

Enhancement of Adult Social Care (ASC) and Community Transport (CT) Passenger Services EqIA

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03 July 2014

This is an Equality Impact Assessment to inform the development of Supported and Community Transport. 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. Introduction

In large programmes such as this, the council has found it useful to have an EqIA that outlines some of the key equality issues. The aim is to have a brief, useful document that spotlights relevant issues and the particular groups of people who will need particular regard.

2. People affected

These changes will affect all those who use the current provision and service users of care and support, carers and their families.

3. The relevant changes assessed

Previous assessments have considered the service as a whole and recommended that the service continue. This assessment formed a part of two budget considerations. Also on the 18th December 2013 a report went to Cabinet setting out all the transport issues for the Authority in the calendar year 2014.

On 16th April 2014 a further report entitled Fleet and Transport Arrangements: Proposed Way Forward went to Cabinet and the following decisions were agreed that a service level agreement be developed to operate and manage the contract for the fleet provision including the transportation of all clients, including existing eligible Adult Social Care clients and existing Community Transport customers.

The benefits of integrating Community Transport (CT) with Adult Social Care (ASC) still apply. A close relationship will continue with Planning and Transportation under

the Head of Service for Transportation Services. This should ensure that the benefits of future developments in Milton Keynes (including Volunteer car schemes and the major potential of the “small vehicle scheme”) are fully included in the service. This was the main purpose in not letting a long term contract at this stage. The team will also work with the small vehicle scheme as it develops.

A major consideration has been Day Centre and Learning Disability vehicles and how these will operate in the future. The report of the 18th December 2013 showed that these vehicles were high cost and low mileage and following discussions with these areas of service, they have confirmed that they will examine how they operate and their transportation will now be part of a centrally operated service. Individuals with specialist needs will still continue to be supported to access transport appropriate to their requirements.

The Council will provide the range of services so as to ensure best use of the fleet for Day Centres, Adult Social Care, Learning Disability and the current Community Transport clients.

4. Consultation

There was a large response to the Community Transport consultation held between December 2013 and February 2014 highlighted issues with the current service.

Over 100 respondents felt that the most prominent issues with the service were due to the current booking system and/or a lack of capacity available on the service. The majority of respondents stated that they would like the service to stay the same, or be provided with something similar. Further details are in the report.

5. Recommendation

That the Cabinet continues with the decision having had due regard to the views expressed in the report.

The programme has consulted and engaged fully with those affected, as outlined in the report. The programme is likely to advance equality of opportunity for people with a disability and also benefit older people as new and alternative transport options are supported.

Vital will be the use of the Council’s influence and bargaining power to improve the accessibility of mainstream transport services, which lag behind other cities in the UK.

Feedback and communications to those affected has been highlighted as an important aspect of the communications plan, especially in the run up to September 2014 and then beyond as new options become available.