



## Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

<b>Organisation prepared for</b>	Somerset West and Taunton		
<b>Version</b>	1.1	<b>Date Completed</b>	01/02/2021
<b>Description of what is being impact assessed</b>			
<p>Proposal to introduce a new table of hackney carriage fares for the district, which will see fares increase.</p> <p>This proposal doesn't target any particular group of customers. The proposed table of fares would apply to all those using a taxi, irrespective of their Protected Characteristic.</p> <p>The fares will not apply to Private Hire Vehicles.</p>			
<b>Evidence</b>			
<p><b>What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups?</b> Sources such as the <a href="#">Office of National Statistics</a>, <a href="#">Somerset Intelligence Partnership</a>, <a href="#">Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA)</a>, Staff and/ or <a href="#">area profiles</a>, should be detailed here</p> <p>There are no available statistics on the proportion of the population as a whole, or a proportion of those who fall within any of the protected characteristic groups, that use taxis.</p> <p>According to Somerset Intelligence, 17.5% of households in the former Taunton Deane district are without a car or van and for West Somerset, it is 17.6%.</p>			

This assessment has been carried out acknowledging, anecdotally, that taxis are an essential form of public transport used significantly by the following:

- Households without a vehicle (often lower income households and older people);
- Individuals with certain disabilities which renders them unable to drive;
- Households in areas with limited bus connections.
- Older people.
- Younger people, in relation to their access of the night-time economy.

Given the proposal would result in an across the board rise in the cost of using taxis, it could be argued that it impacts negatively on all groups.

However, those identified above will be partly or even wholly, in some cases, reliant on taxis for transport. Therefore we believe that the cumulative negative financial impact on these groups would be potentially greater than others, due to the frequency on which they use the service, and this is reflected in some of the objections received from the public.

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

In accordance with section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, notice of the proposal was published in two local newspapers and at the council offices and 19 days given for the public to make objections. The proposal was also advertised on the council website.

There were **eight** objections to the proposal.

Of the **eight**, **six** state that the increase should not be the same for the West Somerset area. Of the **six**:

- **three** make reference to the rural nature of the area and limited access to other forms of public transport.
- **two** mention the impact on older people.
- **one** mentions the impact on those with disabilities who are reliant on taxis.

It is suggested in one objection that, instead of creating a single table of fares for the whole of the district, both of the existing tables of fares receive a percentage increase, meaning that the West Somerset fares increase but remain lower than the Taunton Deane area in recognition of the rural nature of the area. The reason for proposing a single set of fares (rather than just for the Taunton Deane area, where the business who requested the increase are based), was to ensure taxi drivers across the whole of the Somerset West

and Taunton district were equally rewarded for the work they do. As the table of fares the council sets is a maximum rate that can be charged, this still leaves room for customers to negotiate lower fares and competition in the marketplace.

### 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
<b>Age</b>	<p>A significant proportion of older people use taxis regularly and therefore, the cost increase would have a greater aggregated negative financial impact on that group than on those members of the community who use taxis infrequently or not at all.</p> <p>Similarly, Taxis have a particularly important role in the night-time economy where younger people represent a significant proportion of users. Consequently, younger people may also experience a more significant negative impact as a consequence of the aggregation of higher costs.</p>	X	□	□
<b>Disability</b>	<p>Those with disabilities which mean they are unable to drive, are more likely to use taxis regularly and therefore, the cost increase would have a more noticeable impact than those members of the community who use taxis infrequently or not at all.</p>	X	□	□
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<p>It is believed the outcome will not have a significant impact on this group as a whole (although at an individual level the greater the use of taxis the greater the financial impact will be as a result of increased fares).</p>	□	X	□

<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	It is believed the outcome will not have a significant impact on this group as a whole (although at an individual level the greater the use of taxis the greater the financial impact will be as a result of increased fares).	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	It is believed the outcome will not have a significant impact on this group as a whole (although at an individual level the greater the use of taxis the greater the financial impact will be as a result of increased fares).	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	It is believed the outcome will not have a significant impact on this group as a whole (although at an individual level the greater the use of taxis the greater the financial impact will be as a result of increased fares).	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	It is believed the outcome will not have a significant impact on this group as a whole (although at an individual level the greater the use of taxis the greater the financial impact will be as a result of increased fares).	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sex</b>	It is believed the outcome will not have a significant impact on this group as a whole (although at an individual level the greater the use of taxis the greater the financial impact will be as a result of increased fares).	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	It is believed the outcome will not have a significant impact on this group as a whole (although at an individual level the greater the use of taxis the greater the financial impact will be as a result of increased fares).	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</b>	Households on lower income, particularly those with no access to a vehicle, and households living in rural areas with limited access to buses, are more likely to use taxis regularly and therefore, a cost increase would have a more noticeable impact than those members of the community who use taxis infrequently or not at all.  That being said, the proposed increase would have a positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>

	impact on those taxi drivers who can be considered to be part of a low income household.			
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**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
N/A				

**If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.**

It is unfortunate but unavoidable that a taxi fare increase will have more of an impact on certain protected groups, by virtue of their being more likely to use taxis more frequently than other groups. How much of an impact will depend on how regularly an individual uses taxis and, generally speaking, how far they travel as well as their financial circumstances.

Whilst the council could, in theory, create a table of fares that ensures certain protected groups pay lower rates, it is difficult to conceive how it might work in practice, in particular how individuals would evidence that they are eligible for the lower rate. For example, not all disabilities are plainly visible and, just as with face mask exemptions under Covid regulations, there is no recognised scheme which provides individuals with a formal document or ID to evidence their circumstances for these kinds of situations.

That being said, the taxi trades in the former Taunton Deane and West Somerset districts have not had fare increases in over 9 years, during which time fuel prices have reached a record high, general motoring costs have risen by 22.59%, the cost of living has increased by 30.82% (ONS) and, during the past couple of years, the trade has been significantly impacted by Covid 19 restrictions. Against this backdrop the proposed increase does not, therefore, seem unreasonable.

Were taxi fares not to increase across both areas of the district (despite the significant inflationary pressures identified earlier and the fall in trade caused through restrictions associated with Covid 19), there is a risk that operating a taxi could cease to be viable for

many (particularly also given the current pull of improved salaries in other driving professions). This would result in less tax available for the customer, which would ultimately be a greater negative impact on those reliant upon this service.

<b>Completed by:</b>	John Rendell
<b>Date</b>	02/12/2021
<b>Signed off by:</b>	Paul Harding

<b>Date</b>	02/12/2021
<b>Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:</b>	02/12/2021
<b>To be reviewed by:</b> (officer name)	
<b>Review date:</b>	