

## Equality Impact Assessment - Optional EqlA Review

Reference: EQIA165476930

Submitted: 22 January 2020 14:36 PM

### Executive summary

**Title of policy or decision:** Essex-wide Bus Shelter Project

**Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision):** In 2018/19 there were 43 million bus passenger journeys in Essex. The Council has an ambitious strategy to increase bus usage across the County by 1% year on year; recognising the important future that sustainable transport has in reducing congestion, carbon and air quality emissions and improving social mobility.

To support this ambition, the Council's vision is to develop "a sustainable and quality bus infrastructure network that provides consistency of experience, is commercially focussed and future proofed".

The procurement of an Essex-wide Bus Shelter contract will be key in delivering this vision; by providing an improved bus stop experience for existing and prospective bus passengers and leveraging significant advertising potential to generate income that will support this venture.

Essex scores lower than the average score for all bus stop experience indicators than other Two-tier areas in the UK (Transport Focus, 2018). It is likely that bus usage could be higher if people were less exposed to the weather and if there was better provision available at bus stops.

ECC, unlike many Local Authorities around the UK, has maintained a high investment in local services, to the sum of £8 million per annum (2019/20 budget) along with the operation of a concessionary fares scheme which exceeds the minimum requirement.

Bus shelter provision is currently patchy, inconsistent and uncoordinated across the County. Shelter ownership is split across multiple organisations and the Council does not benefit from any advertising income.

To tackle these issues, over the last year the Council has been working collaboratively with all 12 district, city and borough councils across the County to bring the estate together and create a cohesive and attractive proposition for the market.

This partnership working will be formalised by way of a Collaboration Agreement. Under the proposed agreement, the Council will be the Lead Party and will procure lead a 'concession' contract with a successful supplier. A concession contract is one under which the contractor invests in service provision but is entitled to commercially exploit its investment, in this case sharing income with the Council.

Under the Collaboration Agreement it is proposed that the Council would become the owner of all bus shelters currently owned by district councils and the partners would agree that all new locations would similarly be provided via the contract. This will provide a larger estate to leverage the best commercially focussed, concession contract from the market.

For clarity, Parish and Town Council owned shelters are not included in the scope of the contract. The contract will enable those Council's to purchase shelters through it, via the current and established Local Highways Panel process, enabling an alignment, over time, with the new, consistent bus shelter estate desired.

A market engagement event was held in March 2019. This was to gain insight from suppliers in the market to

inform and shape the contract specification; in order to present a viable and attractive proposal.

The contract would require a pro-active maintenance programme for shelters included within the contract, to ensure a higher quality standard.

A replacement programme will be a key part of the contract that bidders will be required to shape as part of their submissions. The Council recognises a need to balance this programme with the income it generates from the advertising.

It is expected that the procurement and implementation of this contract will ensure that the Council has a long-term plan for the funding of the provision, through commercial income, generated from advertising.

The implementation of this contract forms part of the Council's wider approach to increasing sustainable transport use across the County. The increase in bus shelters across the County aids the comfort of bus passengers and increases the likelihood of those services being accessed by new users.

To ensure delivery of what is proposed the Council requires an Advertising and Sponsorship Policy that the successful supplier will be required to adhere to, in conjunction with the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) rules. The proposed policy meets this requirement and clearly outlines the Council's expectations, without being too restrictive and damaging the viability of the contracts commerciality.

Any and all advertising posted as part of this contract will be in accordance with the policy; which prohibits certain adverts, for example, political messages, payday lenders and smoking. The Collaboration Agreement with district council's makes clear that the contract will make use of the Council's proposed Advertising and Sponsorship Policy.

Key benefits for users of the bus shelters the Council expects are:

- Improved, consistent look and feel to the bus shelter estate; through contracting one supplier and requiring a standard specification
- Increased shelter provision across the County; by generating income to fund future purchases and refurbishing, where possible, replaced shelters for use at current bus stops without shelter provision
- An excellent user experience, including key areas such as accessibility, by having a consistent and standard specification.

In summary, the Essex-wide Bus Shelter contract and the requested capital investment, will improve the overall bus stop experience and lead to increased bus patronage, as well as replacing taxpayer funding with commercial funding. In turn, this will improve mobility of many Essex residents and directly impact the following Strategic Priorities within the Council's Organisation Strategy:

- Help people in Essex prosper by increasing their skills
- Enable Essex to attract and grow large firms in high growth industries
- Improve the health of people in Essex
- Help to secure stronger, safer and more neighbourly communities
- Help to secure sustainable development and protect the environment
- Facilitate growing communities and new homes
- Limit cost and drive growth in revenue.

