

Subject:	Consultation Responses: Community Transport	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Council	Date:	20 th July 2011
Report of:	Chief Executive	Portfolio Holder:	Leader of the Council
Key Decision:	No <input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Community Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	No	Attached: No
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1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)
1.1	That Council notes the report.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To receive information on Lancashire County Council's review of Community Transport attached at Appendix 1.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:
- **A clean and green Rossendale** – creating a better environment for all.
 - **A healthy and successful Rossendale** – supporting vibrant communities and a strong economy.
 - **Responsive and value for money local services** – responding to and meeting the different needs of customers and improving the cost effectiveness of services.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Decisions made at County Council level in relation to community transport will create an impact at District level.

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 5.1 Lancashire County Council submitted a report to its Cabinet on the Review of Community Transport on 3rd June 2011 as attached at Appendix 1.
- 5.2 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 6.1 Any financial implications arising must be contained within the Council's financial resources and its Medium Term Financial Strategy.

7. MONITORING OFFICER

- 7.1 No additional comments.

8. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

8.1 There are no Human Resources implications, but there are equality implications which are detailed within the appendices.

9. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

9.1 Consultation Group.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 Members need to be kept informed of community transport updates.

No background papers

The Review of Community Transport
(Appendices "A", "B" and "C" refer)

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Executive Summary

The report reviews the present operation of Community Transport throughout Lancashire and recommends a package of proposals which will ensure that community transport is still viable despite the loss of funding previously provided through concessionary travel payments.

This Report and the Equality Impact Assessments shown at Appendices "A" and "B" identify the potential equality impacts on passengers and, having regard to the Council's duty under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Cabinet Member is recommended to approve the proposals set out below.

This is a Key Decision and is included in the Forward Plan and the provisions of Standing Order No 27 have been complied with.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member is recommended to agree that:

- i. with effect from 1 July 2011, fares are charged in line with the proposals set out in the report,
- ii. with effect from 1 July 2011, the Lancashire wide core operating times be set at 0930 until 1430,
- iii. a fund of £100,000 be made available to the providers of community transport contracted services to ensure their stability as set out in the report,
- iv. the Red Rose Runner service be withdrawn from operation on 30 June 2011, and
- v. subject to approval of i. to iv. above, that the impact on community transport be closely monitored and a further report be brought to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport in six months time.

This decision should be implemented immediately for the purpose of Standing Order 34(3) as the delay could adversely affect the execution of the County Council's responsibilities. The reason for this is to give transport operators and the public, in particular service users as much notice as possible of the potential changes which will be effective from the 1 July 2011.

Background and Advice

From 1 April 2011, responsibility for mandatory concessionary travel schemes transferred from lower tier authorities (district councils) to upper tier authorities ie county councils and unitary authorities. Consequently, a decision was taken on the 2 March 2011 by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to introduce the mandatory concessionary travel scheme as from 1 April 2011.

Concessionary travel on community transport was a discretionary element of the previous scheme and was funded by district councils. Following the transfer of responsibility for concessionary travel to the County Council from 1 April 2011, the County Council received a shortfall of around £5million from central government for the statutory scheme only. With this financial background, neither the County nor the District Councils were in a position to continue funding the use of concessionary travel on community transport, the cost of which was approximately £700,000 in 2010/11, in addition to the £1million per annum contribution towards the operation of community transport made by the County Council.

The majority of contracts are operated by Travelcare, the County Council's in-house operator but, in addition to this, services in Ribble Valley, Chorley, West Lancashire and Preston and all community car schemes are operated by community transport operators with charitable status. The Preston area is operated through a joint contract between Preston Community Transport and Travelcare.

Transitional monies of £150,000, jointly funded by the County and District Councils has been put in place for an interim period of three months from 1 April 2011 and this has given time for a thorough review of community transport to be undertaken with a clear remit to make recommendations to ensure the sustainability of community transport in the future.

Reason for urgency

A review has been undertaken that has focussed on making community transport in Lancashire sustainable and providing a county-wide, equitable fare table and levels of service, coupled with efficiency savings and business opportunities. The review has involved extensive consultation over the past two months. As a consequence the implementation of the scheme was delayed until the 1 July 2011 pending the outcome of the review, which is detailed in this report. There is now a pressing need to implement the scheme and in order to avoid any prolonged uncertainty for transport operators and the public, and to give the required notice, the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee has been consulted and has agreed under the provisions of Standing Order No 27 that the making of the decision is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred.

The Review and Consultation

The review has been undertaken by TAS, a transport specialist company based in Preston with community transport expertise and local knowledge. Throughout this review, the community transport sector has been engaged in discussing the options for the future, particularly in relation to making the sector sustainable in the future.

A consultation programme was developed including the use of on-bus questionnaires to seek the views of community transport passengers and some 756 responses were received. District councils were consulted directly by TAS and town and parish councils were also given the opportunity to contribute either through correspondence or through a workshop that was held at County Hall at the beginning of May. A report summarising the results of the consultation with passengers is contained at Appendix "C".

