




Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer or www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment

<u>Organisation prepared for (mark as appropriate)</u>	 Somerset Council	 NHS Somerset	 NHS Somerset NHS Foundation Trust
<u>Version</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Date Completed</u>	<u>15/11/23</u>
<u>Description of what is being impact assessed</u>			
<p>The government recently launched the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) 2 scheme which will provide £129 million to support the introduction of zero emission buses over financial years 2023/34 and 2024/25. Funding is available for both vehicles and infrastructure and will initially be focusing on services in rural areas.</p> <p>All Somerset public bus operators subject to the Enhanced Partnership (EP) and/or signed up to the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) were advised of the opportunity and invited to submit a bid in partnership with Somerset Council. Only one bus operator, Buses of Somerset (BOS), indicated their interest in submitting a bid and confirmed that there is no requirement for any funding from the Local Authority.</p> <p>Buses of Somerset have indicated that they would like to bid for funding of 25 electric vehicles which will be based in their Taunton depot and serving rural routes 21 (Taunton to Burnham on Sea), 22 (Taunton to Wellington/Rockwell Green) and 28 (Taunton to Minehead) as well as Taunton town services 1, and 2. The vehicles will be a combination of double deckers and single deck vehicles and will replace current vehicles in operation on a like for like basis.</p>			

Vehicles will be new, modern and compliant with Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR). They will have 1 PSVAR compliant wheelchair space and 1 flexible space. They will have next stop display systems and hearing loops.

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

Age:

The ages of Somerset residents are:

- education or pre-education age (0-24) 26.56%
- approximate working age (25-65) 49.28%
- approximate pensionable age (65+) 24.16%

The overall age profile of residents in Somerset is changing with an increase in elderly retired residents, particularly in West Somerset. These groups will be affected differently depending on services cut, changes to time of service and or routes.

Older women are particularly affected by a lack of transport, especially if they outlive their partner as they are less likely to drive a car. In Somerset, females over the age of 65 are 3 times less likely to own their own private transport than their male counterparts.

While older people are less likely to have access to private transport if they live in towns, there are nevertheless around 2,700 women and 900 men aged 65 or over living in rural villages with no access to car or van. This can often contribute to increased social isolation and poorer wellbeing.

Gender:

51.1% of the population of Somerset are female and 48.9% are male. (Projected estimates through Somerset Intelligence.org.uk based on 2011 census data).

Disability:

21.6% of people in Somerset have a limiting long-term illness.

Race:

The demographic of Somerset consists of:

94.6% as 'White British',

2.8% as 'White Other' and,

2.6% as 'Other'

Between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses, there has been an increase in the estimated number of residents aged 20-24, which may be linked to increases in young migrant workers.

Social Economic:

Somerset currently has 16.64% of families with no cars or vans which is much lower than the national average of 23.6%.

1 in 5 Somerset residents aged 65 or more have no access to car or van. The proportion is even higher in some rural towns and villages and amongst women (2011 Census)

Although 83.36% of households in Somerset have a car/van, in most cases the main wage earner uses the vehicle to access employment. Therefore, public transport is relied on by the other members of the household to access services.

13% of households in Somerset are workless.

Working age main benefit claimants in Somerset is at 9.2% total population in 2020.

Rurality:

Somerset is one of the most rural counties in England. Its population density of 1.5 people per hectare is well below the England average of 4.1 per hectare. In particular, West Somerset's density of 0.5 per hectare is one of the five lowest of any local authority in England. 48 of Somerset's 138 council wards have a population density of under 1 per hectare, including representatives of all five districts. (Somerset Intelligence)

A document by Rural England in 2016 called "State of Rural Services" states that 88% of the mileage by those living in smaller rural settlements in England, is made by private van or car, with only 2% of mileage done by local bus in comparison to 5% in urban areas.

Broadly, around 50% of Somerset OAs are classed as 'Urban City and Town'; 20% are 'Rural Town and Fringe'; and 30% are Rural Village and Hamlets'.

1 in 9 rural households do not have access to a car (or van).

Social Isolation:

The availability of affordable, accessible and safe transport has been identified as having a huge impact on social isolation and loneliness. Poor transport can restrict access to opportunities such as further education, training, employment, as well as access to health facilities, shops and amenities (Clarke, 2014). Therefore, reducing barriers to local public and community transport should be a top priority for local authorities looking to combat social isolation.

The 2014/15 Community Life Survey showed that the Southwest has the highest rate of formal volunteering of any region in England.

Carers:

There are over 58,300 carers in Somerset, which constitutes 11% of the total population.

Military Covenant:

There are 4,670 Ministry of Defence personnel working in Somerset (as of Oct 2017).

The armed forces population was much younger than the general population; almost 64% were in the 16-34 age group and only 7.5% were aged 50 or more.

Of the 4,670 personnel, 92% were male.

For every serving member of the Forces in Somerset there is approximately one spouse and/or child, which in 2012 was estimated to be between 3,300 and 3,900 people, including 1,700 to 2,200 children.

