

Board Meeting Paper	
Mar 17 BM A 4.0	
Purpose of report	<input type="checkbox"/> Decision ¹ <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion / debate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information only ²
Sensitive Information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If sensitive, protective marking³	
Date of Meeting	16/03/2017
Agenda Item	A 4
Report Title	Cover Note: the Bus Cuts Tool Kit
Sponsor	David Sidebottom
Author(s)	David Sidebottom



1. Summary

In October 2012 Transport Focus published *Bus service reviews: consulting on changes to local services, a best practice toolkit*.

This followed a recommendation from the House of Commons Transport Committee which, in its report, *Bus services after the Spending Review*, asked us to develop a consultation toolkit, for local authorities. The aim was to “provide best practice guidance on how local authorities can hold meaningful consultation processes with local communities about bus service proposals.”

Our report looked at how local authorities formulated proposals, how they consulted and how they considered and then communicated the results of the exercise. Throughout we included examples of best practice that we had identified from our discussions with local authorities.

Four years on from our original report, we thought it time to take a fresh look at how local authorities consult passengers and the wider community.

2. Recommendations / decision required

We are pleased to note some improvement in the way in which local authorities have been consulting since we sent out *Bus service reviews: consulting on changes to local services, a best practice toolkit* four years ago. An increasing number of authorities are asking a broader range of questions and eliciting a larger number of responses. A wider range of options are now being considered including savings from pooling resources with other agencies and departments and increases in council tax or fares.

However some local authorities are still not consulting very well. Although, those highlighted in this report appear to be making the best of a difficult situation. While there are some important differences, what the best authorities learn from consulting on service reductions should stand them in good stead if they need to consult on partnership agreements and franchising proposals.

Service cuts are not going away. Neither is the demand for effective public consultation. Protest

¹ If a decision is required, or you are asking for the paper to be formally noted, please set this out in section 2

² If for information only, please make clear in section 1 **why** this information is being provided

³ ie **OFFICIAL/SENSITIVE**: plus COMMERCIAL / POLICY / MANAGEMENT-STAFF / PERSONAL PROTECT

appears to be on the increase: more and more of the consultations we looked at included petitions. This may reflect a lack of public confidence that ‘filling out a form’ is going to make a difference.

There is a limit to what consultation can achieve. Good consultation may not make unpalatable proposals and unenviable choices acceptable, but poor consultation and inadequate notification of changes can certainly make things worse. At best, consultation can lead to more accountable and better-informed decisions, and a more understanding public.

3. Further details

See attached document for full details and case study summaries

4. Implications – Financial, Risk, Legal, Staffing

Staffing – on publication we have raised awareness of our report through established bus industry networks/member organisations such as Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT, Local Government Association (LGA) and Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO). In addition report discussed with individual bus industry contacts as part of 2016/17 Bus Passenger Survey presentations throughout February and March.

5. Background information

Description	Web Link
Report published 16 February 2017	https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/bus-service-reviews-consulting-on-changes-to-local-services-progress-report-february-progress-report/

6. Equalities screen

Sometimes, an equalities impact assessment (EIA) is required for a given report, proposal or project. To help decide whether an EIA is required, a screen must be undertaken based on the information provided above. The screen seeks answers to four questions which are used to determine impact on the protected characteristics – major, minor or none (default). Please choose the correct impact value and, if **major**, link it to an explanation below.

Gender	Age	Sexual orient'n	Disability	Marital status	Political belief	Religious belief	Racial group
1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?							
None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?							
None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?							

					None	None	None
4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?							
					None	None	None

*Summary of **major** impacts*

1	
2	

Conclusion (the board's consideration of this paper may result in a change of conclusion)

Based on the information above, and having regard to the guidance below, the sponsor and author of this paper agree that (✓)	
(a) A full equalities impact assessment is not required	✓
(b) A full equalities impact assessment is not required at this time but the impact values above suggest the matter should be kept under view during the lifetime of the project	
(c) A full equalities impact assessment is required and should be completed during the lifetime of the project	
(d) A full equalities impact assessment is required and should be completed immediately	
Please provide a brief explanation of why you have arrived at this conclusion	
<p><i>The proposal has little no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations and / or is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.</i></p>	