The key areas of the review have focussed on making community transport in Lancashire sustainable and providing a county-wide, equitable fare table and levels of service, coupled with efficiency savings and business opportunities that can be introduced to compensate for the significant loss of concessionary revenue.

In addition, as the service is provided for potentially vulnerable members of society who may be unable to use conventional public transport, the review has considered the impact on these individuals and identified solutions to help those passengers for whom the introduction of charges will be a serious burden on their finances. Equality Impact Assessments have also been carried out in relation to the proposals regarding community transport and, separately, the proposal to discontinue the Red Rose Runner Service and these are shown at Appendices "A" and "B".

Advice is provided later in the Report in relation to the implications of the duty placed on the Council by virtue of s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 – the public sector equality duty.

The Proposals

- Fare Levels

TAS has undertaken detailed work on the number of passengers travelling and the distances of journeys made and have tested a number of options. After giving consideration to a number of options they have suggested a mileage-based fare table as set out below. They have considered the principles of equity, affordability, fairness, sustainability and deliverability and have recommended the following mileage-based core fare table:

Up to 2 miles - £2 adult single fare
Over 2 and up to 4 miles - £3 adult single fare
Over 4 and up to 9 miles - £4 adult single fare
Over 9 miles and up to 18 miles - £5 adult single fare
Over 18 miles - £10 adult single fare

These core fares, if agreed, set the maximum that can be charged and community transport operators would have the opportunity to charge less if local circumstances permit.

The current passenger trips and resistance factors have been taken into account and it is estimated that this option would generate £580,000 in fare income leaving a deficit of £117,000 per annum on the revenue received from concessionary fare income. None of the options considered fully replaced the level of concessionary fare revenue lost and it is clear that other remedial action needs to be taken in conjunction with this proposal. A 10% variation in passenger numbers would alter the fare assumptions by +/- £76,000.

With regard to Community Car schemes, it is proposed that the fares scale will be based on a charge of 40 pence per mile for each journey, which is the current charge payable by non-NoWcard holders and is the norm for many such schemes across the country. This will, at least initially, reduce the number of trips undertaken but there will be no increase in overhead costs to the two groups managing the schemes and no subsequent increases in costs to the County Council.

One of the questions in the consultation with passengers was whether visitors were prepared to pay an annual membership fee. The results are summarised at Appendix C but it is considered that the costs of administering a membership scheme would outweigh the financial benefits.

- Core level of service

Currently, although there are variations between schemes, community transport schemes generally operate between 0830 and 1600. In order to address the overall deficit, it is proposed that there should be a county-wide, core period of operation between 0930 and 1430 on Mondays to Fridays, and this level of service would be guaranteed to passengers.

Operators would be free to supplement community transport journeys outside these times or look to develop and undertake other, more remunerative, work. This freedom will give operators the opportunity to reduce costs or supplement their income in order to address the shortfall in fares revenue as described above. With regard to Travelcare, the County Council's in-house operator, there are options to reduce costs and they will have the opportunity to declare some vehicles surplus to requirements if they operate to the core times and this, together with a reduction in drivers' hours, will lead to reductions in costs.

- Implications and Mitigation

The fares proposed will undoubtedly meet with some resistance from users. However, fares less than those proposed would only worsen the financial situation and impact on future sustainability and the current proposals mitigate the impact of the withdrawal of concessionary travel as described in more detail in Appendix "A".

The increase in fares could have the effect that some vulnerable members of the community may no longer be able to afford to travel on these services. Where this is

the case the County Council's welfare rights service will work with service users to ensure that such users are fully aware of the welfare benefits for which they may be eligible and to maximise the take up of benefits. However, there may remain some individuals who are unable to afford the increased fares.

The proposals will give community transport groups, including Travelcare, a realistic opportunity to become sustainable. However, they take into account only a full year effect and, in the short term, reductions in revenue will be more severe because it is anticipated that there will be a greater loss of passengers over the short term before numbers are expected to build up again. Coupled with this, operators will need time to implement efficiency measures and seek to acquire other work. TAS has suggested that certain operators are particularly vulnerable to this scenario and there is a real danger that they may go out of business before they have had time to benefit from the proposals.

It is therefore proposed that a £100,000 fund be made available to ensure stability for providers of community transport contracted services over this short term scenario. The income achieved by operators will be monitored over the period 1st July 2011 – 31st December 2011. In the event that any operators actually have an increased income over this period from the income they were achieving over the same period in the previous year then such operators will be obliged to contribute such excess income to the fund. However, it is accepted that any such monies will be relatively small and that the majority of the fund will be made up of money from the community transport fund which, at present, has a balance of £117,000 from the community transport fund allocated to the County Council from central government earlier this year.

