

# Equality Impact Assessment: Woking Community Transport (WCT) – Dial a Ride and day care transport

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| <b>Officer responsible for completing EIA: Julie Meme</b>          | <b>Manager responsible for EIA: Julie Meme</b> |
| <b>Strategic Director responsible for EIA: Louise Strongitharm</b> | <b>Date last updated: 17 January 2023</b>      |

## 1. Introduction

This Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) seeks to identify impacts and effect of this proposal with the aim of assessing whether it would have a disparate impact on persons with a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. As part of this assessment, consideration will be given to ways in which any such impact can be avoided or mitigated, any negative impacts arising from this proposal will be assessed and where this could be reduced in their impact this will be noted in the attached action plan. The Council also recognises that it may not completely remove all negative impacts.

The purpose is to provide impartial information to assist in the decision-making process and inform rather than determine policy. The objective is not to make the decision but to assist decision makers through the provision of relevant information.

The Council faces a critical financial shortfall owing to its historic investment strategy which has resulted in unaffordable borrowing, inadequate steps to repay that borrowing and high values of irrecoverable loans.

To address these severe financial challenges the Council must make significant saving alongside taking steps to 'live within its means' in the future.

Widespread reductions and changes to public-facing services, alongside reducing management and internal costs, have been set out in the [Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy](#).

The Council is no longer able to support the Dial a Ride and day care transport, which are discretionary services. This will result in a £170,485 saving year on year.

This EqIA considers the grant withdrawal impact for residents who use Woking Community Transport. The community grants help subsidise the Dial a Ride Scheme and the transport for Day care to community centres and extra care.

## 2. Services which will no longer be delivered

Woking Community Transport provides services to all age groups. All users have a disability or reduced mobility which results in pain or discomfort when using normal public transport. The break down for age is as follows:

| <b>Age range</b> | <b>Dial a Ride users</b> | <b>Day Centre Transport users to The Vyne, St Marys, Brockhill and Hale end Court.</b> |
|------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 19-64            | 373                      | 5  |

|              |              |            |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| 65-69        | 220          | 31         |
| 70-74        | 294          | 31         |
| 75-79        | 423          | 38         |
| 80-84        | 470          | 46         |
| 85+          | 2173         | 85         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>3,953</b> | <b>236</b> |

Note: \* Updated figure of WCT members as at 4 January 2024 is 3,992.

WCT provide a borough wide door to door service and hospital transport to St Peters and Royal Surrey. Day care transport for elderly people to The Vyne, St Marys, Brockhill and Hale End Court.

WCT is a non-for-profit organisation, and the funding that WBC provides via a Service Level Agreement supports them to deliver the services. The removal of the funding will likely result in the Dial a Ride and day centre services ceasing and staff redundancies.

WCT will continue to operate separate contracts for SCC and the NHS in support of children with SEND and non-emergency patient transport.

WCT had also been in receipt of a grant from SCC for £42,500, but this was withdrawn in 2022 and is no longer available.

WCT completed 114,658 journeys in the 2022/2023 financial year, of these 40.33% were Woking borough journeys including hospital transport outside the borough.

### 3. Engagement and consultation

The Council has carried out public engagement on all proposed savings to ensure a balanced budget for the 2024/25 financial year.

The **first phase of the engagement** took place in summer 2023. Residents and businesses had the opportunity to have their say on how to tackle the budget shortfall. [Help shape the future of discretionary council services | Woking Community Forum](#)

The **second phase of the public engagement** took place between **2 October and 12 November**. The report can be found [here](#).

WCT responded and stated that the removal of funding would result in the closure of the Dial a Ride and Day Care transport services and, linked to these service reductions, staff redundancies.

Council Officers and Executive Members have also hosted a number of informal meetings with Woking Community Transport to discuss the potential impact of removing funding to the organisation and how WCT might operate going forward.

|                            |                                       | Positive impact?         |                  |                | Negative impact? | No specific impact | <p><b>What will the impact be? If the impact is negative, how can it be mitigated? (action)</b></p> <p>This section needs to be completed as evidence of what the positive impact is or what actions are being taken to mitigate any negative impacts</p> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|---|
|                            |                                       | Eliminate discrimination | Advance equality | Good relations |                  |                    |   |
| <b>Gender</b>              | Men                                   |                          |                  |                |                  | x                  | There are currently 3,992 (Jan '24) WCT members but WCT does not keep records on gender. As a result, the Council assumes that the impact of withdrawing the grant would not be gender specific.  |
|                            | Women                                 |                          |                  |                |                  | x                  | There are currently 3992 (Jan '24) WCT members but WCT does not keep records on gender. As a result, the Council assumes that the impact of withdrawing the grant would not be gender specific.   |
| <b>Gender Reassignment</b> |                                       |                          |                  |                |                  | x                  | This information is not available but it is assumed there would be no specific impact on this group.  |
| <b>Race</b>                | White                                 |                          |                  |                |                  | x                  | Cessation of the service may give rise to a negative impact on all groups but with no <i>specific</i> impact to this group.   |
|                            | Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups          |                          |                  |                |                  | x                  | Cessation of the service may give rise to a negative impact on all groups but with no <i>specific</i> impact to this group  |
|                            | Asian/Asian British                   |                          |                  |                |                  | x                  | Cessation of the service may give rise to a negative impact on all groups but with no <i>specific</i> impact to this group  |
|                            | Black/African/Caribbean/Black British |                          |                  |                |                  | x                  | Cessation of the service may give rise to a negative impact on all groups but with no <i>specific</i> impact to this group  |
|                            | Gypsies / travellers                  |                          |                  |                |                  | x                  | Cessation of the service may give rise to a negative impact on all groups but with no <i>specific</i> impact to this group  |
|                            | Other ethnic group                    |                          |                  |                |                  | x                  | Cessation of the service may give rise to a negative impact on all groups but with no <i>specific</i> impact to this group  |

