

Equality Impact Assessment Form

1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

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Service: Customer Services	E-Mail: shobhan. sen@stroud.gov.uk
	Date of Assessment: Nov/Dec 2010

2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function: Discretionary Travel Token Scheme

Is this new or an existing one? Existing

From April 2011, Gloucestershire County Council will take over responsibility from the district councils to provide concessionary fares travel in Gloucestershire. Currently each district council operates a different scheme, which means what people are eligible for varies from area to area. Some of the district councils pay for an enhanced discretionary service, which in some areas includes earlier start times, travel tokens in lieu of bus passes and taxi tokens/vouchers. **From April 2011 Stroud District Council will have no central government funding for any concessionary fare provision, as all monies will have transferred to Gloucestershire County Council.**

3. Briefly describe its aims and objectives

Stroud District Council's concessionary fare scheme is operated in partnership with Cotswold, Forest of Dean, Gloucester City, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury councils, with support from Gloucestershire County Council. Under the scheme eligible residents from the Stroud District area have the choice of **either** a free travel bus pass **or** travel tokens. **Travel token are of the value of £20 only per individual for the whole year whereas a bus pass covers unlimited travel.**

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4. Who is intended to benefit from it and in what way?

The scheme caters for district residents over 60 years of age and those with qualifying disabilities.

5. What outcomes are expected?

With the statutory responsibilities transferring to Gloucestershire County from April 2011, we, Stroud District Council are jointly consulting with the County on the future provision of the service. After April 2011 Stroud DC will have no central government funding to run the Concessionary fares scheme.

6. Have you consulted on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function?

Yes

Details of consultation and outcome

A Gloucestershire County Council and Stroud District Council joint public consultation across Gloucestershire is currently open till the 14 January 2011. Residents are able to express their views through an online questionnaire, by telephone, letter, email and visiting drop in sessions held across the County. The final report on results of the consultation will be included as part of the decision making process. Council will make its decision on 10 February 2010.

In addition to publicity in local media, newspapers, posters and websites, Stroud District Council has written letters out to all Travel Token users advising them of the changes and the consultation inviting comments and feedback. This service is specifically aimed at people over 60 and those with a disability, therefore all current travel token users have been written to individually.

We have communicated the proposed changes and details of ongoing consultation to the wide membership of the Local Strategic Partnership listed below and the Stroud Disability Access Group. We have also communicated the changes to all registered taxi services in the district through a newsletter in December 2010.

Members of Parliament

Neil Carmichael MP
Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP

Public Agencies

- Gloucestershire County Council -
- NHS Gloucestershire -
- Gloucestershire Police
- Stroud College
- Gloucestershire First

Business

- DH Consulting
- Federation of Small Businesses -
- National Farmers Union (NFU)
- Pink Square
- Renishaw Plc
- Rococo Garden
- Silverwood UK Ltd

Community and Voluntary Sector

- Churches Together
- Cotswold Care Hospice
- Gloucestershire Older Persons Assembly / Stroud Older Persons Forum
- Gloucestershire Rural Community Council
- Meningitis Trust
- Social Enterprise
- Stroud District Youth Council
- Stroud Market Towns Partnership / Glos. Chamber of Commerce/Vale Business Forum

Volunteer & Community Action (Stroud District)

Parish and Town Councils

- Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils

Council

- Leader of the Council - Cllr. Frances Roden
- Portfolio holder for Planning & Environment - Cllr. Barbara Tait
- Chief Executive - David Hagg

Initial responses received from residents of the district indicate that disabled, elderly and infirm residents may find it more difficult to travel to medical appointments, shopping or leisure day trips. These are residents who either do not have a bus service at their doorstep or cannot travel by buses.

Feedback received also indicate that there are able bodied residents who may use their cars to travel who have also applied for and received travel tokens on age eligibility.

7. What evidence has been used for this assessment: eg Research, previous consultations, MAIDEN?

With the transfer of the administration of the Concessionary Fares scheme to Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) all funding has also been transferred to GCC.

We have researched the modes of travel used by Travel Token users and latest figures show that 55% use trains, 30% taxis and volunteer car schemes and 14% buses and coaches. We have also analysed the initial responses to the Countywide consultation which has shown that travel token users use them for train travel, taxis for going shopping, to the hospital and doctors and occasional leisure day trips. We have also directly consulted with volunteer car schemes to understand their views better. We have also discussed the proposed changes and their impact with residents at two drop in sessions in December 2010.

8. Could a particular group be affected differently in either a potentially negative or positive way?

	Potentially Negative	Positive	Neutral	Evidence
Age	x			Service aimed at +60 age group as part of national statutory scheme. Some users may be too elderly and infirm to use buses and choose tokens instead to use on taxis and volunteer car schemes. We have also received feedback that there are token recipients who are able-bodied, have and use their own transport and don't regularly use the tokens or use them to travel by rail.
Disability	x			Service aimed at people with qualifying disabilities. Some users may be too elderly and infirm to use buses and choose tokens instead to use on taxis and volunteer car schemes. If there is a bus available the timings and frequency may not suit the needs of the residents or the buses may not have wheelchair access.
Gender	x			The evidence shows that a higher proportion of women than men currently use travel tokens. This is in line with the district demographic of there being more women than men residents over the the age of

				60 years.
Race including Gypsy & Traveller			x	We advertise scheme through local media including radio, newspapers and website. A translation service is also available. Scheme only open to residents with a permanent address.
Religion or Belief			x	No evidence available.
Sexual Orientation			x	No evidence available
Transgender			x	No evidence available
Other groups: eg Rural Isolation, Long term unemployed, Deprivation Health Inequality	x			Residents in some rural areas may not have access to any public transport or are not served by the bus network. So they are unable to use their concessionary bus pass. If there is a bus available the timings and frequency may not suit the needs of the residents or the buses may not have wheelchair access. There is also evidence of travel tokens being not used during the year and being stored up for several years to be used at some time in the future when the need arises.

9. If you have identified a negative impact in question 8, what actions have you undertaken or do you plan to undertake to lessen or negate this impact?

Action(s):	How will this action be Monitored/Evaluated	When will policy / service / strategy / procedure / function be reviewed?
Proposal to offer community transport initiatives a fixed value grant of £10,000 in 2011/12 only currently	Will be monitored as part of service delivery planning.	Every quarter in 2011/12

Declaration

We are satisfied that an Impact Assessment has been carried out on this service and where a negative impact has been identified, actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact.

We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the District Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment

Completed by:

Date:

Role:

Countersigned by Head of Service

Date:

Date for Review:

Please forward an electronic copy to the Policy Team by emailing

equalities@stroud.gov.ukThe original signed hard copy and electronic copy should be kept with your team for audit purposes.