Payments from the fund will be made subject to certain conditions, to be drawn up by the Council. This will ensure that the monies are properly spent on the community transport services and that the effect can be monitored.

The overall impacts on community transport will be monitored closely and a further report will be brought to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport in six months time.

Included within the community transport services outlined above, the County Council currently supports the Red Rose Runner service which provides medical and well-being journeys from the Chorley and South Ribble areas at a net cost of £39,000 per annum.

In October 2010 the Red Rose Runner service was retendered but none of the bids submitted met the County Council's financial guidelines. As a result, the service was considered for withdrawal although it was subsequently extended during November 2010 to allow time for a consultation with users and stakeholders to take place. Having considered the responses, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport decided to extend the operation to 31 March 2011 and undertake a further review of contract performance during this period. As part of this agreed extension, it was decided that all passengers would pay an additional £1 per journey in an effort to make the service more sustainable.

Further tenders received to operate the Red Rose Runner from 1 April 2011 again failed to meet the County Council's guidelines and returned an estimated revenue to cost ratio of 21%. The service was extended until 30 June 2011 as part of the transitional arrangements mentioned above and, given the poor performance of the contract it is proposed that the service is withdrawn after operation on 30 June 2011. Wherever possible, journeys will be accommodated on the existing dial-a-ride service in the area although this is likely to apply to only a small number of passengers. An Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the proposal to discontinue the Red Rose Runner service is attached at Appendix "B".

In addition, a commercial community transport service is provided in the Wyre area by Lune Valley Transport and provides medical journeys. Whilst it does not receive direct subsidy from the County Council, in 2010/11 it received £30,000 in concessionary travel payments. The decision whether to continue operation after 1 July 2011 will be a commercial one but, if it should be withdrawn, it is recommended that where it is practicable journeys would be undertaken using the existing Wyre dial-a-ride service but that otherwise no replacement service would be provided.

The implications of the impacts identified in each of the EIAs are addressed below.

Equality and Diversity Implications

There are risks of an adverse impact on groups of people who have previously received the discretionary elements of the concessionary travel scheme, in particular elderly and disabled customers.

Equality impact assessments relating to the community transport proposals and the proposal to discontinue the Red Rose Runner service are attached at Appendices "A" and "B" which identify and analyse the impacts on service users, drawing upon monitoring information, and the responses received from operators, passengers and local councils as a result of the consultation exercise undertaken. A report summarising the results of the consultation is also provided at Appendix "C".

In relation to the community transport proposals, the recommendations mitigate some of the impacts that would otherwise occur whilst balancing these against the need to ensure the sustainability of community transport services generally. Similarly the EIA relating to the proposal to discontinue the Red Rose Runner service identifies a number of ways of mitigating the impacts although there will continue to be negative impacts for some current users.

In considering the recommendations the Cabinet Member must have regard to the Council's duty under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 as explained in the following section.

Legal Implications

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the 2010 Act) sets out the general equality duty that public authorities must comply with. The broad purpose of the duty is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day to day business of public authorities. If a local authority does not consider how a function can affect

different groups in different ways it is unlikely to have the intended effect and this can contribute to greater inequality and poor outcomes.

The Council must therefore, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are:

Age
Disability
Gender reassignment
Pregnancy and Maternity
Race
Religion or Belief
Sex
Sexual orientation

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity at paragraph b) above involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons at paragraph c) above involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

Compliance with the duty under section 149 may involve treating some persons more favourably than others, provided that this is not taken to permit conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by the Act.

Guidance issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission explains how public authorities can meet the requirements of the 2010 Act. Volume 2 of the Guidance, *Equality analysis and the equality duty*, sets out what the duty requires of public authorities with regard to equality analysis and officers analysing the impact of the

proposals have taken this guidance into account in producing this report and associated EIA. Regard has also been had to the implications of the decision in the recent case of *R (W, M and others) v Birmingham City Council* which is commented upon further below.

The general equality duty does not specify how public authorities should analyse the effect of new policies but doing so is an important part of complying with the general duty. Appropriate analysis must be undertaken before making the policy decision and whilst a written record to demonstrate that due regard has been taken is not a legislative requirement, it is generally expected and therefore good practice. In this respect the EIA shown at Appendix "A" has been undertaken.

The act of producing an EIA does not satisfy the duty if it fails to fully and properly get to grips with the actual, practical impacts that result from the proposed decision – ticking boxes is not enough. An EIA is therefore a means to an end, not an end in itself. It is a tool that is intended to assist the officers formulating policies and the decision-maker to decide whether the decision should be implemented. The EIA process gathers and analyses information about the impact of the proposed decision on the statutory needs (eg the need to promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled people) and then weighs up that impact against countervailing factors, such as financial pressures.

