



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

Equality Impact Analysis

Title of policy, function or service	Demand Responsive Transport Service
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Person completing the EIA	Alistair Napier
Type of policy, function or service:	Existing (reviewed) <input type="checkbox"/> New/Proposed X
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1. Background

Watford's roads are very congested during peak travel periods, lengthening journey times, impacting air quality, putting pressure on car parking capacity and hampering sustainability efforts. Transport for London's recent decision not to proceed with the Metropolitan Line Extension (MLX) has also removed the opportunity to alleviate traffic congestion from West Watford to Watford Junction, with alternative solutions still to be explored. These traffic and congestion issues will only increase as Watford's residential and working population continue to grow, putting further pressure on an already stretched transport network and infrastructure. There is an over-reliance on the use of private vehicles, taxis can be expensive and the network buses have few priority lanes on the roads.

As part of Watford's ambitions to develop a more sustainable approach to transport solutions across the borough, one of the Mayor's commitments, embedded into the council's Corporate Plan, is to invest in new bus-related services. This will support the provision of sustainable transport as Watford grows and there is ever-increasing pressure on the transport network. It also supports the delivery of a number of our key priorities by being fully accessible, more affordable and leveraging digital technology. It will also strengthen connectivity across the town, linking major business / employment zones with the town centre and the wider borough,

The council is working on a number of sustainable transport initiatives and Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) fits within an overall Sustainable Transport programme. The programme aims to relieve the congestion on Watford's roads/parking, promote more sustainable modes of travel and improve air quality, particularly in the light of additional growth for Watford expected to be around 800 new dwellings per year. DRT supports the programme's objectives to:-

- Encourage a change in the way we use local transport as 'a way of life', often known as a modal shift
- Improve Watford as a sustainable transport town
- Improve accessibility, mobility and connectivity within the town
- Improve health and wellbeing.

Due to its compact urban nature (approx. 8 square miles), Watford lends itself to this type of transport system. It is expandable and scalable as demand increases and in the schemes researched there has been an expansion of the operating area (or it is currently under consideration) due to latent demand, which can be measured using the App technology that is another integral project within the Sustainable Transport programme.

Watford has some dedicated bus lane infrastructure in place, but in time there will be a need to expand and improve the infrastructure of the town to support the change in behaviours required to make the scheme a success, and to promote a sustainable alternative to the use of private vehicles.

2. Focus of the Equality Impact Analysis

This EIA, therefore, considers the potential equality related impacts, both positive and negative of Demand Responsive Transport on the people in the groups or with the characteristics protected in the Equalities Act 2010.

These are:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender Reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race
6. Religion or belief
7. Sex (gender)
8. Sexual Orientation
9. Marriage and Civil Partnership.

3. Engagement and consultation

Whilst we do not have specific local consultation information, existing UK demand responsive transport schemes were researched and visited to determine impacts.

Gov.UK National Travel Survey statistics (2017) were also used to determine hours spent travelling by age, gender and mode of travel:-

Main mode	Hours per person per year								
	All ages	0-16	17-20	21-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
All people:									
Car / van driver	140	0	56	153	191	228	229	175	109
Car / van passenger	76	150	80	57	51	48	54	67	61
Other local bus	22	23	57	24	17	14	15	22	27
Taxi / minicab	3	3	6	4	4	3	2	2	3
All modes	377	291	350	406	433	448	438	392	285
Males:									
Car / van driver	162	0	45	170	209	250	262	226	166
Car / van passenger	59	152	61	45	31	28	28	29	36
Other local bus	20	20	55	25	14	12	10	23	22
Taxi / minicab	3	3	5	4	3	3	2	3	2
All modes	387	295	323	407	426	464	452	414	319
Females:									
Car / van driver	118	0	68	135	175	207	197	127	63
Car / van passenger	93	147	100	70	71	68	79	104	82
Other local bus	24	26	59	22	20	15	19	21	31
Taxi / minicab	3	3	7	5	4	3	3	2	4
All modes	368	287	378	405	439	432	424	372	257

From an equalities perspective, there is clear statistical evidence of the impact on younger people between the ages of 17-20 of bus services, which is understandable as these young people would only just be in the age range to drive but would be old enough to travel independently of their parents and carers.

4. What we know about the Watford population

Watford is a compact borough with 96,700 people (2017) living in an area of just 21 square kilometres in 39,100 households (2017). With around 45.14 persons per hectare (2017) it is one of the most densely populated district council areas in England.

Numbers

- 96,700 2017 estimate of population
- 102,533 projected population in 2022
- 106,075 projected population in 2027.

Age profile

- Watford has a younger population than the rest of England. In particular, it has a higher percentage of people in the 30-50 age range. As a result, it also has a higher proportion of under 10s and a high number of babies being born each year to Watford mothers.

