

Equality Impact Assessment

Respond to the change in demand for the
community transport service at weekends

Section 1: Introduction and background

What is being assessed?	Removal of the weekend community transport service
Business unit	Mole Valley Life
Job title of assessor	Executive Head of Service
Strategic Management Lead	Executive Head of Service - Community
Date of assessment	November 2021
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing

Description of the function or policy, including:

- **The aims and scope**
- **The main beneficiaries or users**
- **The main equality issues and barriers, and the protected characteristics¹ they relate to (not all assessments will encounter issues relating to every protected characteristic)**

Background

Prior to the pandemic Mole Valley Life provided a weekend community transport service which was partially paid for from a Surrey County Council grant. Over the years the SCC portion of grant has reduced to £6k and the cost to MVDC has increased to £9k.

The service was available to book, however the take up was very small.

In the last few years numbers taking up the service at weekends have been very small – averaging less than 5 trips per weekend. Between 9 and 12 regular users, mainly being transported to shopping and Church have undertaken 91% of the weekend journeys. During the pandemic the service was necessarily suspended, as was the weekday Community Transport Service.

There has been no requirement from our members for a weekend service since the weekday service resumed in the summer of 2021.

MVDC is proposing the removal of the weekend community transport service from 2022/23 onwards. The weekday community transport service will continue.

Impact on protected characteristics

The main beneficiaries of this service, as mentioned above, were between 9 and 12 trips a weekend mainly being transported to shopping or church prior to the

¹The protected characteristics are age, sex, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race and ethnicity, religion and belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership (Source: Equality Act 2010)

pandemic. On this basis negative impacts have been identified for the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Religion and belief
- Carers (possibly)
- Rural/Urban access issues

Although it is worth keeping in mind that demand for the weekend service has ceased since the weekday service resumed in the summer of 2021 and there are currently no users of this service.

No positive impacts have been identified in this assessment.

Description of how the function or policy fits into the Council's Corporate Priorities or other local, regional or national plans and priorities

Council Strategy 2019-2024

The delivery of this service has contributed to the 'Community Wellbeing' priority and the guiding principle of 'Putting People First: Ensuring a people focussed culture in our organisation to provide the best possible experience and services for our residents, businesses, and visitors.'

The proposed removal of this service will contribute to the delivery of the following guiding principles in the Council Strategy:

- Living within our means: Be mindful of current and future costs in our approach to delivering and developing services.
- Acting sustainably: Meeting the needs of the present without compromising future generations requires responsible decision making and innovation.

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 (to 2024/25)

The proposed removal of this service will also enable MVDC to deliver against the Financial Objective in the Medium Term Financial Strategy: "To ensure a balanced budget, without any budgeted use of reserves to support underlying spending, from April 2022, in order to: ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of MVDC; protect services to Mole Valley residents, communities and businesses; and recognise the needs of Council Tax payers."

Section 2: Analysis and assessment

Indicate for each protected characteristic whether there may be a positive impact, negative impact, a mixture of both or no impact – using a tick <input type="checkbox"/> in the appropriate columns				
Protected characteristics	Positive	Negative	No impact	Reason
Age		✓		69% of the users of the weekend service were over 60. this is commonplace for the nature of this service however.
Sex			✓	
Disability		✓		Due to the nature of the service the majority of customers will have had mobility issues.
Pregnancy and maternity			✓	
Race and ethnicity			✓	
Religion and belief		✓		The destinations for the Sunday service were 3 churches. There were 70 journeys to church made in the last year of service, on average just over 1 journey a week.
Gender reassignment			✓	
Sexual orientation			✓	
Marriage and civil partnership			✓	
Other aspects to consider	Positive	Negative	No impact	Reason
Carers		✓		If Community Transport is not available on the weekend, it may fall to a carer to transport the customer.
Rural/urban access issues			✓	
HR issues (how will staff with protected characteristics be affected?)			✓	

What can be done to reduce the effects of any negative impacts?

Where negative impact cannot be completely diminished, can this be justified, and is it lawful?

The weekday community transport service will continue. As there are currently no users of the weekend service no mitigation has been identified.

Where there are positive impacts, what changes have been or will be made? Who are the beneficiaries? How have they benefited?

Not applicable.

Section 3: Evidence gathering and fact-finding

What evidence is available to support your views above?

Please include:

- A summary of the available evidence
- Identification of where there are gaps in the evidence (this may identify a need for more evidence in the action plan)
- What information is currently captured with respect to usage and take up of services.
- What the current situation is in relation to equality and diversity monitoring (where relevant)

There have been no bookings for the weekend service since the weekday service resumed in the summer of 2021 therefore no weekend journeys have been run during this time. It is understood that the previous users of this service have found alternative modes of transport for their weekend journeys especially for Church on Sundays, and shopping trips have been accommodated within the week day service.

How have stakeholders been involved in this assessment?

Who are they, and what is their view?

No stakeholders have been involved in this assessment as there are currently no users of the weekend community transport service. The Mole Valley Life team are in regular contact with users of the service and they have not had unmet demand reported to them.

Recommendations

Summary of the main recommendations (if any) arising from the assessment

Not applicable.

Section 4: Action Plan

Actions needed to implement the EqlA recommendations (if any)

Issue	Action	Expected outcome	Who	Deadline for action
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a