



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

1. Service Area/Directorate

Name of Head of Service for activity being assessed: Dr Dave Land

Directorate: Economy and Environment

Name of lead person for this activity: Dr Dave Land

Individual(s) completing this assessment: Dr Dave Land & Sarah Morris

Date assessment completed: 1 September 2026

2. What is being assessed

Activity being assessed (eg. policy, procedure, budget, service redesign, strategy etc.)

Implementation of a Passenger Transport Open Framework for the commissioning of passenger transport services.

What is the aim, purpose, or intended outcome of this activity?

The purpose of the Open Framework is to establish a compliant, flexible and efficient procurement mechanism for passenger transport services, including home to school transport, SEND transport and public transport services. The framework will replace the existing Dynamic Purchasing System and provide a mechanism through which transport contracts can be awarded in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023. The framework aims to support continuity of service provision, maintain market capacity, encourage supplier diversity and ensure the Council can continue to meet its statutory transport obligations.

Who will be affected by the development and implementation of this activity?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☒ Service users | ☒ Visitors to the county |
| ☒ Communities | ☒ Carers |
| ☒ Children | ☐ Patients |
| ☐ All staff | ☐ All part-time staff |
| ☐ Staff at a particular location | ☐ Other: |

Is this:

- ☒ Review of an existing activity/policy
- ☐ New activity/policy
- ☐ Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?

3. Background information and findings

What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (name your sources, eg. demographic information, usage data, Census data, feedback, complaints, audits, research)

Evidence demonstrates that passenger transport services are relied upon by a large number of children, young people and vulnerable residents, particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The proposed Open Framework does not change eligibility criteria, statutory entitlements, transport policies or levels of service. Instead, it establishes a new procurement mechanism to replace the existing Dynamic Purchasing System following the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023. The framework is intended to support continuity of service provision, encourage market participation, maintain transport capacity and improve resilience in response to

increasing demand, particularly for SEND transport services. Therefore, no significant adverse equality impacts have been identified, with the potential for positive impacts through improved accessibility, supplier choice and service sustainability.

Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (eg. who you've engaged with, and how, or why do you believe this is not required)

Public consultation has not been undertaken because the decision relates solely to the procurement mechanism through which transport services are commissioned. The framework does not change eligibility criteria, statutory entitlements, travel assistance policies or service standards. A market engagement exercise has been undertaken with the supplier market and local trade associations to inform the development of the procurement model. Information regarding the proposed procurement approach has been shared with providers to encourage participation and ensure awareness of the future opportunity.

Summary of relevant findings (it is possible that you will have gaps in your evidence. You must decide whether you need to fill in the gaps now, and if it is feasible to do so. It might be that collecting robust information forms part of your action plan below)

The Open Framework is expected to support positive outcomes through:

- Increased supplier participation and competition.
- Improved resilience and transport capacity.
- Continued delivery of statutory home to school and SEND transport services.
- Continued provision of public transport services.
- Greater flexibility to accommodate increasing transport demand and changing needs.
- Opportunities for local SMEs and new providers to participate throughout the framework term through periodic reopening of the framework.

No significant adverse equality impacts have been identified as the proposal does not alter transport eligibility, policy or service provision arrangements.

4. The Public Sector Equality Duty

Will this activity have a positive, neutral or negative impact on our duty to:

Equality Duty	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation?	☒	☐	☐
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups?	☒	☐	☐
Foster good relations between different groups?	☒	☐	☐

Explain your rationale here, and include any ways in which you could strengthen the capacity of this activity to promote equality (remember to add anything relevant into your action planning below)

The framework supports the continued provision of accessible transport services used by children, young people, SEND passengers and residents across Herefordshire. The procurement model encourages a wider range of providers to participate, helping to maintain availability of services that support access to education, healthcare, employment and community life. The framework includes ongoing supplier compliance requirements, safeguarding requirements and accessibility expectations, which support equitable service delivery.

Eliminate discrimination: Positive – The Open Framework supports the elimination of discrimination by requiring transport providers to meet appropriate accessibility, safeguarding and equality requirements.