Ethnicity

- Watford has a very diverse community – in many ways more like parts of London than the rest of Hertfordshire.

At the last Census (2011), 38% of Watford's residents were non White British, with White other (7.7%), Pakistani (6.7%) and Indian (5.5%) the next highest ethnic groups (after 62% White British). Although there has not been any official analysis of ethnic groups since the 2011 Census, it is thought that this level of diversity will not have changed significantly and it is likely that the borough's attraction for new and recent migrants continues.

Disability / Health

Around 85% of the population of Watford state that they have 'good health' and just under 14% record a disability (Census 2011).

The 2018 NHS Health Profile's summary conclusion is that the health of people in Watford is 'varied' compared with the England average. Life expectancy for both men and women is similar to the England average (which is an improvement on previous years when men's was lower).

The profile also shows that physically active adults has remained relatively stable over the last five years with 68% stating they were active, which compares well to the England average of 66%. There has been a reduction in the adults classified as overweight or obese in Watford (55.4% in 2016/17 from 60% in 2015/16), which indicates a move to more healthy lifestyle.

The government estimates that around 4% of the population holds blue badges (government data statistics 2018). As an estimate this would mean there would be approximately 3,500 - 4,000 blue badge holders in the borough.

MOSAIC profile of Watford

This shows that the group 'Career Builders' has the highest number in Watford, followed by 'Cultural Comfort'. These groups are in the J and I type classifications – known as 'rental hubs' and 'urban cohesion' – and together make up almost 25% of the Watford population. The key characteristics of these types are:

Rental hubs (J type)	Urban cohesion (I type)
Aged 18-35 years	Settled extended families
Private renting	City suburbs
Singles and sharers	Multicultural
Urban locations	Own 3 bedroom houses
Young neighbourhoods	Sense of community
High use of smartphones	Younger generation love technology

The third highest MOSAIC type, 'Café and Catchments', is from MOSAIC group D, which is known as 'Domestic Success' and characteristically are families with children and larger upmarket suburban homes.

Economic activity of Watford population

- 84.5% of Watford's working age population were economically active in the year to June 2018, equating to 54,600 people. This is a higher percentage than for Great Britain overall (78.4%) and the East of England region (81.1%).
- Over 52% of Watford's working age population are working in the top 3 standard occupational classification groups - managers, directors and senior officials; professional occupations; associate professional and technical - compared with 45.9% for Great Britain and 45.7% for the East of England.
- The gross weekly pay for Watford residents (2017) is higher than for Great Britain and the East of England at £640.00 (Watford), £552.30 (Great Britain) and £574.90 for East of England in 2017.
- The gross weekly pay in Watford is also higher than for Great Britain and the East of England: £580.30 (Watford), £552.00 (Great Britain) and £545.10 for East of England.

5. How will the council ensure equality is promoted through DRT

Under the Equality Act 2010, three areas need to be considered when analysing the equality impact of DRT:

1. **eliminate** discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
2. **advance** equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it
3. **foster** good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not.

a). Positive impacts

Known positive effects

- The scheme is open to everyone regardless of whether they have a protected characteristic or not
- A concession policy has been applied to blue badge holders. The effectiveness of the policy and the appropriateness of extending it will be kept under review. Wheelchair users are able to use the service, improving accessibility for disabled passengers
- Availability of on-demand transport to people with limited or no access to a private vehicle/ public transport. We know from research that as well as younger and older people, people with disabilities are less likely to own a car
- Research shows that the scheme is used for commuting, student travel, leisure, first/last mile inter-modal journeys and 'between' existing fixed bus routes

b). Negative impacts

Potential negative effects based on what you know from your analysis

- The taxi community may, initially, see this as a challenge to the service they provide – the majority of Watford's 600+ taxi drivers are non-White British, primarily from the Pakistani community. This means that the introduction of DRT may have a potential negative impact on this part of the community in particular
- It may be seen as a threat to existing fixed bus routes
- The scheme is accessed via smart phone or the internet only. We know that older people are less likely to have a smartphone than the population as a whole and, overall, are less likely to be digitally enabled/confident

- The service is cashless and debited to the passenger's card/bank account via the App/online only. Around 1.5 million people in the UK do not have bank accounts. There is no known analysis against protected characteristics of this group but the main reason for not having an account is 'too little money to warrant one'.

6. Overall conclusion

The DRT service will be available to everyone and will be inclusive, providing equality of opportunity to all individuals, including those with protected characteristics.

It will expand the provision and range of transport for public usage at a reasonable price, complementing the existing transport network. It will go towards reducing the number of single occupancy car journeys in Watford leading to fewer cars on the road/congestion. The DRT offer will open up opportunities for a wide range of the community to get out and about across the borough, which may not be possible, or easy, with current transport options.

