Essex County Council

Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment v2 - optional ECIA review

Reference: ECIA531335375

Submitted: 10 August 2023 11:26 AM

Executive summary

Title of policy / decision: Extension of DigiGo

Policy / decision type: Key Decision

Overview of policy / decision: To recognise the early success of the DigiGo pilot and the exciting new delivery model of transport it offers. It is proposed that DigiGo should become a long-term part of the supported bus network in the local area. This would mean integrating DigiGo into the supported bus network strategy agreed by Cabinet in May 2023 as a new service.

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?: To approve the extension of the DigiGo service for an initial two years from 1 April 2024, with the option for a further two, one-year extensions.

Executive Director responsible for policy / decision: Mark Ash (Climate, Environment and Customer Services)

Cabinet Member responsible for policy / decision: Lee Scott (Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport)

Is this a new policy / decision or a change to an existing one?: New policy / decision

How will the impact of the policy / decision be monitored and evaluated?: Passengers numbers / Cost Per Passenger Journey / Passenger feedback through ratings and surveys

Will this policy / decision impact on:

Service users: Yes

Employees: Yes

Wider community or groups of people: Yes

If the policy decision impacts on employees, provide details here and include potential impacts on identified groups later in the form: If the decision is agreed, employees within the service would transition from being fixed-term to permanent employees. A positive impact.

What strategic priorities will this policy / decision support?: Strong, Inclusive and Sustainable Economy, High Quality Environment, Health, Independence and Wellbeing for All Ages, A good place for Children and Families to Grow

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Economy?: Green growth, Levelling up the economy

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Environment: Net zero, Transport and built environment, Green communities, Levelling up the environment

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Health: Promoting independence

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Families: Education outcomes, Levelling up outcomes for families

What geographical areas of Essex will the policy / decision affect?: Braintree, Chelmsford, Uttlesford

Digital accessibility

Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?: Yes

What steps you have taken to meet the digital accessibility: This is an extension of a current contract for an app and integrated payment service provider. The current arrangements meet accessibility requirements.

How have you tested accessibility?: The current arrangements meet accessibility requirements tested through subject matter experts within technology services.

How will you monitor and maintain accessibility once it has gone live?: Minimum standards in contract to be abided by, with ongoing monitoring by the Council

Equalities - Groups with protected characteristics

Age

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Disability - learning disability

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Disability - mental health issues

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Disability - physical impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Disability - sensory impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Sex

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Gender reassignment

Nature of impact: None

Marriage / civil partnership

Nature of impact: None

Pregnancy / maternity

Nature of impact: None

Race

Nature of impact: None

Religion / belief

Nature of impact: None

Sexual orientation

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: DigiGo is a shared form of public transport, delivered in a new model. It works on-demand and flexibly - therefore better meeting the needs of local residents.
It offers shorter walking distances to pick-up (virtual stops) and provides a service in rural and sub-urban, which without DigiGo, either have no public transport or very limited (e.g. once a week or every 2/3 hours). DigiGo operates seven days a week, 7am until 10pm.

There is extensive research nationally that demonstrates buses have a disproportionately positive impact on these groups. All Local Bus Service ECIA's note this.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: n/a

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: Continue to deliver DigiGo and consider options to increase the operational area.

Levelling up - Priority areas & cohorts

Children and adults with SEND, learning disabilities or mental health conditions (taking an all-age approach)

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Children on Free School Meals

Nature of impact: None

Working families

Nature of impact: None

Young adults (16-25 who have not been in education, training or employment for around 6-

12 months)

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Harlow

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Jaywick and Clacton

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Harwich

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Basildon (Town) housing estates

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Canvey Island

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Colchester (Town) - Housing Estates

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Rural North of the Braintree District

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: DigiGo provides a lifeline to those living in rural and sub-urban areas who have no current public transport provision. It offers a reliable, flexible and on-demand service that enables those without access to a car or suffering the impact of the cost of living crisis; to access key establishments such as health, education and employment.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: n/a

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?:

