

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EIA Version	Date	Author	Changes
1	25/01/21	Marion Mackay	n/a

Stage 1: Title and aims of the activity (“activity” is an umbrella term covering policies, procedures, guidance and decisions including those that affect services the council delivers).

Service	Infrastructure Services
Section	Transportation – Passenger Transport Unit
Title of the activity etc.	Transportation - Withdrawal of TaxiCard Scheme
Aims and desired outcomes of the activity	To achieve a £147,000 Revenue Budget saving in financial year 2021/22, through withdrawal of the Council’s TaxiCard concessionary travel scheme. TaxiCard - Aberdeenshire Council provides disabled and elderly residents with discounts on taxi and rail fares.
Author(s) & Title(s)	Marion Mackay, Principal Officer

Stage 2: List the evidence that has been used in this assessment and explain what it means in relation to the activity you are assessing.

Evidence	What does it say?	What does it mean?

<p>Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).</p>	<p>TaxiCard customer satisfaction surveys over the years have indicated that there is high satisfaction with the scheme. There is very little use of the rail concession.</p> <p>There are 1,508 TaxiCard holders. A small survey of 54 customers was held in July 2020 to try to understand the impact of Covid-19. 88% said they were relying on friends and family to get shopping during lockdown. 85% said they planned to do their own shopping by taxi after the initial lockdown was lifted. 85% said they could access, at least some, health appointments without the need to travel.</p> <p>Taxi trip numbers and associated Council costs are reduced under Covid-19. For example, October 2020 trips and costs were only 40% of October 2019.</p>	<p>The withdrawal of discounted taxi fares will impact on residents who will either need to pay more for transport or undertake fewer trips.</p> <p>Generally speaking, the impact of removing the scheme would be smaller whilst Covid-19 restrictions apply than under “normal” times.</p>
<p>Internal consultation with staff and other services affected.</p>	<p>None</p>	
<p>External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils).</p>	<p>None</p>	
<p>External data (census, available statistics).</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>	
<p>Other (general information as appropriate).</p>	<p>TaxiCard holders are permitted to make the equivalent of two return trips per week with their TaxiCard. The discount is 50% for short trips and £5 for longer trips. Many TaxiCard holders make much fewer trips than the allowance.</p>	<p>Not all TaxiCard holders will be affected equally. Those who use their full trip allowance of 52 discounted taxi trips per three calendar months will be negatively impacted most, either financially or by needing to reduce the number of trips made.</p>

Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.	
Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold?	In terms of assessing socio-economic issues, we do not have knowledge of TaxiCard customers' financial situations but since the TaxiCard scheme includes disabled and older people from across Aberdeenshire it is assumed that a proportion of them will have low income/wealth.

Stage 4: Measures to fill the evidence gaps.		
What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan at the back of this form.	Measures:	Timescale:

Stage 5: What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups/areas?	
These should be included in the action plan.	There is no opportunity to promote good relations between various groups/areas.

Stage 6: How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?
The budget proposal does not create opportunities for advancing equality.

Stage 7a:				
Are there potential impacts on protected groups?				
The protected groups covered by the equality duty are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.				
Who is affected by the activity or who is intended to benefit from the proposed activity and how? Complete the table below for each protected group by inserting "yes" in the applicable box/boxes below.				
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Age – Younger			yes	

Age - Older		yes		
Disability		yes		
Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)			yes	
Religion or Belief			yes	
Sex		yes		
Pregnancy and maternity			yes	
Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual)			yes	
Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)			yes	
Marriage and Civil Partnership			yes	

Stage 7b: Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy, activity etc. will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?

This is about trying to be fair to everyone. Part of that is realising that not everyone may be starting at the same place. Some individuals and families may have low income, may have very little or no savings which means they are living from month to month therefore changes to council policies/services may have a greater adverse impact on them.

On this basis you should consider potential impacts on individuals/families by:

- Place: on specific vulnerable areas or communities (SIMD, regeneration, rural) e.g., housing, transport.
- Pockets: household resources, (Income, benefits, outgoings) ability to access a service
- Prospects: peoples life chances e.g., Access to, or ability to access employment, training, services (such as council or health) or support.