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| <b>Disability</b> | Physical |  |  |  | x | <p>There is a potential for increased impact to users with physical disabilities (dependent upon the nature of the disability) whereby a greater reliance is placed upon the ability to access these facilities. The cessation of services could therefore adversely impact these groups and detract from the ability to achieve an independent daily routine and attend day care, GP, and primary care appointments.</p> <p>Of the total membership of WCT, 97 are known to be wheelchair users and 2,180 have to be aided to the transport.</p> <p>Mitigations include:</p> <p>Support service users to find alternative transport options, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service run by the NHS provides hospital transport via GP or clinician.</li> <li>• A new White bus service provides services to St Peters and Ashford hospitals.</li> <li>• The Good Neighbourhood scheme provides free transport to St Peters. Information is available on their website.</li> </ul> <p>Continue conversations with other D&amp;Bs, voluntary sector, private sector to investigate alternative options.</p> <p>Work with Surrey County Council to support WCT to review their business model to enable some service provision to continue.</p> |
|                   | Sensory  |  |  |  | X | <p>There is a potential for increased impact to users with sensory disabilities (dependent upon the nature of the disability) whereby a greater reliance is placed upon the ability to access these services to enable execution of day-to-day activities. The cessation of WCT services could therefore adversely impact these groups and detract from the ability to achieve an independent daily routine, attend health appointments etc.</p> <p>Mitigations as above</p>   |

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|  | Learning Difficulties |  |  |  | x |  | WCT can not provide numbers of clients who have learning disabilities There is a potential for increased impact to users with learning disabilities (dependent upon the nature of the disability) whereby a greater reliance is placed upon the ability to access these services to enable execution of day-to-day activities.<br><br>Mitigations as above.  |
|  | Mental Health         |  |  |  | X |  | There is a potential for increased impact to users with mental health (dependent upon the nature of the disability) whereby a greater reliance is placed upon the ability to access these services. The cessation of these services could therefore adversely impact these groups and detract from the ability to achieve an independent daily routine and attend health appointments.<br><br>Mitigations as above |

|   |                            |  |  |  |   |   |  |
|---|----------------------------|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Sexual Orientation</b>               | Lesbian, gay men, bisexual |  |  |  |   | x | There is no specific impact on this group.   |
| <b>Age</b>                              | Older people (50+)         |  |  |  | x |   | The cessation of the services will have a greater negative impact for older people. This age group is less likely to drive, have mobility issues restricting walking to bus stops etc plus have more health appointments than the younger population.<br><br>Mitigations as above. |
|   | Younger people (16 - 25)   |  |  |  |   | x | There is no specific impact on this age group.   |
| <b>Religion or Belief</b>               | Faith Groups               |  |  |  |   | x | There is no specific impact on this group.   |
| <b>Pregnancy &amp; maternity</b>        |                            |  |  |  |   | x | There is no specific impact on this group.   |
| <b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b> |                            |  |  |  |   | x | There is no specific impact on this group.   |

|                                  |                  |  |   |   |  |
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| <b>Socio-economic Background</b> |                  |  |   | x | There is no specific impact on this group.   |
| <b>Carers</b>                    |                  |  | X |   | Cessation of the services could have a greater negative impact on carers of family members who use the WCT service. Carers rely on WCT to get those they care for to day centres/clubs/health appointments. It could have a negative effect on how the carers support the person requiring care and risk of their own health deteriorating.<br><br>Mitigations as above. |
| <b>Other identified groups</b>   | (Please specify) |  |   |   | None identified  |

#### **ACTION PLAN:**

| <b>Actions identified from EIA</b>   | <b>Target completion date</b> | <b>Responsible Officer</b>                               | <b>Comments</b>   |
|--|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Promote alternative services, eg. White Bus Service, Non-Emergency Patient Transport, Good Neighbourhood Schemes.                  | 31/03/2024                    | Marketing and Communications Manager                     | Good Neighbourhood schemes, with volunteers, cover the whole of the Borough.<br>New White Bus service to Ashford & St Peters is now operational.<br>Patient transport continues to be available via Ashford & St Peters hospitals.  |
| Continue conversations with SCC, other D&Bs, voluntary sector, private sector to investigate alternative options/provisions.       | 31/03/2024                    | Strategic Director – Communities and Head of Living Well | SCC is in regular dialogue with WCT and are keen to continue the strong relationship with them going forward. SCC are not able to step in with financial assistance to the DAR service but by the end of March will be publishing a Countywide long term community transport strategy considering all services. |
| Hold conversations with WCT about changing their business model and review their pricing structure.                                | 31/03/2024                    | Strategic Director – Communities and Head of Living Well | Discussions are ongoing. A proposal to deliver a door service is currently being discussed.   |
| Review impacts identified above and effectiveness of mitigations put in place. Consider other mitigations that can be put in place | 31/03/2025                    | Strategic Director – Communities and Head of Living Well |   |
| Work with other third parties such as licensed taxis and Uber accessible to support the vulnerable cohort.                         | 31/03/2024                    | Strategic Director – Communities and Head of Living Well | Promote these services once agreed what the offer is.   |

**SIGNOFF:**

|                                       |                              |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>LEGAL SERVICES:</b> Completed      | <b>DATE: 8 January 2024</b>  |
| <b>STRATEGIC DIRECTOR:</b> Completed  | <b>DATE: 22 January 2024</b> |
| <b>REVIEW PANEL MEMBER:</b> Completed | <b>DATE: 4 January 2024</b>  |