

Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This tool helps the Council ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to have due regard to the need to –

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Guidance on how to complete this tool can be found on the Cambridge City Council intranet. For specific questions on the tool email Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer at equalities@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223 457046.

Once you have drafted the EqIA please send this to equalities@cambridge.gov.uk for checking. For advice on consulting on equality impacts, please contact Graham Saint, Strategy Officer, (graham.saint@cambridge.gov.uk or 01223 457044).

1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service

Review of Cambridge City Council's Taxicard Scheme. Updated December 2021

2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/taxicard>

3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

The Taxicard is a scheme that aims to help disabled people on low incomes to afford to use taxis for essential journeys. It is not known when the last review of this scheme was carried out, so a review was requested in an attempt to;

- 1) Increase usage by existing members
- 2) Generate more members

In order to do this, the administration of the scheme has been looked at in so far as the arrangements for how the scheme operates, usage, the invoicing and a review of the Application Form to ensure it meets the requirements in so far as eligibility criteria is concerned. As a result of the work carried out, and consultation carried out, we are proposing the following changes;

- To continue to allow the use of Taxicard vouchers on Cambridge Dial-a-Ride.
- Allow the use of more than one Taxicard voucher per journey
- The application form criteria have been reviewed so it reflects requirements to include eligibility if you cannot use public transport in line with benefit requirements
- To issue a book of vouchers worth £150
- To remind members, taxi drivers and operators to ensure vouchers are handed over to the driver so the driver has their membership number and voucher number for monthly invoicing purposes.
- Ask taxi operators to ensure invoices for vouchers used in one financial year are invoiced within 2 months of the new financial year.

4. Responsible service

Business Support – Human Resources

5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

(Please tick all that apply)

- Residents
- Visitors
- Staff

The client groups affected by this review include;

Staff: The renewals process is administered by the Business Support Team. They will need to be made aware of any changes. In particular, when communicating with existing members which may require letters to be sent explaining the proposals. Colleagues in other departments have been called upon to assist and provide expertise on certain areas of the review, for example the review of the application form where advice was sought from Revenue & Benefits and the Licensing Team in Environmental Health in relation to communications for Taxi Drivers and Operators.

Members of the Public - Existing Members: All members were written to during the renewals process prior to April 2021 making them aware of changes to be made to the scheme from 1 April and the changes proposed going forward being presented to Committee in June. The proposals were listed in the correspondence and all were asked to get in touch should they have comments or questions around the changes from 1 April or the wider review taking place. Prior to the changes implemented to the scheme from 1 October, all existing Taxicard members were written to in September, to explain the changes which were sent with their new books of Taxicard vouchers for use from 1 October 2021 – 31 March 2022. In November existing Taxicard members were again written to with proposals for the scheme from 1 April 2022 and were encouraged to complete the questionnaire enclosed with their letter to obtain feedback on the changes introduced to the scheme from 1 October to see how they had been received, and to provide information on the proposals from the scheme from 1 April so they could help shape the scheme going forward.

Taxi Companies: Liaison with taxi drivers and operators to inform them of the changes proposed around the vouchers included areas surrounding the invoicing for the reimbursements of the vouchers, so we receive the same information on invoices from each company. A template invoice was provided for them to use, should they choose to do so. Further communication will be had with the taxi drivers and operators after the outcome of the committee meeting is known.

Cambridge Dial-a-Ride: Our proposals are linked with this service which Cambridge City Council supports in the form of a Grant Agreement. Since 1 October 2021, existing Taxicard members have been able to use their vouchers on the Cambridge Dial-a-Ride. This change is hoped to be implemented on a permanent basis and a decision will be known after the Committee meeting in January. Further communication will be had with DaR after the outcome of the committee meeting is known.

The Council's supplier of the Taxicard Scheme Vouchers: Our existing provider has been made aware there could be a further change to the denomination and value of vouchers from the 1 April 2022. Any amendments to the way in which the books are currently issued, will need to be discussed with them. Further communication will be had with them once the outcome of the committee meeting is known.

6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this?

- New
 Major change
 Minor change

7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)

- Yes
 No

If 'Yes' please provide details below:

- Cambridge Dial-Ride
- Taxi Drivers and Operators
- The Council's provider of the Taxicard book of vouchers
- Revenue & Benefits Team
- Licensing Team, Environmental Health
- The Executive Councillor for Transport and Planning
- The Leader of the Council (in their former role as Executive Councillor for Communities)
- Disability and Access Lead for Cambridge City Council and Chair of Planning and Transport

8. Has the report on your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service gone to Committee? If so, which one?

Proposals were originally presented to Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee on 29 June and are being presented back to the next Committee meeting on 11 January as the changes have been implemented, to provide feedback on the 1 October 2021 changes and for agreeing proposals for the Taxicard Scheme from 1 April 2022.

9. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

Discussions with 7 local authorities (including South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council) on similar schemes they operate were held to identify if the pattern being seen for reductions in our membership was being experienced by others, how many vouchers are in their books, the value of their vouchers, if they increase the voucher values annually and how many vouchers are permitted each journey.

Ongoing conversations with our existing supplier of Taxicard Vouchers to see whether the books can be produced in different ways going forward, i.e, a mix of voucher values in each book, and issuing throughout the year to new members.