The courts have said that "due regard" is the regard that is appropriate in all the particular circumstances in which the public authority concerned is carrying out its function as a public authority. What is required goes beyond taking notice in passing of the statutory equality goals, they must be given due regard, that is the degree of regard that is proportionate in all the circumstances, taking into account the nature of the policy or decision, its predicted effect on the statutory equality goals, and the way in which its impact will be experienced by those affected. The greater the potential adverse impact of proposed policy on a protected group (eg disabled people), the more thorough and demanding the process required by s.149 will be.

In relation to the *Birmingham* case referred to above, whilst the decision taken in that case related to changes in eligibility criteria for the provision of adult social care, the principles are important in relation to the decision recommended in this report. It was recognised in the *Birmingham* case that the local authority had failed to assess the practical impact on disabled persons affected by the decision and not paid due regard to the disability equality duty pursuant to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (now superseded by the 2010 Act and duty).

The local authority had failed to address whether the impact of the decision on disabled people was so serious that a less draconian alternative should have been identified and funded to the extent necessary by making savings elsewhere within the local authority's budget. Whilst local authorities have to seek value for money and balance the interests of local taxpayers with those of service users, the local authority had not adequately considered whether its financial position gave any further room for manoeuvre in view of the impact on disabled people.

Therefore, whilst s.149 came into operation at a time when many local authorities find themselves under severe financial pressures, the courts have made it clear that

budgetary constraints do not detract from the force of the public sector equality duty which must be fulfilled in substance, with rigour and with an open mind.

Therefore, the Cabinet Member must consider carefully the assessed impacts on people with relevant protected characteristics as set out in the EIA and determine whether, having regard to the range of mitigating measures proposed, he considers that it is nevertheless appropriate to proceed on the basis recommended to achieve the savings identified. If he considers that the impacts are so serious that they should not be proceeded with then consideration would need to be given to whether savings can be found elsewhere.

In relation to the contractual position, community transport services have been procured through a competitive tendering exercise which was carried out in the summer of 2010. The contracts will be varied to take into account the service and financial changes outlined in this report. Such changes are aimed at securing the continuance of community transport services in light of the removal from the contract of the operator's right to recover from the Council concessionary travel payments – it is not intended that there be any additional financial benefit to any operator. The County Secretary and Solicitors Group will provide advice and assistance in drawing up the contract variation and the conditions of grant.

Financial Implications

The proposals maintain the County Council's current level of funding to community transport operators through service contracts of £1 million per annum. A fund of £100,000 will be provided initially from the community transport groups who have benefited financially during the first six months from increased revenue compared with their concessionary payments as a result of these changes. It is estimated that this could be in the region of £5,000 and the remainder will be contributed by the County Council. This will be taken from the £117,000 balance of the Community Transport Fund allocated to the County Council from Central Government earlier this year.

Given that reductions in revenue will be more severe in the short term because of the anticipated greater loss of passengers before numbers build up again, there remains the potential financial instability for some of these providers. Whilst the offer of the fund is aimed at minimising this impact, there is still a possibility that the providers will not regain stability. However, the package outlined above seeks to minimise this because:

- a) it will give operators sufficient time and flexibility to make quite radical adjustments to their business models to get them back into financial balance.
- b) it will require operators to prepare realistic business plans in order to access the fund
- c) there will be closer and more frequent monitoring from 1 July until the position has stabilised.

Any representations made to the Cabinet Member prior to the issue being considered in accordance with the Public Notice of Forward Plans

Name: Organisation: Comments:

Nil.

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers**

Paper Date Contact/Directorate/Tel

Nil.

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A.

Appendix A

Fairness Impact Assessment Process

To support decision making in terms of changes and potential changes to services, policies, strategies and projects.

Name of Service/Policy/Strategy/ Project:

Community Transport Services in Lancashire including dial-a-bus and community car schemes

Who is the service/policy/strategy/project aimed at?

Members of community transport schemes throughout Lancashire. The services provided are available to people with reduced mobility who cannot access the conventional transport network. As such, the service contributes to Lancashire County Council's intention to tackle inequalities. The planned support for the community transport sector will enhance the capacity to provide for individuals and groups who are disadvantaged.

Dial a bus services run to a broad timetable with the flexibility to deviate off route providing the bus is going in the general direction.

A team of local volunteer drivers provide the community car scheme services using their own cars and passengers are able to travel within a 20 mile radius for which volunteer drivers are remunerated at 40p per mile

Lancashire County Council has established nine key objectives in its Corporate Strategy 2010 – 2013. These are grouped into three themes: Our Citizens, Our Communities, and Our County. The Community Transport Services contributes to objectives in each of the themes, and in particular:

- Promoting health and wellbeing;
- Supporting people in need;
- Making Lancashire communities safer and stronger;
- Promoting sustainable economic growth; and
- Improving roads and transport

The services also contribute to our Narrowing the Gaps strategy by providing services predominantly to older people and people with disabilities, enabling those that cannot easily use public transport to have the same opportunity to access services, employment, hospital appointments, and leisure facilities, as those that can access public transport.