Groups of people who may be impacted include, but not limited to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed • Single parents and vulnerable families • People on benefits • Those involved in the criminal justice system • People in the most deprived communities • People who live in rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pensioners • Looked after children • Carers including young carers • Veterans • Students • Single adult households • People who have experienced the asylum system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness • Homeless people • People with low literacy/numeracy • People with lower educational qualifications • People in low paid work • People with one or more protected characteristic
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Please complete by inserting "yes" in the applicable box/boxes below.

Socio-economic disadvantage	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Pockets: Low income/income poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing		yes		

Pockets: Low and/or no wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future		yes		
Pockets: Material deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies				yes
Place: Area deprivation – where you live, where you work		yes		
Prospects: Socioeconomic background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income , educational achievement.				yes

Stage 8: What are the positive and negative impacts?		
Impacts.	Positive	Negative
Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and describe those affected.	Not applicable.	TaxiCard holders, which are mainly older and/or disabled women, will need to pay full fare for any taxi trips they make – compared to a saving of up to £5 each way under the TaxiCard scheme.

Stage 9: Have any of the affected groups/areas been involved, engaged with or consulted?

<p>If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps?</p>	<p>No, the groups/areas have not been consulted about the potential withdrawal of the Scheme.</p>
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Stage 10: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts?

<p>These should be included in any action plan at the back of this form.</p>	<p>Mitigating Steps</p>	<p>Timescale</p>
	<p>TaxiCard holders will be signposted to any suitable free or low-cost transport services. They will also be advised of the THInC advice service for those needing transport to health-related appointments.</p>	<p>March onwards</p>
	<p>TaxiCard holders will be referred to the Council's benefits team if deemed appropriate.</p>	<p>March onwards</p>
	<p>Feedback from TaxiCard holders will be taken into account when planning/reviewing A2B dial-a-bus services.</p>	<p>March onwards</p>
	<p></p>	<p></p>
	<p></p>	<p></p>

Stage 11: What monitoring arrangements will be put in place? How the EIA will be used to monitor the proposal

<p>These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires).</p>	<p>There are no plans to put formal monitoring arrangements in place.</p>
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Stage 12: What is the outcome of the Assessment?

<p>Please complete the appropriate box/boxes</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>No negative impacts have been identified –please explain.</p>
	<p>Not applicable.</p>	

	2	Negative Impacts have been identified; these can be mitigated - please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen.
	Not applicable.	
	3	The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully – please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen
	Whilst customers will be provided with advice on any alternative low-cost transport services, these will not always be suitable for people's needs or every journey that they want to make. Under such circumstances travelling by taxi may be the only option and the customer will need to pay the full fare (rather than benefitting from the TaxiCard discount of up to £5 per journey).	

* Stage 13: Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact.

The Council requires to make budget savings in order to achieve a balanced budget position.

Stage 14: Sign off and authorisation.

Sign off and authorisation.	1) Service and Team	Infrastructure Services – Transportation (PTU)	
	2) Title of Policy/Activity	Budget savings – Withdrawal of TaxiCard Scheme	
	3) Authors: I/We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Marion Mackay Position: Principal Officer Date: 25.01.2021 Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:
		Name: Position: Date: Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:
4) Consultation with Service Manager	Name: Richard McKenzie Date: 25.01.2021		

5) Authorisation by Director or Head of Service	Name: Ewan Wallace Position: Head of Transportation Date: 01/02/21	Name: Position: Date:
6) If the EqlA relates to a matter that has to go before a Committee, Committee report author sends the Committee Report and this form, and any supporting assessment documents, to the Officers responsible for monitoring and the Committee Officer of the relevant Committee.	Date:	
7) EqlA author sends a copy of the finalised form to: equalities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk	Date:	

Action Plan					
Action	Start	Complete	Lead Officer	Expected Outcome	Resource Implications
TaxiCard holders will be signposted to any suitable free or low-cost transport services. They will also be advised of the THInC advice service for those needing transport to health-related appointments.	March	May	Marion Mackay	Some customers will have an alternative to using a taxi for some of their journeys.	Within existing staff resources.
TaxiCard holders will be referred to the Council's benefits team if deemed appropriate.	March	May	Marion Mackay	Some customers may receive financial assistance.	Within existing staff resources.
Feedback from TaxiCard holders will be taken into account when planning/reviewing A2B dial-a-bus services.	March	onwards	Marion Mackay	Some customers will have an alternative to using a taxi for some of their journeys.	Within existing staff resources.