14% of working age veterans in Somerset had a long-term health problem or disability which limited their day-to-day activity. (2011 census)

There is a good deal of evidence that spouses/partners who contributed to the review had found it very difficult to register with a local GP when they moved to a new area. The difficulty in registering with NHS doctors is exacerbated by the relative isolation of some bases. Families might have to travel some distance to see a doctor or dentist, even if they can find one. Since not all non-serving partners are able to drive or have a car, they are reliant on public transport, which can be poor. – Living in our shoes report 2020.

Public Transport Usage in Somerset:

Based on 2022-23 data, there were 4.4 million adult single passenger journeys made on public transport in Somerset (registered public bus services) of which 1.7 million journeys (39%) were made by concessionary pass holders.

At August 2023, the total number of live concessionary passes issued to senior citizens in Somerset is 98,931, of which 94,684 were age-related and 4,067 disability-related.

Those aged 65 or more living in rural areas are only half as likely as those in the same age group in urban areas to use public transport at least once a week. (Somerset Intelligence)

Older people living in rural areas do not use public transport because it is less convenient, infrequent, does not go where they wish or is simply not available. In contrast, amongst older urban residents, poor health and mobility are more likely to be barriers than problems with frequency, availability or destinations. (Somerset Intelligence)

Demand Responsive Transport (SCC Slinky services) – In 2022-23 there were 33,420 single passenger journeys made on Slinky services, with an average of 565 individual passengers utilising the service each month during 2022-23.

The DfT Bus Usage survey found that Somerset residents made c6.3 million bus journeys in 2018/19. This averages at 11.3 journeys per capita, the 5th lowest of all English Local Authorities.

Between 2017/18 and 2019/20, total bus mileage in Somerset dropped 15.4% whilst the number of commercial passengers dropped 13%. Our experience shows evening and weekend services are usually first to go.

Expressed as a rate per head of population, Somerset's bus usage was the fifth lowest in England in 2018/19.

Sources of data used:

To inform the above information the below sites were used:

Disability - <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/health-and-disability.html>

Age - <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/population-estimates-and-projections/>

Gender - <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/population-estimates-and-projections/>

Race - <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/ethnicitytest/>

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/cyp-population.html>

Social Economic - <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/households-with-no-car-or-van.html>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2017>

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1941962904/report.aspx?town=somerset#tabjobs>

Social Isolation – Social Isolation and Loneliness in the UK (Hannah Griffiths), Social Isolation in Bristol (2014), (David Clarke)

Rurality - <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/rurality.html>

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/files/State%20of%20Rural%20Services%20report%202016.pdf>

Carers - <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/carers.html>

Military Covenant - <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/armed-forces-serving.html>

Living in our shoes report 2020

Public Transport Usage in Somerset – Somerset County Council concessionary fares database,

2011/2021 Census (uplifted census data has been utilised where possible) <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/census-datasets.html>

Population and age breakdown - <https://citypopulation.de/en/search/?q=Somerset>

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups and what have they told you? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

Tom Rutland - Public Health Promotion Manager – Equalities

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Considered with no impact highlighted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with learning disabilities and sensory loss may struggle to understand or recognise the vehicle changes on this route particularly as branding will be updated to indicate the vehicles are electric which may cause confusion and stress when trying to use the service if the information/promotion is not set out in clear formats for all. • All vehicles will be modern and fully accessible, with a PSVAR compliant wheelchair space, next stop displays and hearing loops, hopefully leading to a better travel experience. • The lighting levels on the new vehicles will be at the very least the same standard as currently provided, so will be comparable and will not impact on passengers with visual impairments. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered with no impact highlighted. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered with no impact highlighted. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered with no impact highlighted. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People where English is not their first language may struggle to understand or recognise the vehicle changes on the route which may cause confusion and stress when trying to use the service if the information/promotion is not set out in clear formats for all. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered with no impact highlighted. 	☐	☐	☐
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered with no impact highlighted. 	☐	☐	☐
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered with no impact highlighted. 	☐	☐	☐
Armed Forces (including serving personnel, families and veterans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered with no impact highlighted. 	☐	☐	☐
Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<p>Low Income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered with no impact highlighted. 	☐	☐	☐
Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<p>Rurality/isolation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those people who live in rural parts of the county that will be served by the new vehicles will now have access to the most modern electric buses, improving the comfort of the journey and hopefully encouraging more people to use the service. 	☐	☐	☒
Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<p>Carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered with no impact highlighted. 	☐	☐	☐

Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
Ensure that any promotion material and information regarding which services are changing to the new vehicles and new branding, are clear and available in easily understandable formats for all potential service users.	Select date	Andrew Doyle	Feedback from service users	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use the Travel Trainers, who work with LD clients to encourage them to travel independently, to help deliver the information on the changes to service users.	Select date	Natasha Bates	Feedback from Travel Trainers	<input type="checkbox"/>
The vehicles will comply with the reasonable adjustment element of the Equalities Act 2010 to ensure display screens are fit for purpose and viewable to all.	Select date	First Bus	Feedback from service users and vehicle checks	<input type="checkbox"/>

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

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Completed by:	Nicholas Margison – Commissioning Manager - Transport
Date	15/11/23
Signed off by:	Natasha Bates – Service Commissioning Manager - Transport

Date	28/11/23
Equality Lead sign off name:	Tom Rutland
Equality Lead sign off date:	30/11/23
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	Nicholas Margison/Natasha Bates
Review date:	30/05/24