What changes to the service/policy/strategy/project are proposed?

The County Council has decided to introduce the mandatory concessionary travel scheme from 1 April 2011. The concessionary travel payments previously made to community transport operators amounted to £700,000 in the financial year 2010/2011 in addition to the £1million per annum contribution towards the operation of community transport made by LCC.

The majority of contracts are operated by Travelcare but in addition to this, services in Ribble Valley, Chorley, West Lancashire and Preston and all community car schemes are operated by community transport operators with charitable status. The Preston area service is operated through a joint contract between Preston Community Transport and Travelcare.

Transitional funding of £150,000, jointly funded by the County and District Councils has been put in place for an interim period of three months until 30 June 2011. During this interim period the County

Council commissioned TAS, a local company of transport specialists, to undertake a complete review of community transport and to make recommendations on the measures required to mitigate against the adverse impacts on service users of the reduction of concessionary funding.

The proposals now being recommended are to make the following changes to existing community travel arrangements:

1. that maximum fares are charged as follows:

Up to 2 miles - £2 adult single fare

Over 2 and up to 4 miles - £3 adult single fare

Over 4 and up to 9 miles - £4 adult single fare

Over 9 miles and up to 18 miles - £5 adult single fare

Over 18 miles - £10 adult single fare

These proposed fares are similar to corresponding bus fares.

2. that the minimum Lancashire wide core operating times be set at 0930 until 1430 on Mondays to Fridays,
3. that a £100,000 fund be made available to operators to ensure their continued stability and avoid business failure,
4. that the Red Rose Runner service be withdrawn after operation on 30 June 2011.

The introduction of these fares is seen as a necessary measure to support the financial viability of the operators who may otherwise be unable to continue providing the services altogether.

Question 1

Using information that you have gathered from service monitoring, surveys, consultation and other sources, in your opinion, could your decision to change your service/policy/strategy have a potentially disproportionately negative effect on any of the following groups:

- People of different ages – including young and older people – Yes people over 60 and limited use by some younger people.
- People with a disability - Yes
- People of different races/ethnicities/nationalities – monitoring information indicates that use of the service by members of ethnic minorities is limited
- Men - No
- Women -Yes, monitoring shows that that a significant majority of current service users are female
- People of different religions/beliefs – Monitoring shows that very few members of ethnic minorities use community travel services. There is no evidence to suggest that there may be a disproportionate negative impact on persons with this protected characteristic
- People of different sexual orientations – Monitoring information does not suggest that there may be a disproportionate negative impact on persons with this protected characteristic
- People who are or have identified as transgender – Monitoring information does not suggest that there may be a disproportionate negative impact on persons with this protected characteristic
- People who are married or in a civil partnership – There is potential for couples to be doubly disadvantaged due to the fact that greater costs incurred would be double for them travelling together.

- Women who are pregnant or on maternity leave or men whose partners are pregnant or on maternity leave – Information on numbers of users who are pregnant or on maternity leave is not collected but, given the age profile of users is unlikely to be significant. A reduction in the service could however affect people needing access to maternity appointments.
- People on low incomes – Yes, due to the existing costs of public transport. Many estimates indicate that disabled and older people are heavily represented in groups on low incomes.

Question 2

Could changing your service/policy/strategy have a disproportionately detrimental effect on the health of any of the above groups?

People using community transport such as Dial a Bus and Community Car Schemes are often disadvantaged and may be at risk of social exclusion. Clients of the service include people with disabilities who cannot use conventional transport services, people living in rural areas for whom no other public transport service exists, young and older people, and people on low incomes. Disabled and/or older people are statistically more likely to also experience poor health. Poor access to transport can result in isolation, depression and a greater likelihood to require medical assistance. It is therefore important that the measures proposed support the continued sustainability of the service.

Question 3

What sources of information have you used to answer the above two questions?

A consultation exercise has been undertaken with community transport passengers and there have been detailed discussions with existing operators and district councils. Parish and town councils have also been consulted

Information used to identify impacts for different groups is:

the results of the consultation survey undertaken by TAS referred to below and summarised at Appendix C

- Monitoring information collected on the use of all Community Transport Services – operational passenger figures (see below).
- Information regarding the changes to Concessionary Travel

We monitor the take up of services via contract monitoring across clients':

- age
- ethnicity
- gender
- disability

Question 4

How have you tried to involve people/groups that might be affected in reaching your decision?

As part of the review, community transport passengers have been consulted (over 750 responses) and detailed discussions have been held with existing operators and District Councils. Parish and Town Councils have also been consulted.

A selection of comments received in response to the survey indicating why it is important to maintain the service:

- Without this service I would not be able to shop for myself or keep medical appointments without relying on other people.
- I have been using dial-a-ride for approx. 8 years. Without dial-a-ride I would lose my independence. As I am disabled I would not be able to do my own shopping. I am dependent and grateful for the very willing and cheerful help that dial-a-ride drivers provide.
- Dial-A-Ride plays an important part in maintaining my independence & Social Network. Would like to use for medical appointments if change makes this possible - Have one appointment a week to G. P.