The council will ensure that any vehicles used to provide the DRT service are fully accessible, in line with current best practice so that there are no barriers to using the service in terms of physical accessibility.

By improving the transport links across the town, the DRT will improve connectivity between different communities within the town – both resident and business – which will help foster community relations.

Whilst it is acknowledged that there might be a potential negative impact on the taxi community (known to be predominantly Pakistani / Muslim) feedback from schemes elsewhere in the country is that a DRT bus service sits alongside other transport options – complementing rather than competing. Taxis / hackney carriages / private hire vehicles provide an individual / bespoke service to the customer, including added benefits such as help with luggage / bags, which is a different offer from DRT, which will meet the needs of some people but not to the exclusion of those who use taxis / hackney carriages / private hire vehicles.

Additionally, as the service is accessed through an app and paid for via bank card, there is a potential that certain members of the community could be excluded as not all members of the community will have access to mobile technology and / or bank accounts. Whilst we are aware of this, we do know from national data (ONS 2018) that the percentage of the UK population overall with access to mobile technology (smart phones / tablets / laptops) currently stands at 80%. This percentage is likely to increase although there will always be a number of people who fall outside the mainstream use of technology. In terms of bank accounts, there is little the council can do to encourage the take up of bank accounts by those in the community without the means or inclination to do so and this is acknowledged as a potential barrier to access to the DTR.

Please see following tables:-

Summary of potential positive impacts and ways in which they can be ensured:-

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme is open to everyone regardless of whether they have a protected characteristic or not 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure service is delivered as planned and to specification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concessions will apply to blue badge holders and the policy will be kept under review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Further to be identified as part of post implementation review of the concessions policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirement to provide concessionary fares included in tender specification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheelchair users are able to use the service, improving accessibility for disabled passengers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirement for low-level kerb-side access and dedicated space(s) on bus included in tender specification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved connectivity across the town helping to bring communities together and foster good relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective planning of routes to ensure connectivity is improved (i.e. opening up routes that are currently not served in the town) Identify where discounts will enable people to use the new service
	<i>Other implications</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Availability of on-demand transport to people with limited or no access to a private vehicle/ public transport</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Economic</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Delivery of service will expand transport reach at an affordable price</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Research shows that the scheme is used for commuting, student travel, leisure, first/last mile inter-modal journeys and 'between' existing</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Inclusivity and modal shift</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Robust marketing and comms campaign to ensure changes in behaviour across all types of traveller in Watford</i>

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
<i>fixed bus routes, thus reducing private vehicle usage</i>		

Summary of potential negative impacts and ways in which they can be removed or mitigated

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to mitigate the negative impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The taxi community may initially see this as a challenge to the service they provide – the majority of Watford’s 600+ taxi drivers are non-White British, primarily from the Pakistani community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethnicity Religion Economic (other implication) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DRT is a ride-share service, aggregating users on to a single trip using virtual bus stops – this is a different type of service to taxis and will be marketed this way i.e. not in direct competition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme is accessed via smart phone or the internet only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The benefits of DRT services are delivered via app technology utilising an algorithm which aggregates passengers’ requests to a single journey & provides updates ‘on the go’ - it will be marketed accordingly Clear communications on the scheme to ensure people are aware of how to access the service 90% of UK households (ONS 2018) have access to the internet 8 out of 10 adults (ONS 2018) access the internet ‘on the go’ (smartphone, tablet, laptop)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme requires people to pay via a bank account 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentially all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear communications on the scheme to ensure people are aware of how to access the service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>It may be seen as a threat to existing fixed bus routes by operators and passengers</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Mobility</i> <i>Economic (unprotected)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>DRT is seen as a service that compliments existing bus routes and passengers tend to use it where fixed bus routes do not go – it is not in direct competition with fixed bus route operators</i> <i>DRT expands the provision of public transport</i>

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to mitigate the negative impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The scheme is accessed via smart phone or the internet only</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Inclusivity</i> 	<p><i>across Watford</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The benefits of DRT services are delivered via app technology utilising an algorithm which aggregates passengers' requests to a single journey & provides updates 'on the go' - it will be marketed accordingly</i> <i>90% of UK households (ONS 2018) have access to the internet</i> <i>8 out of 10 adults (ONS 2018) access the internet 'on the go' (smartphone, tablet, laptop)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The service is cashless and debited to the passenger's card/bank account via the App/online only</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Inclusivity ('unbanked')</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Will explore ways with chosen operator to enable 'unbanked' to pay for and use the service</i>

This EIA has been approved by:

Kathryn Robson

Date 05 Jun 2019

