

Equality Impact Assessment Form

1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

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Directorate: Environment	Date of Assessment: 19 th January 2011

2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function:

Issuing Concessionary Fare passes
Is this new or an existing one? Existing (but new to GCC. This service was previously provided by the Districts)
See also the associated EIA into the proposed change of valid hours for bus passes.

3. Briefly describe its aims and objectives

Providing concessionary fare passes is a statutory service that from 1 st April 2011 passes from the Districts to the County Council. Previously passes were issued at : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• District offices• A few other locations• By post (certain districts only) It is proposed that once responsibility passes to GCC, passes will be issued <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On-line (for age related passes only)• At libraries (age related or disability related)• At some parish and town council offices

4. Who is intended to benefit from it and in what way?

This change will benefit: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicants applying on grounds of age as they will be able to apply from their own home (if they have internet access)• All applicants as for many it will be easier to get to a library or parish/town council office than it may be to get to their District office• GCC – we will not have to pay District staff to do it as the role will be assumed by library staff. The overall cost of administering will reduce the more applicants apply on-line.

5. What outcomes are expected?

Customer satisfaction improves as an unknown, but increasing, percentage of pass applications are made on-line.

Disabled and some age related applicants will go to their library where the library staff will assist them with their application.

Overall costs will be lower than current district arrangements

6. Have you consulted on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function?

Yes, between mid November 2010 and mid January 2011, we have held a joint consultation with district councils on proposals to change the time of travel and the application process.

Nine local drop in sessions were held across Gloucestershire. Publicity was through local media, posters in libraries, district offices, on buses and at bus stops. A telephone help line and web pages were established and a public survey undertaken - this could be returned by freepost or completed online.

As of 19th January 2011 just under 900 completed responses had been received. Assessment of the first 570 returns indicated low levels of concern about the change to on line applications, but some concerns about the impact of library closures, especially in rural areas. We have also received expressions of interest from some parish and town councils willing to assist with applications, to increase accessibility to the service for rural residents.

We have identified that the government may establish an online database to share information about disability benefits. This could help us to introduce changes later which allow online validation of disabled applications. Currently we propose to do this at libraries by checking documents.

7. What evidence has been used for this assessment: eg Research, previous consultations, MAIDEN?

Results of consultation feedback and Discussions with district, parish and town councils.

As part of the selection process for procuring the application system a group of volunteers aged 65 to 85 years old took part in assessing the bids from suppliers. The winning bid received the highest score from this group, who commented on the user friendly system for applying for a bus pass.

8. Could a particular group be affected differently in either a negative or positive way?

Please evidence that you have used the Consultation toolkit and planning template <http://staffnet/index.cfm?articleid=5203>

	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Evidence
Age		X		<p>For many applicants, the application will be easier since it can be done on-line from any PC.</p> <p>For those who are uneasy with PC's or do not have internet access, they will have to go to a library rather than a District office. Even with the proposed reductions in libraries under Meeting the Challenge, there will still be more libraries than District offices. For most people therefore the change will make applying more convenient.</p> <p>A panel of 5 retired members of the public aged 65 – 84 helped in the selection of the proposed system. The selected system was their preferred choice.</p>
Disability	X	X		Disabled people will have to visit a library to apply for a bus pass. This may or may not be more convenient for them than visiting their District Office.
Gender			X	
Race including Gypsy & Traveller			X	
Religion or Belief			X	
Sexual Orientation			X	
Transgender			X	
Other groups: eg Rural Isolation, Long term unemployed, Deprivation Health Inequality			X	
Community Cohesion Community Cohesion (Contd)	Describe how the proposed activity, policy, strategy, service, procedure or function will contribute to Community Cohesion. You will need to consider; Is there equality between those who will and won't benefit from the proposal? Are there strong relationships between groups and communities in the area affected and will the proposed action promote positive relationships? Does the proposal bring groups / communities into			Encouraging people to come into libraries will assist in community cohesion as they may find other useful information about local activities while they are there. .

	increased contact with each other	
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9. If you have identified a negative impact in question 8, what actions have you undertaken or do you plan to undertake to lessen or negate this impact?

1) Disabled people. Currently 7000 of the 102,000 passes in circulation are issued on grounds of disability, and additional documentary proof is required. By law these are only issued to people who are disabled but do not qualify on the grounds of age, i.e. those under 60. Arguably they may find the new online service more accessible than before if they can apply from home or work. There has been little comment about this in the consultation however if we become aware of significant issues later we may be able to consider a postal application service for disabled passes.

We are looking at the possibility of enabling disabled applications to be made at other locations such as parish councils, or possibly adult drop in centres for disabled people.

Please indicate whether these actions will be carried forward into level 2 or level 3 business plans.

Action(s):	How will this action be Monitored/Evaluated	When will policy / service / strategy / procedure / function be reviewed?	Carried to Level 2?	Carried to Level 3?
Consultation into impact of location change	Results by 25 th January 2011	January 2011	N	N
Implementation of online applications	Quarterly system reports starting June 2011	September 2011	N	Y
Providing parish/town council application service	Implement Feb/March 2011. Monitor during 2011.	September 2011	N	Y

Declaration

We are satisfied that an Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function * (delete those which do not apply) and where a negative impact has been identified, actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact.

We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the County Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment

Completed by: Pippa Dickinson

Date: 19/1/2011

Role: Project Manager

Countersigned by Head of Service

Philip Williams

Date: 19/1/2011

Date for Review: September 2011

Please forward an electronic copy to the Equalities Team by emailing

equalities@gloucestershire.gov.uk

The original signed hard copy and electronic copy should be kept with your team for audit purposes.