- My son is in a wheelchair. We find the bus a lifeline with not having transport.
- I am housebound and only shop with the help of dial-a-ride
- As an elderly person, living in a village with only a Spar shop, this service is a Godsend to me.
- My husband is seriously ill with cancer, pneumonia and heart failure. I go shopping with you once a week and it's my only day as I won't leave my husband. Your service is invaluable to me and I'm so grateful. Thank you.
- My husband has Alzheimer's and severe arthritis and could not manage without the bus. He would be housebound.
- I am disabled. It gets me out.
- As I am carer and suffer with osteoarthritis it helps considerably.
- My husband is no longer able to drive so the bus is a lifeline as I am in a wheelchair
- I need to get out of my four walls
- Without this wonderful service I would be at home - I really depend on this

However, it must be noted that the proposal is not that the service will be discontinued as some of the comments imply, the key recommendations relate to increased fares and reduced operating hours, the purpose being to ensure the future viability of the services.

A statistical summary of the response to the consultation with passengers is provided at Appendix C to the Report. The main purposes of journeys are given as shopping and recreation/leisure. Only a

significant minority of users see their main purpose as medical appointments and day care.

Question 5

Could changing your service/policy/strategy potentially disadvantage particular groups or lead to incidents of discrimination, harassment or victimisation towards particular groups of people?

Dial-a-bus services are heavily subsidised by Lancashire County Council and so offer a premium service at a low cost to the user. There is a strong correlation between disability, including mobility impairment, and low disposable income, so that dial-a-bus users are potentially a vulnerable group. This means that it is important to maintain the service but the introduction of the proposed fares could deter users on low incomes. To mitigate against this impact, the County Council are developing various strategies around ensuring that such users are fully aware of the welfare benefits for which they may be eligible, the take up of which would improve their ability to afford fares.

It is important to note that passengers in possession of a Nowcard who would be able to access the local bus network would fall under the concessionary scheme and would be eligible to travel free after 9.30am on weekdays and, if they are holders of a Blind and Disabled Person Nowcard, for a flat rate before 9.30am. However, they may not be able to easily access public transport vehicles, particularly if low floor vehicles are not used. Disabled people do make use of conventional bus services, even though this may cause inconvenience and in some cases pain. This reflects the correlations between disability and age, low disposable household income and numbers of people with valid driving licences.

Question 6

Could changing your service/policy/strategy potentially lead to incidents of disharmony within and between communities? E.g. between different sections of communities.

Not known at this time, though the introduction of a charge may affect communities in particular geographic areas across Lancashire, e.g. where there is economic deprivation which may lead to some feelings of dissatisfaction.

The potential for the loss of jobs and contracts as a result of a decrease in funding for organisations providing community transport services could lead to feelings of dissatisfaction across the sector. If jobs are lost in any particular geographic area, there is potential for an increase in community tensions in that area as happens when there are a significant number of job losses at any particular time.

Question 7

What actions will you take to address any issues raised in your answers to the above questions?

It is important to note that the fare increase proposals themselves mitigate the impact of the decision to withdraw concessionary travel from community transport services which would otherwise have had the following effect:

- a) schemes would have had to charge against the underlying fare tables, because that is what was contractually required - this would have resulted in higher fares
- b) inequity in impact on users across the county
- c) significantly fewer service users and trips
- d) some contracts being handed back and/or services stopping and/or operators ceasing to trade
- e) significantly increased isolation and disadvantage to service users

The proposals mitigate against these outcomes and allow for:

- a) new fare tables that are the same across the county and as a result are more equitable
- b) removal of some excessively high fares so that all now bear a relationship to underlying bus and taxi fares
- c) a more equal spread of the disadvantage that removal of £700,000 financial support to users inevitably creates
- d) reduced likelihood of services ceasing to operate straight away
- e) some service adjustment to create improved sustainability under the new arrangements
- f) reduced impact on service users
- g) continuing support to give operators a longer period to adjust their 'businesses', thus further reducing the likelihood of service withdrawal
- h) a commitment to review, along with continued consultation, the overall provision with an intention to continue to improve the position for users

However, as noted above, passengers on very low incomes may not be able to afford the fares introduced by the proposals. This group will include disabled and elderly passengers. To mitigate against this, we are working closely with the County Council's welfare rights service to develop strategies around ensuring that such users are fully aware of the welfare benefits for which they are eligible and to maximise the take up of benefits.

We will proactively promote alternative local bus services, together with the Traveline help telephone number and other forms of electronic information that is currently available.

We will provide clear information about changes and developments to service users, including details relating to the concessionary scheme so that people understand the changes to fare rates before the introduction of the proposals.

