

Provide basic details

Changes to Concessionary bus pass acceptance

Directorate: DENS

Service: Transportation and Streetcare

Name and job title of person doing the assessment

Name: James Turner

Job Title: Transport Planner

Date of assessment: 21st January 2019

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?

To reduce the acceptance of Concessionary bus passes for free travel to the statutory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) with effect from 1st April 2019. This would specifically remove the additional locally funded discretionary benefits, as set out below:

1. Free travel before 9.30am and after 11:00pm Mondays to Fridays for disabled Access pass holders in Reading.
2. Free travel for a companion of an Access pass holders who has been assessed and considered unable to travel on the bus independently during the same period.
- 3a. Free travel for Access pass holders on Readibus dial-a-ride services.
- 3b. Free travel for Older Person Pass holders on the Readibus dial-a-ride services.

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

This proposal would revert the Concessionary bus pass scheme in Reading to the standard national concessionary fares scheme therefore no one will directly benefit from the proposal.

What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom?

The aim is to reduce discretionary council spending in view of the unavailability of future budgets to support this cost.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

The proposal will impact a number of concessionary disabled Access pass holders who currently travel before 9.30am or after 11.00pm Mon-Fri. The proposal will also impact Access Companion Pass holders who currently can take a companion with them to assist them with their travel or use the Readibus service. The proposals will also impact Access and Older Person Pass holders who also currently use the Readibus dial-a-ride services for free. Since the proposal would mean that a free service will no longer be available, as noted above, it is considered likely that the affected stakeholders will not wish this to happen.

Assess whether an EqlA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc.)

Yes (delete as appropriate)

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, and feedback.

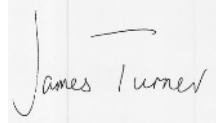
Yes (delete as appropriate)

If the answer is **Yes** to any of the above you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If **No** you **MUST** complete this statement

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:

Signed (completing officer)



Date 21/01/2019

Signed (Lead Officer)



Date 21/01/2019

Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

- Consultation
- Collection and Assessment of Data
- Judgement about whether the impact is negative or positive

Consultation

How have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts. If you haven't already completed a Consultation form do it now. The checklist helps you make sure you follow good consultation practice.

[My Home > Info Pods > Community Involvement Pod - Inside Reading Borough Council](#)

Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted

<p>Access Concessionary pass holders, Access plus Companion pass holders also issued the Companion element for assisted travel and Access pass holders who use their bus pass to travel for free on the REDIbus services.</p> <p>REDIbus</p> <p>Reading Buses</p> <p>Access and Disability Working Group members (via Policy Team)</p> <p>Physical Disability and Sensory Needs Partnership members (via Adult Social Care)</p> <p>Citizen Panel</p>	<p>An 8 week consultation was carried out in May - July 2018 following a mail shot to all Access Pass holders (approx. 6,000) with a link to an online questionnaire as well as details of how to acquire and respond to a paper questionnaire, which was available in a variety of formats on request. Information was also distributed as printed media and on bus information screens.</p>	<p>May - July 2018</p>
<p>Older Person ENCTS Pass Holders</p> <p>Older Peoples Working Group (OPWG)</p> <p>Older Person Pass holders who use the REDIbus services</p>	<p>Further to above a 4 week consultation ran in Nov-Dec 18 ran with individual letters and questionnaires being sent to the 2,000 Older Person Pass holders who use the REDIbus services detailing the impact of removing free use. The consultation was also promoted via a press release, open online consultation and updates at meetings attended by vulnerable people, including the Older Peoples Working Group.</p>	<p>November - December 2018</p>

Equality Impact Assessment: Changes to Concessionary bus pass acceptance.

Using information from Census, residents survey data, service monitoring data, satisfaction or complaints, feedback, consultation, research, your knowledge and the knowledge of people in your team, staff groups etc. describe how the proposal could impact on each group. Include both positive and negative impacts.

The table below shows the gender profile of the current Access and Access Plus Companion holders who could be impacted by this proposal. This identifies a roughly even split of male and female users in each category but a slightly larger number of Access Pass holders than Access Plus Companion Pass holders who will be affected.

Summary at 15/05/2018	Female	Male	Total
Access Pass holders	1642	1704	3346
Access Plus Companion Pass holders	1165	1246	2411
Total Access and Access Plus Companion Pass holders			5757
Percentages	Female	Male	Total
Access Pass holders	49.1	50.9	100%
Access Plus Companion Pass holders	48.3	51.7	100%

The table below shows the age range of both the Access and the Access Plus Companion Pass holders. The largest percentage of age groups for both sets of users are of those aged between 40 and 59 years old. The lowest percentage of user groups are aged either 19 or under or 80 years old and above.

Age Range (years)	Access Plus Companion		Access	
	Total	%	Total	%
0-19	350	14.5	66	2.0
20-39	570	23.6	682	20.4
40-59	739	30.7	1335	39.9
60-79	562	23.3	1114	33.3
80+	190	7.9	149	4.5
Total	2411		3346	

Describe how this proposal could impact on Racial groups

This proposal does not impact on Racial groups

Is there a negative impact? No

Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/transgender (cover pregnancy and maternity, marriage)

This proposal does not impact on Gender/transgender.

Is there a negative impact? No

Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability

The proposal to change the hours of acceptance of the Concessionary Access bus pass and the non-acceptance of Access passes before 9:30 and after 11:00pm on Mondays to Friday, the removal of Access Plus Companion Passes and no longer allowing free travel on REDIbus services for Access and Access Plus Companion pass holders has an impact on Disability as the passes are only issued to those who qualify on disability grounds.

Consultation responses reported the likely impacts as being social isolation, unaffordability of trips made by companion and the inability of using their pass to travel for medical appointments, commuting trips or to attend school/college.

