Belief		X		
Pregnancy and Maternity		X		
Deprived / Socio Economic Disadvantage Groups		X		
6(a) What types of engagement and/or consultation are relevant to the decision?				
Protected Characteristic (as defined in the Equality Act)	YES	NO	UNCLEAR	Information and evidence Hyperlinks, References and Notes
Age	X			
Disability	X			
Race		X		
Gender or Gender Reassignment		X		
Sexual Orientation		X		
Religion/Belief		X		
Pregnancy and Maternity		X		
Deprived / Socio Economic Disadvantage Groups		X		
(b) For planning purposes, list areas where more information is needed.				
Working with people with a specific level of learning disability, test the operation of self service facilities in order to confirm, or otherwise, that the images are clear and easy to use.				

7. How are people likely to be affected (positive and negative) by this decision? (Identify the range of options and the effects of each)

See main report

8. Address the impact (Mark with an)

A No major change needed	
B. Continue with the decision despite having identified some potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities	X
C. Adjust or amend the decision	
D Stop the decision	

(b) Explain the rationale for what you marked above with details of any mitigating activity

Due regard has been taken with regards to people with different characteristics. Some examples of this are:

Visually impaired – the kiosks have DDA compliant large touch-sensitive screen with easily readable text, large icon buttons and ability to change text size and colour to optimise accessibility

Wheelchair users and different age groups and heights – kiosks are compliant in terms of physical reach and viewing of information on the screen

Language – the kiosks have the ability to change the language on screen, with a choice of 30 languages

Older people and children – lessons learnt from other authorities are that older people and children are the highest users of self-service kiosks. Staff and volunteers will be on-hand to assist customers

The RFID equipment has been installed in over 100 public library authorities and have been assessed in line with best practice.

9. Outline the next steps (add an action plan if necessary) and when and how will this policy or decision be reviewed (Include any mitigating work)

Use of monitoring and feedback to evaluate all impacts to service users. [information from staff, customer feedback and complaints.]

Address issues as they arise through the above process of review and evaluation. Survey of users March 2016