**What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?:** Enable inclusive economic growth, Help people get the best start and age well, Help create great places to grow up, live and work, Transform the council to achieve more with less

**Which strategic priorities does this support? - Enable inclusive economic growth:** Help people in Essex prosper by increasing their skills, Enable Essex to attract and grow large firms in high growth industries

**Which strategic priorities does this support? - Help people get the best start and age well:** Improve the health of people in Essex

**Which strategic priorities does this support? - Help create great places to grow up, live and work:** Help to secure stronger, safer and more neighbourly communities, Help secure sustainable development and protect the environment, Facilitate growing communities and new homes

**Which strategic priorities does this support? - Transform the council to achieve more with less:** Limit cost and drive growth in revenue

**Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?:** a new policy (or decision)

**Please provide a link to the document / website / resource to which this EqIA relates:** [https://essex-dash.achieveservice.com/service/Equality\\_Impact\\_Assessment](https://essex-dash.achieveservice.com/service/Equality_Impact_Assessment)

**Please upload any documents which relate to this EqIA, for example decision documents:** [https://essex-dash.achieveservice.com/service/Equality\\_Impact\\_Assessment](https://essex-dash.achieveservice.com/service/Equality_Impact_Assessment)

## Assessing the equality impact

**Use this section to record how you have assessed any potential impact on the communities likely to be affected by the policy (or decision):** All shelters will be installed in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and overall the Project is a good news story as it seeks to improve quality of experience and expand shelter provision across the County.

**Does or will the policy or decision affect:**

**Service users:** Yes

**Employees:** No

**The wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities:** Yes

**Which geographical areas of Essex does or will the policy or decision affect?:** All Essex

**Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?:** No

**Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?:** No

**Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies?:** No

## Description of impact

**Description of Impact.** If there is an impact on a specific protected group tick box, otherwise leave blank. You will be given the opportunity to rate identified impacts as positive, negative or neutral on the next page: Age, Disability - learning disability, Disability - mental health issues, Disability - physical impairment, Disability - sensory impairment, Pregnancy / maternity

**I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics:** I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics

**Describe any actions that have already been taken to mitigate negative impacts on any of the protected characteristics:** N/A

## Age

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Positive - plans to increase number of shelters across the County.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** Positive - plans to increase the number of shelters across the estate.

Increased consistency of the estate will provide a more familiar experience making them more accessible for this group, as will an increased availability of seating (with arms) which will assist older adults.

## **Disability - learning disability**

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Positive - plans to increase number of shelters across the County.

Increased consistency of the estate will provide a more familiar experience making them more accessible for this group.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** Positive - plans to increase number of shelters across the County.

Increased consistency of the estate will provide a more familiar experience making them more accessible for this group.

## **Disability - mental health issues**

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Positive - plans to increase number of shelters across the County.

Increased consistency of the estate will provide a more familiar experience making them more accessible for this group.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** Positive - plans to increase number of shelters across the County.

Increased consistency of the estate will provide a more familiar experience making them more accessible for this group.

## **Disability - physical impairment**

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Positive - plans to increase number of shelters across the County.

Increased consistency of the estate will provide a more familiar experience making them more accessible for this group.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** Positive - plans to increase number of shelters across the County.

Increased consistency of the estate will provide a more familiar experience making them more accessible for this group.

## **Disability - sensory impairment**

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Positive - plans to increase number of shelters across the County.

Increased consistency of the estate will provide a more familiar experience making them more accessible for this group.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** Positive - plans to increase number of shelters across the County.

Increased consistency of the estate will provide a more familiar experience making them more accessible for this group.

## Pregnancy / maternity

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Positive - plans to increase number of shelters across the County.

Increased seating provision (with arms) will aide this group.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** Positive - plans to increase number of shelters across the County.

Increased seating provision (with arms) will aide this group.

## Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

**Does your EqlA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?:** 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 EqlA completed:** 22/01/2020

**Name of person completing the EqlA:** Gwen Rowan

**Email address of person completing the EqlA:** gwen.rowan@essex.gov.uk

**Your function:** Corporate Development

**Your service area:** Traded and Delivery Support

**Your team:** Project Delivery

**Are you submitting this EqlA on behalf of another function, service area or team?:** Yes

**Name of person completing the EqlA:** Gwen Rowan

**Function:** Infrastructure & Environment

**Service area:** Transport

**Team:** Integrated Passenger Transport Unit

**Email address of Head of Service:** Helen.Morris@essex.gov.uk