Advance equality of opportunity: Positive – Supports the continued delivery of transport services, which enable people, particularly disabled children and young people, to access education, healthcare, employment and community opportunities that may otherwise be unavailable to them.

Foster good relations: Positive – Accessible and inclusive transport services help people participate in education, employment and community life, reducing social isolation and promoting inclusion. Public transport services in particular support community cohesion by improving connectivity and access to services.

5. The impact of this activity

Consider the potential impact of this activity on each of the equality groups outlined below and explain your rationale. Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group. Remember to consider the impact on staff and service users (current and potential) and partner organisations. It may be useful to include data within these sections if you know the diversity make-up of the people likely to be affected.

Equality Group	Potential <u>positive</u> impact	Potential <u>neutral</u> impact	Potential <u>negative</u> impact	Rationale
Age (include safeguarding, consent and child welfare)	☒	☐	☐	The framework supports continuation of transport services used by children and young people accessing education and by older residents accessing public transport services. No reduction in provision results from this decision.
Disability (consider attitudinal, physical, financial and social barriers, neuro-diversity, learning disability, physical and sensory impairment)	☒	☐	☐	A significant proportion of transport users are SEND learners. The framework supports continued access to specialist and accessible transport provision, including bespoke arrangements where required. Increased provider participation may strengthen service resilience.
Gender Reassignment (include gender identity, and consider privacy of data and harassment)	☐	☒	☐	No direct impact identified. The framework does not affect eligibility, policies or access arrangements based on gender identity.
Marriage & Civil Partnerships	☐	☒	☐	No direct impact identified.
Pregnancy & Maternity (consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities)	☐	☒	☐	No direct impact identified.
Race (including Travelling Communities and people of other nationalities)	☐	☒	☐	Accessible transport services support equal access to education, public services and community participation regardless of ethnicity or nationality. The framework provides equal opportunities for providers regardless of location.
Religion & Belief	☐	☒	☐	No direct impact identified.
Sex (consider issues of safety, sexual violence, part-time work, and single-sex provision – especially in light of the legal definition of “sex”)	☐	☒	☐	No direct impact identified. Existing safeguarding arrangements remain in place.
Sexual Orientation	☐	☒	☐	No direct impact identified.
Others: carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation (consider shift-patterns, caring responsibilities)	☒	☐	☐	Reliable transport helps carers and families access education and essential services. Public transport services support wider social inclusion and reduce isolation for vulnerable residents.

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
Health Inequalities (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions)	☒	☐	☐	Public transport and specialist transport services support access to healthcare, education and community facilities, helping reduce barriers experienced by vulnerable groups.

Where a negative impact on any of the equality groups is realised after the implementation of the activity, the activity lead will seek to minimise the impact and carry out a full review of this EIA.

6. Action planning

What actions will you take as a result of this impact assessment? (you will need to include actions to mitigate any potential negative impacts)

Potential negative impact	What action will be taken	Who will lead	Timeframe
Risk that framework requirements could inadvertently discourage smaller providers from participating	Tender documentation will be proportionate to maximise participation from SMEs and local operators.	Transport and Procurement Teams	During procurement process
Risk of insufficient transport capacity to meet increasing demand	Framework will be periodically reopened to enable new suppliers to join and increase market capacity.	Transport and Procurement Teams	Throughout framework term
Risk that service accessibility requirements are not consistently delivered by providers	Accessibility, safeguarding and compliance requirements will be embedded within framework documentation and contract management arrangements.	Transport Teams	Ongoing

7. Monitoring and review

How will you monitor these actions?

- Ongoing contract management and performance monitoring.
- Monitoring of supplier participation levels and market diversity.
- Monitoring complaints, compliments and feedback from service users.
- Review of accessibility and safeguarding compliance requirements.
- Monitoring availability of SEND transport capacity and service performance.

When will you review this EIA?

At each framework reopening stage or sooner if significant service changes arise.

8. Equality Statement

- All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to how they can improve society and promote equality in every aspect of their day-to-day business. This means that they must consider, and keep reviewing, how they are promoting equality in decision-making, policies, services, procurement, staff recruitment and management.
- Herefordshire Council will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.

Signature of person completing EIA

David Land

Date signed

03.09.2026