Appendix B

Fairness Impact Assessment Process:

To support decision making in terms of potential cuts to services, policies, strategies and projects

Name of Service/Policy/Strategy/ Project:

Red Rose Runner Service

Who is the service/policy/strategy/project aimed at:

The Red Rose Runner provides a demand responsive Dial-a-Bus service in South Ribble and Chorley providing links to healthcare and wellbeing activities, as well as maintaining access to shopping facilities and social events.

Lancashire County Council has established nine key objectives in its Corporate Strategy 2010 – 2013. These are grouped into three themes: Our citizens, Our communities, and Our county. The Red Rose Runner Service contributes to objectives in each of the themes, and in particular:

- Promoting health and wellbeing;
- Supporting people in need;
- Making Lancashire communities safer and stronger;
- Promoting sustainable economic growth; and
- Improving roads and transport

People using community transport such as the Red Rose Runner Service, are often disadvantaged and may be at risk of social exclusion. Clients of the service include people with disabilities who cannot use conventional transport services, people living in rural areas for whom no other public transport service exists, young and older people, and people on low incomes.

The Service is often used by people needing access to health and care services, including access to hospital appointments.

The Service is a door to door pick up service within the operating areas of Chorley and South Ribble, using fully accessible vehicles specially adapted to make them easy for people to use and travel safely.

The Service is pre-booked by users who are unable to access public transport enabling them to make essential healthcare appointments and wellbeing activities, as well as maintaining access to shopping facilities and social events in Chorley and South Ribble.

Services are provided within the operating areas stated above. The service is provided for Lancashire residents in Chorley and South Ribble only.

The proposal is to withdraw the Red Rose Runner from service with effect from 30 June 2011 alongside other changes to the current arrangements for community transport. This equality impact assessment has been prepared in relation to those proposed changes.

Question 1

Using information that you have gathered from service monitoring, surveys, consultation and other sources, in your opinion, could your decision to withdraw/cut your service/policy/strategy have a potentially disproportionate negative effect on any of the following groups:

- People of different ages – including young and older people – Yes over 60's who are the predominant users of the service
- People with a disability - Yes
- People of different races/ethnicities/nationalities – The information available does not suggest that this would be the case
- Men - No
- Women –Yes, the majority of users of the service are female
- People of different religions/beliefs – The information available does not suggest that this is the case
- People of different sexual orientations – Information is not available but it is extremely unlikely that it would have this effect
- People who are or have identified as transgender – previous point refers
- People who are married or in a civil partnership – previous point refers
- Women who are pregnant or on maternity leave or men whose partners are pregnant or on maternity leave – Information on numbers of users who are pregnant or on maternity leave is not collected but a cut to the service could affect people needing access to maternity appointments.

- People on low incomes – Possibly due to the nature of the service although this information is not monitored

Question 2

What sources of information have you used to come to this decision?

Letters and other communications from service users and organisations that have highlighted concerns about cuts to the service and the impact. This includes passenger consultation carried out in November 2010.

Monitoring information collected on use of community transport generally, and satisfaction rates with community transport generally, across Chorley and South Ribble.

Single passenger trips (SPT) totals:

	Jan 11	Feb 11								Totals
Total SPT	465	452								917

	Apr 10	May 10	Jun 10	Jul 10	Aug 10	Sept 10	Oct 10	Nov 10	Dec 10	Totals
Total SPT	772	824	902	710	793	1066	865	819	200	6951

Yearly SPT figures for 2009/2010

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Totals
Total SPT	821	761	911	904	760	903	864	888	700	583	820	1064	9979

The take up of the service is monitored across the following criteria:

- age
- ethnicity
- gender
- whether or not they have a disability

Customer Satisfaction Surveys are carried out every 3 years covering all services within the area, not only the Red Rose Runner Services. Statistics from the survey show that:

- 90% of users of the service are female
- 93% of users are aged 71 and over
- 62% of users have a disability

Question 3

Could your decision to withdraw/cut your service/policy/strategy potentially disadvantage particular groups or lead to incidents of discrimination, harassment or victimisation towards particular groups of people?

People using the Red Rose Runner service are often disadvantaged and may be at risk of social exclusion. Clients of the service include people with disabilities who cannot use conventional transport services, people living in rural areas for whom no other public transport service exists, young and older people and people on low incomes. Disabled and/or older people are statistically more likely to also experience poor health. Poor access to transport can result in isolation, depression and a greater likelihood to require medical assistance. It is therefore important that the measures proposed support the continued sustainability of the service.

Information collected identifies that people with a disability and older people are likely to be disadvantaged by loss of the service and could be at risk of becoming isolated.

People relying on the service to access particular events or appointments would be disadvantaged and this may have a knock on adverse affect on how organisations will provide services (for example medical clinics).

It is not believed that the proposal would lead to incidents of discrimination, harassment or victimisation towards particular groups of people.

Question 4

Could your decision to withdraw/cut your service/policy/strategy potentially lead to incidents of disharmony within and between communities? Eg. between different sections of communities.

