

Medium Term Financial Plan

Initial Equality Impact Assessment of Budget Proposal 2024/25



1. The Proposal

Budget Theme: Services we provide to the community transport

Budget reference: SPTC02

Budget proposal 2024/25 (£): £55,000

The following savings are included within this Theme:

Directorate Reference	Service Area	Budget Proposal	2024/25 Budget reduction
PD18	Public Transport	Review the delivery model for community transport	£55,000

Theme Narrative:

Review the delivery model for discretionary community transport services.

Summary of changes:

The provision and support of community transport is not a statutory service. It is provided as a discretionary service for those that typically are unable to access the traditional public transport network. They are often run by small transport operators who are normally limited companies and usually have a charitable or trust related foundation using volunteers or paid staff.

The groups are usually funded by a mixture of membership fees, charges for journeys, grants, sponsorship and contracts, predominantly from the town and parish councils, developer contributions and lottery funding, providing a degree of resilience to date.

The council has provided 2 contracts for specific shopper services since 2017 to Nailsea and District Community Transport and Weston and District community transport via a competitive tender process, they have been extended during the pandemic to provide a degree of stability but can no longer be extended under our contract standing orders.

The annual value of these contracts is £110,000 per annum, and they expire on the 31 March 24 with no option for a further extension. The purpose of retaining 50% of the budget in this financial year is to support transition of community transport providers to a sustainable funding model and mitigate the potential impact of the loss of contract on the service.

Users are currently expected to contribute towards the cost of the specific journeys, which are then in part subsidised by the council, along with any other funding that the organisation musters towards the running of the service.

Community transport is one of many factors that help reduce social isolation and promote the ability to live independently longer.

There are separate NHS commissioned schemes in North Somerset run by various foundation trusts providing access to health services, however the current contracts do provide an overlap service to local healthcare facilities and regional hospitals. Members of the Community Transport providers often elect to use the services in this way.

Is any of the proposals within this theme a continuation of a previous medium-term financial plan saving?

Yes

No

If yes, please insert reference number and year of assessment?

Budget Proposal	Year of assessment	Budget Reference

If yes, please describe what steps you have taken to review the equality impacts from previous years?

2. Customer equality impact summary

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups?

Insert X into one box per row, for impact level and type.

H = High, M = Medium, L = Low, N = None

+ = Positive, = = Neutral, - = Negative

Impact Level	Impact type						
	H	M	L	N	+	=	-
Disabled people (Including consideration of neurodiversity)		X					X
People from different ethnic groups				X			
Men or women (including those who are pregnant or on maternity leave)				X			
People who are LGBTQ+				X			
People on a low income	X						X
People in particular age groups		X					X
People in particular faith groups				X			
People who are married or in a civil partnership				X			
People who are undergoing gender reassignment				X			
Other specific impacts, for example: carers, parents, armed forces community, impact on health and wellbeing. Please specify:							

3. Explanation of customer impact

The council does not hold personal details of who uses the services or data on the nature of the journeys, only the destination and overall patronage data per trip, it is not therefore possible to identify any impacts at a granular level.

The Community Transport Association's survey of members in England (CTA, 2014) shows that the great majority of community transport users are older people (98%)

and people with disabilities or restricted mobility (85%), while more than half (55%) are geographically excluded. This aligns with an evidence review from 2020 (Department for Transport, 2020) which found Demand Responsive Transport (DRT), including dial-a-ride services, to be particularly important for two cohorts:

- Those who don't drive or own a car, particularly older people, those with limited mobility and low incomes; and
- Those living in rural areas with low population density, where there is low demand for public transport and limited fixed route public transport services

Customers may need to pay more for journeys or see a reduction in the amount of journeys provided if the ending of the council contracts results in the need for more income and reduced availability. Engagement will take place with the contractors to review evidence and understand any potential impacts so that the remaining budget can be considered to mitigate impacts. This is most likely to affect customers on low income.

The council will also work with providers and communities to signpost impacted customers to alternative transport – for example the Westlink demand responsive transport service. This offers a much cheaper alternative at £2 per trip, however the service reliability and consumer confidence is lower than expected at this point.

Please describe how you will communicate these changes to your customers.

The council will work with the existing providers and community organisations to ensure that customers are informed of any changes to services that they receive that could result from these contracts ceasing.

4. Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal? Yes No

Explanation of staff impact

If yes, please describe the nature of the impact, including how many posts could be affected, please state whether they are vacant, or filled permanently or temporarily.

6. Review and Sign Off

Service Manager Review

Insert any service manager comments here:

<<Text here>>

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed? Yes No

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed?

January 2024

Service Manager:

Gemma Dando

Date:

20 December 2023