Existing Taxicard members were written to in September providing information on the changes to the scheme from 1 October along with their new books of vouchers. In November they were again written to and sent a questionnaire to complete providing feedback on those changes introduced and to provide feedback on the proposals to the scheme from 1 April 2022 in order for them to help shape the scheme in the future.

Consultation has previously taken place with disability organisational groups including Camsight, Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and Disability Cambridge on the changes to the scheme from 1 April and 1 October. Feedback received from disability organisational groups supported the proposals. Some were unaware of the scheme which has highlighted the need for further publication of the scheme going forward which has been addressed as part of the review.

Informal consultation was also undertaken with taxi drivers and operators, the Council's provider of Taxicard vouchers and existing members in relation to the changes to the system from 1 April, and 1 October and further communication will be had with them once the outcome of the recommendations presented to Committee in January for the scheme from 1 April 2022 are known

10. Potential impacts

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

(a) Age - Please also consider any safeguarding issues for children and adults at risk

The scheme is open to disabled people of all ages and especially benefits older people who may be more likely to have disabilities to qualify for the scheme.

The criteria for joining the scheme changed in 2006 to bring in a means tested element to the eligibility. At the time of the change, special rights were granted for those aged 80+ before 2006 who were automatically issued with a Taxicard. That right was removed for new applicants after 2006. That means that those members aged 80+ before 2006 do not need to meet the financial criteria to remain on the scheme.

(b) Disability

The scheme is to benefit people with disabilities who live within the Cambridge City Boundary and the review aims to increase usage by existing members and to increase membership, which would mean it benefits more disabled people.

Currently, to qualify members must indicate how they meet one of the following;

- Income Support / Pension Credit / Income Based Jobseekers' Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Universal Credit
- Council Tax Reduction including Disability premiums / reductions, but NOT including 25% single occupancy reduction
- Income – related Employment and Support Allowance (not contribution – based ESA)

(Applicants are asked to provide the letter sent to them when awarded the allowance or benefit)

Applicants must also provide proof of one of the following;

- Higher Mobility or the Higher Care Component of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Mobility or the Daily Living Enhanced Personal Independence Payment
- Attendance Allowance
- War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement
- Be registered blind or partially sighted

(Applicants are asked to provide the letter sent to them when awarded the allowance or benefit)

Or

- A permanent wheelchair user
- You cannot walk without a walking aid such as a frame crutches etc
- Cannot walk more than 100 metres
- Unable to stand unsupported for more than 5 minutes

(A medical practitioner is required to complete part of the form here for compliance)

We consulted with the following groups on the approved amendment to the scheme from 1 April 2021 and also the proposals being presented to Committee in June;

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Healthwatch
- Disability Cambridgeshire
- Camsight

(see 9 above for feedback received)

Existing Taxicard members were written to informing them of the changes to the scheme from 1 April and also the proposals going to Committee in June, which if approved would be implemented from 1 October 2021. Indications show that between 1 April and 30 September 2021 some members chose to use 2 vouchers per journey as opposed to the 1 previously permitted. Data analysis work to see how vouchers have been used from 1 October is ongoing.

Since 1 October, Taxicard Members who are also members of Cambridge Dial-a-Ride have been able to use their Taxicard vouchers on the Dial-a-Ride mini buses. Whilst early days, we have seen that a few Taxicard members have used their vouchers on the mini-buses. Recommendations for this arrangement to continue will be presented to Committee in January.

(c) Gender reassignment

No Impact identified specific to this protected characteristic group.

(d) Marriage and civil partnership

No Impact identified specific to this protected characteristic group.

(e) Pregnancy and maternity

No Impact identified specific to this protected characteristic group.

(f) Race – Note that the protected characteristic ‘race’ refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

No Impact identified specific to this protected characteristic group.

(g) Religion or belief

No Impact identified specific to this protected characteristic group.

(h) Sex

No Impact identified specific to this protected characteristic group.

(i) Sexual orientation

No Impact identified specific to this protected characteristic group.

(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular, please consider the impact of any changes on low income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty

It is hoped the proposals will benefit low income groups as use of the Taxicard scheme is means-tested.

See (b) for qualifying criteria.

11. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqIA accordingly.)

We spoke with Disability Groups prior to the changes implemented in April 2021 and explained our plans that went to Committee in June. The groups were also updated following the decisions made at the June Committee. We will update them again following the decisions made at Committee in January so they are aware and can inform their members accordingly.

We have carried out consultation with existing members to see how the scheme implemented from 1 April to 30 September has supported them more (or otherwise), on the 1 October changes and proposals from April 2022. This consultation took place with members in November, once additional changes approved at Committee in June had been implemented on 1 October.

12. Do you have any additional comments?

The review was carried out in an attempt to increase the usage of the scheme, to encourage existing members to use it more, to obtain new membership and to adapt the scheme to make it more appealing to new members. Another part of the review was to look at the back office administration of the scheme in conjunction with taxi drivers and operators, and look at the Cambridge Dial-a-Ride scheme and how we could work with them when considering our proposals for the Taxicard.

13. Sign off

Name and job title of lead officer for this equality impact assessment: Sharon Line,
Corporate Business & Executive Support Manager

Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted: Deborah
Simpson, Head of HR

Date of EqIA sign off: December 2021

Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: June 2023

Date to be published on Cambridge City Council website: [Click here to enter text.](#)

**All EqIAs need to be sent to Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer. Ctrl +
click on the button below to send this (you will need to attach the form to the email):**

Send form