The proposal to remove the allowance for Access and Access plus Companion pass holders to travel before 9.30am instead of on or after 9.30am on Mondays to Fridays and to remove travel after 11.00pm on Mondays to Fridays for free will impact pass holders ability to travel for free at these times. They would need to either;

1. Travel after 9.30am which may delay them getting to appointments. However for the majority of concessionary pass journeys this delay will have no effect as users could arrange for appointments to be scheduled within revised scheme hours and continue to use their pass for travel.
2. Travel before 11.00pm which may require them to leave appointments or events earlier than they would otherwise intend. However for the majority of concessionary pass journeys this will have no effect as the majority of journeys are undertaken during the day.
3. Pay the commercial bus fare to travel before 9.30am or after 11.00pm.
4. Consider using alternative modes of transport including private vehicle use or taxi services.

The proposal to discontinue issuing Access plus Companion passes to allow users free travel for a Companion to assist them with their travel will impact these pass holders ability to travel. They would need to either:

1. Pay the commercial bus fare for a Companion to travel with them to assist in their journey.
2. Use the REDIbus dial-a-ride service for assisted travel. It should be noted that the removal of free travel on REDIbus dial-a-ride services is also a proposal therefore this will not be an option if the decision is taken to remove this discretionary element.
3. Continue to use their Access pass (with no Companion element) if the user feels they may now be able to travel without a Companion to assist them (this could be due to improvements in their personal circumstances or due to improvements in the bus vehicle and bus stop infrastructure (low floor, raised kerbs etc...))

4. Consider using alternative modes of transport including private vehicle use or taxi services.

The proposal to discontinue allowing Access pass holders to use the Readibus dial-a-ride services for free will impact their ability to travel. They would need to either:

1. Pay the commercial fare for Readibus services.
2. Use local bus services if the user feels they may now be able to travel on these service (this could be due to improvements in their personal circumstances or due to improvements in the bus vehicle and bus stop infrastructure (low floor, raised kerbs etc...))
3. Consider using alternative modes of transport including private vehicle use or taxi services.
4. Request alternative support from other Council services, such as social care.

The proposal to remove free travel on Readibus services for Older Persons pass holders is also considered in this assessment to ensure that both schemes are consistent and do not negatively impact on one group more than the other.

All of the proposals will remove a locally funded discretionary element which is currently offered in addition to the statutory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme. Reading Borough Council's commitment to the full statutory scheme is unaffected by the proposals.

Is there a negative impact? Yes

Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)

This proposal does not impact on sexual orientation.

Is there a negative impact? No

Describe how this proposal could impact on Age

This proposal does impact on Age.

In 2016 amendments to the use of the Older Persons ENCTS pass within Reading were made to revert to the national scheme and remove local discretionary elements. An EQIA was undertaken as part of this process.

Further consultation on the proposal to remove free use of the Readibus dial-a-ride service for eligible Older Person Pass holders took place in November on the proposal to take steps to ensure that the Access and Older Persons Pass schemes are aligned and do not negatively impact on one group more than the other.

As with the consultation on changes to the Access Pass, responses reported the likely impacts on Older Person Pass Holders as being social isolation, unaffordability of trips and the inability of using their pass to travel for medical appointments, shopping and leisure activities.

If the proposal to remove free use of the Readibus dial-a-ride service was to be taken forward, Older Persons Pass Holders would either need to:

1. Pay the commercial fare for ReadiBus services.
2. Use local bus services if the user feels they may now be able to travel on these service (this could be due to improvements in their personal circumstances or due to improvements in the bus vehicle and bus stop infrastructure (low floor, raised kerbs etc...)).
3. Consider using alternative modes of transport including private vehicle use or taxi services.
4. Request alternative support from other Council services, such as social care.

As with proposed changes to the Access Pass scheme, this proposal would remove a locally funded discretionary element which is currently offered in addition to the statutory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme. Reading Borough Council's commitment to the full statutory scheme is unaffected by the proposals.

Is there a negative impact? No

Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief?

This proposal does not impact on religious belief.

Is there a negative impact? No

Make a Decision

If the impact is negative then you must consider whether you can legally justify it. If not you must set out how you will reduce or eliminate the impact. If you are not sure what the impact will be you MUST assume that there could be a negative impact. You may have to do further consultation or test out your proposal and monitor the impact before full implementation.

1. **No negative impact identified** — Go to sign off —

2. **Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason**

You must give due regard or weight but this does not necessarily mean that the equality duty overrides other clearly conflicting statutory duties that you must comply with.

Reason

The proposal to remove locally funded discretionary elements offered in addition to the statutory ENCTS benefits is intended to help save money which the Council no longer has available in its budgets going forwards.

The impacts on disabled and older people who enjoy the benefits of using their concessionary bus pass do not compromise the intentions or rules of the ENCTS.

3. **Negative impact identified or uncertain**

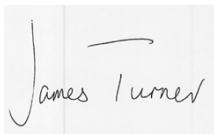
What action will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale?

The Council could consider making only one or a combination of the three changes outlined above, however it is not possible to assess the proposed level of savings that would be achieved if this approach is taken as there is likely to be displacement between the three elements. For instance, if the Council removed the Companion entitlement but retained the free use of ReadiBus services, it may result in a rise in the demand for ReadiBus services from pass holders who are unable to travel on the regular bus network without a companion. This approach has the potential to increase the cost to the Council of providing the scheme as trips on Readibus are reimbursed at a higher rate than those on local bus services.

How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?

Reading Borough Council will continue to monitor feedback from ENCTS pass users so as to assess the impacts of the decisions for future consideration.

Signed (completing officer)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Turner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the "T".

Date 21/01/2019

Signed (Lead Officer)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be initials or a stylized name.

Date 21/01/2019