Equalities - Inclusion health groups and other priority groups

Refugees / asylum seekers

Nature of impact: None

Homeless / rough sleepers

Nature of impact: None

People who experience drug and alcohol dependence

Nature of impact: None

Offenders / ex-offenders

Nature of impact: None

Victims of modern slavery

Nature of impact: None

Carers

Nature of impact: None

Looked after children / care leavers

Nature of impact: None

The armed forces community (serving personnel and their families, veterans, reservists and cadets)

Nature of impact: None

People who are unemployed / economically inactive

Nature of impact: None

People on low income

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Sex workers

Nature of impact: None

Ethnic minorities

Nature of impact: None

Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities

Nature of impact: None

People with multiple complex needs or multi-morbidities

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: DigiGo provides a lifeline to those living in rural and sub-urban areas who have no current public transport provision. It offers a reliable, flexible and on-demand service that enables those without access to a car or suffering the impact of the cost of living crisis; to access key establishments such as health, education and employment.

The £2 single capped fare government has introduced across bus services, which was specifically brought in to 'Help for Households' as part of the cost for living crisis, has benefited those on low incomes.

There is no specific data to show an impact on the other groups in this section (albeit anecdotally we believe there is).

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: n/a

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?:

Equalities - Geographical Groups

People living in areas of high deprivation

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

People living in rural or isolated areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

People living in coastal areas

Nature of impact: None

People living in urban or over-populated areas

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: DigiGo provides a lifeline to those living in rural and sub-urban areas who have no current public transport provision. It offers a reliable, flexible and on-demand service that enables them to access key establishments such as health, education and employment.

The £2 single capped fare government has introduced across bus services, which was specifically brought in to 'Help for Households' as part of the cost for living crisis, has benefited those on low incomes.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: n/a

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: Continue to deliver DigiGo and consider options to expand the service.

Families

Family formation (e.g. to become or live as a couple, the ability to live with or apart from children)

Nature of impact: None

Families going through key transitions e.g. becoming parents, getting married, fostering or adopting, bereavement, redundancy, new caring responsibilities, onset of a long-term health condition

Nature of impact: None

Family members' ability to play a full role in family life, including with respect to parenting and other caring responsibilities

Nature of impact: None

Families before, during and after couple separation

Nature of impact: None

Families most at risk of deterioration of relationship quality and breakdown

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: DigiGo provides a lifeline to those living in rural and sub-urban areas who have no current public transport provision. It offers a reliable, flexible and on-demand service that enables those who can no longer drive the option to continue being independent by using public transport to access key services such as health, education and employment.

There is no specific data to show an impact on the other groups in this section (albeit anecdotally we believe there is).

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: n/a

Climate

Does your decision / policy involve development or re-development of buildings or infrastructure?: No

Does your decision / policy take place in, or make use of, existing buildings or infrastructure?: No

Does your decision / policy involve elements connected to transport, travel or vehicles? This includes travel needs / requirements of both service users and staff (including staff you're planning to recruit): Yes

Where are staff or service users coming from and how are they travelling?: DigiGo is new form of shared public transport. It's primary purpose is to enable residents to travel sustainably to key services that it needs to access - leaving the car at home. It also uses electric minibuses to deliver the service, further reducing the carbon impact of the service.

If car travel is unavoidable, are you specifying electric cars and vehicles?: Yes

Are you undertaking a procurement exercise?: No

Does your decision / policy involve the purchase of goods or materials?: No

Will any waste be generated by this decision? This includes waste from construction, waste generated by service users / staff, and waste generated by replacing existing products / materials with new: No

Nature of impact

Built Environment / Energy: None

Sustainable Transport / Travel: Positive

Waste: None

Extent of impact

Sustainable Transport / Travel: High

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: DigiGo is new form of shared public transport. It's primary purpose is to enable residents to travel sustainably to key services that it needs to access - leaving the car at home. It also uses electric minibuses to deliver the service, further reducing the carbon impact of the service.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: n/a

Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your ECIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more of the groups / areas identified?: No

Details of person completing the form

I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance: I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

Date ECIA completed: 13/07/2023

Name of person completing the ECIA: James Hopkins

Email address of person completing the ECIA: james.hopkins@essex.gov.uk

Your function: Climate, Environment and Customer Services

Your service area: IPTU

Your team: Commercial Operations

Are you submitting this ECIA on behalf of another function, service area or team?: No

Email address of Head of Service: helen.morris@essex.gov.uk