




# 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](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment)

Organisation prepared for (mark as appropriate)					
Version	<u>1</u>	Date Completed	<u>15/11/23</u>		
<u>Description of what is being impact assessed</u>					
<p>The current operator of the Taunton Park and Ride service gave notice on the contract, with effect from 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The expectation is that the cost of providing this contract will now increase and with Somerset Council recently declaring a financial emergency, Transporting Somerset are reviewing ways to limit the impact of any contract price increases or make savings on the contract.</p> <p>One of the options being explored is to cease providing the Park and Ride service completely. This is a discretionary service used in the main for commuters to access the town centre. The service runs in a figure of 8 to and from the sites with Castle Green, in the centre of Taunton used as a midpoint, and is the only regular service to serve Musgrove Park Hospital during the day. Passengers can use the service from any of the designated stops along the route and don't need to have parked at one of the Park and Ride sites to access the bus. On average there are 1550 journeys a day on this service between October 2022 to October 2023.</p> <p>A number of changes have taken place to reduce the cost of the park &amp; ride service over time which includes new service providers, reductions in frequency and the implementation of CCTV to remove the need for customer service assistants at the sites. Options for commercial use of the sites have also been considered and part of the Gateway site is now leased to EDF</p>					

As well as the impact on passengers the closure of the service will have an environmental impact and will have a detrimental effect on a number of improvement and development plans within the Taunton area of the County. These include: -

- Taunton Town Public realm
- Somerset's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)
- Taunton Garden Town improvements and development and the new Taunton Strategy
- SCC Passenger Transport Strategy
- Taunton Car Parking Strategy

Large amounts of modelling on these developments has already taken place, closure of the Park & Ride would preclude this modelling being used in a meaningful way and could impede many of these developments without additional modelling being undertaken.

#### 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 Taunton residents are:

- education or pre-education age (0-17): 16,168 (21%)
- approximate working age (18-64): 44,330 (58%)
- approximate pensionable age (65+): 15,957 (21%)

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 (292,100) and 48.9% are male (279,447). (Based on 2021 census data)

**Disability:**

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

Just under 100,000 people in Somerset (18.8% of the population) said they had a long-term condition or disability which limited their day-to-day activities a lot or a little.

**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 (Low Income):**

15.9% of households in Somerset, have no car or van, 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 84.1% 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 are workless.

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

### **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.

### **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.

Park and ride patronage between October 2022 - October 2023 was 475,616, this has a daily average of 1,550 journeys a day. Of the 475,616, Concessionary pass holders made 141,199 of these journeys, which equates to 29.98% of the total journeys.

As of 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.

At the time of the 2021 census, the government advice was for people to work from home where possible, and to avoid public transport. Of those who were travelling to a place of work, 78.5% were travelling by car or van. Only 2.1% were travelling by public transport, with 17% either walking or cycling. It is difficult to determine the impact of the government advice around avoiding public transport on these figures.

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/>

<https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/>

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

<https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/>

**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)

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

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

**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>

**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?

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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Working age population who drive and use the P&amp;R could now face increased parking charges if they wish to park in town. This could affect younger workers who are likely to have less well paid jobs, potentially making work no longer viable due to the extra cost</li><li>Teenagers/Young adults who can travel independently but do not drive and use the service to access the hospital or to catch the</li></ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<p>Falcon Bus to Bristol, Exeter or Plymouth for onward travel, may now be unable to access further education, health appointments and work opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older people are more likely to need access to health care at MPH and those who do not drive may no longer be able to access these services or face increased costs.</li> </ul>			
<b>Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People with disabilities may no longer be able to access health services at MPH if they cannot walk to the site from the town centre or they will face increased parking costs if they park on the MPH site.</li> <li>People who are unable to drive on medical grounds, who would have previously caught the P&amp;R from the town centre, may no longer be able to access health services at MPH. If P&amp;R services are withdrawn this could create a loss of independence and access to health &amp; social care services as well as access to work opportunities.</li> </ul>	☒	☐	☐
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considered with no impact highlighted.</li> </ul>	☐	☐	☐
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considered with no impact highlighted.</li> </ul>	☐	☐	☐

<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pregnant women will have an increased need to access health services at MPH and therefore may rely on the P&amp;R to access these services rather than driving or as a way to save parking charges.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Migrant workers unable to access work and health services at MPH as they are less likely to have access to or be able to afford their own vehicle and may rely on the P&amp;R to access MPH.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considered with no impact highlighted.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sex</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Females could be impacted more than men as statistics show that women make the most use of public transport. The most trips are made by women in the 17-20 and 60+ age groups with females in the older age group being less likely to have access to a car than their male counterparts.</li> <li>Women are more likely to be on lower paid jobs so having to pay increased parking charges to park in Taunton could make employment no longer viable due to extra cost.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considered with no impact highlighted.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



<b>Armed Forces (including serving personnel, families and veterans)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considered with no impact highlighted.</li> </ul>	□	□	□
<b>Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</b>	<p><b>Low Income:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families and individuals who are considered low income may find that ceasing the P&amp;R directly affects their ability to access health services at MPH and their ability to attend work and interviews to gain employment as they may not be able to afford the extra cost of parking charges.</li> </ul>	☒	□	□
<b>Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</b>	<p><b>Rurality/isolation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considered with no impact highlighted.</li> </ul>	□	□	□
<b>Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</b>	<p><b>Carers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carers may use the P&amp;R service to access MPH for their dependant, as they are more likely to use the public transport network and be on a lower income. The loss of the P&amp;R may mean they can no longer access the hospital and may not be able to afford the parking charges.</li> </ul>	☒	□	□

**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.

<b>Action taken/to be taken</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>How will it be monitored?</b>	<b>Action complete</b>
Talk to bus operators who operate services in Taunton to negotiate if they are willing to divert services into the hospital.	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
Taunton has a town centre bus network and this could be used by travellers who wish to access the town centre. It is the same cost as the P&R.	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
Free hospital transport is available for anyone who qualifies and may struggle to get to health appointments either on medical or social grounds.	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

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

The extra costs associated with using town centre or MPH car parks cannot be mitigated, and if anything may get worse if parking charges increase.

<b>Completed by:</b>	<b>Nicholas Margison</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>15/11/23</b>
<b>Signed off by:</b>	<b>Natasha Bates</b>

<b>Date</b>	<b>24/11/23</b>
<b>Equality Lead sign off name:</b>	<b>Tom Rutland</b>
<b>Equality Lead sign off date:</b>	<b>27/11/23</b>
<b>To be reviewed by:</b> (officer name)	<b>Nicholas Margison/Natasha Bates</b>
<b>Review date:</b>	<b>6 months from any decision being made to cease the service</b>