Any cut in service may affect communities in particular geographic areas across Chorley and South Ribble, and lead to some feelings of dissatisfaction, but is unlikely to cause disharmony between communities.

Question 5

What actions will you take to address any issues raised in your answers above?

- We have consulted with existing operators to assess the possibility of including our current service users within their passenger transport services. We have received feedback from these operators and this has identified:

Local Bus Services

Alternative local bus services are available and can be accessed by current users of the Red Rose Runner service. However, these involve much less convenient and indirect journeys and cannot fully replace the accessible nature of the Red Rose Runner and some of the destinations to which passengers currently travel.

Existing Dial-a-Bus schemes

It is likely that some journeys may be able to be accommodated on the current Community Transport network but this would be within current resources and dependant on time being available outside existing commitments (and the proposed changes to current community transport arrangements may have a further impact).

The County Council has discussed the possibility of transferring passengers from the Red Rose Runner to the existing Dial-a-Bus network with both Central Lancs Dial-a-Ride and Travelcare/Preston Community Transport. It is estimated that 10% of existing Red Rose Runner passengers may be able to transfer to the existing schemes but this would be dependent on existing commitments. It would also mean that the majority of journeys to and from medical appointments could not be accommodated due to the difficulty in pre-planning journeys where outpatient and doctors' appointments are often of indeterminate length.

Summary of Results of the Consultation with Passengers

Appendix C

Total No. of Respondents	756	
Q1: Main Purpose of Dial-a-Ride Journeys	No.	%age of NonBlanks
Work	7	0.9%
Medical Appointment	28	3.8%
Day Care	28	3.8%
Education	1	0.1%
Shopping	502	67.6%
Visiting friends/family	13	1.7%
Recreation/leisure	140	18.8%
Other	24	3.3%
TOTAL	743	100.0%
<i>Skipped Question</i>	13	
Q2: Current Frequency of Use	No.	%age of NonBlanks
Less than once a year	0	0.0%
Once in the last year	0	0.0%
Once every six months	0	0.0%
Every two or three months	1	0.1%
Monthly	5	0.7%
Two or three times a month	68	9.2%
Weekly	457	61.8%
More than once a week	209	28.2%
TOTAL	740	100.0%
<i>Skipped Question</i>	16	
Q3: Difference Dial-a-Ride Makes to Quality of Life	No.	%age of NonBlanks
No difference	2	0.3%
Makes my life better	152	20.7%
Makes my life much better	172	23.5%
It's a lifeline - don't know how I would cope if it wasn't there	407	55.5%
TOTAL	733	100.0%
<i>Skipped Question</i>	23	
Q4: Payment for Journey	No.	%age of NonBlanks
I use my Elderly NoWcard	524	75.9%
I use my Disabled NoWcard	93	13.5%
I pay the full fare in cash	73	10.6%
TOTAL	690	100.0%
<i>Skipped Question</i>	66	
Q5: Prepared to Pay Annual Membership Fee	No.	%age of NonBlanks
Yes, £10	274	42.3%
Yes, £20	139	21.5%
Yes, £30	54	8.3%
I wouldn't be prepared to pay a fee	181	27.9%

TOTAL	648	100.0%
<i>Skipped Question</i>	108	
Q6: Reasonable One-Way Fare	No.	%age of NonBlanks
50p	58	8.3%
£1.00	180	25.6%
£1.50	148	21.1%
£2.00	170	24.2%
£2.50	111	15.8%
£3.00	18	2.6%
£3.50	4	0.6%
£4.00	10	1.4%
£4.50 and above	3	0.4%
TOTAL	702	100.0%
<i>Skipped Question</i>	54	
Q7: Frequency of Use with Fare Payment	No.	%age of NonBlanks
Less than once a year	3	0.4%
Once in the last year	0	0.0%
Once every six months	0	0.0%
Every two or three months	2	0.3%
Monthly	14	2.0%
Two or three times a month	83	11.9%
Weekly	404	57.9%
More than once a week	192	27.5%
TOTAL	698	100.0%
<i>Skipped Question</i>	58	
Area	No.	%age of NonBlanks
Burnley & Pendle (BPDAB)	57	7.5%
Chorley & S. Ribble (CLDAR)	81	10.7%
Hyndburn (HDAR)	37	4.9%
Lancaster (LMDAB)	59	7.8%
Preston & S. Ribble (PCT)	246	32.5%
Ribble Valley (LGB)	88	11.6%
W Lancs (WLDAR)	128	16.9%
Wyre & Fylde (WFDAB)	60	7.9%
TOTAL	756	100.0%
<i>Skipped Question</i>	0	
Frequency Analysis	No	%age of NonBlanks
Same level of use	591	82.3%
Increase in use	35	4.9%
Decrease in use	92	12.8%
TOTAL	718	100%
<i>Skipped Question</i>	38	