

## Section 1 – Service Details and Summary of EIA Activity

<b>Title of activity:</b>	Concessionary fares (Bus Passes) reduced to statutory requirements only. – Ceasing Disabled Companion Pass Entitlement
<b>Lead Officer responsible for this EIA:</b>	Dave Winstanley – Assistant Director – Transport and Capital Projects
<b>Telephone:</b>	(01325) 406618
<b>Service Group:</b>	Economic Growth
<b>Service or Team:</b>	Transport and Capital Projects
<b>Assistant Director accountable for this EIA</b>	Dave Winstanley
<b>Who else will be involved in carrying out the EIA:</b>	Andrew Casey, Head of Network Management Sue Dobson – Sustainable Transport Manager Gill Hutchinson – Sustainable Transport Officer Mary Hall and Deena Wallace

### What stage has the EIA reached?

This table provides a 'cover note' of progress to be maintained as the EIA is developed over time.

Stage	Date	Summary of position
<b>Stage 1: Initial Officer Assessment. Whole Population likely to be affected identified</b>	23 July 2015	Identified as part of the initial Chief Officers Executive Report. Initial Screening assessment undertaken in developing the MTFP proposal (Form W15).
<b>Stage 2: Further Assessment. Target Population likely to be affected identified</b>		Identified as part of the initial Chief Officers Executive Report. Initial Screening assessment undertaken in developing the MTFP proposal (Form W15).  Target population are those individuals who currently have a Companion Pass, their carer or those applying for a Companion Pass between now and the date of any decision on changing the policy.  In addition Companion Pass holders from other boroughs that have a reciprocal agreement with DBC for the use of the passes (Tyne & Wear - Nexus, Northumbria, Durham).
<b>Stage 3: Further Assessment. Individuals likely to be affected identified</b>	July 2015	A report was run to identify the number of individuals affected i.e. those that currently have a Companion Pass. In July 2015 this is 635 individuals. This information forms the basis of the officer assessment.  When the consultation was undertaken in 2016 in line with the MTFP process a new report was run from the Customer Management System using up to date information. A letter was

<p><b>Stage 4: Analysis of Findings</b></p>	<p>May 2016</p>	<p>sent to all 665 Companion Pass holders.</p> <p>83 responses were received to the consultation letter from pass holders and carers. In addition there was feedback from the People's Parliament and Darlington Association on Disability. There were numerous impacts and these are summarised as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Impact on health, well-being, social inclusion and independence (as disabled people who can't travel unaided, wouldn't be able to make the same number of journeys as do currently which will limit their access to services.)</li> <li>- Increased financial pressure on Benefits and individual budgets.</li> <li>- Many companion pass holders are unable to make journeys unaided, especially those with visual impairments and learning disabilities.</li> <li>- The companion pass holders carer would have to bear the cost of journeys, and would impact on their Carer's Allowance.</li> <li>- Certain companion pass holders would no longer be able to leave the house without the aid of companion due to the above.</li> <li>- If Darlington were to withdraw from the North East reciprocal arrangement, this may have a negative effect on the number of people travelling into Darlington.</li> </ul> <p>Further analysis of the most recent and accurate figures from the regional concessionary fares system shows that the number of trips is lower than originally stated and the potential financial saving is lower.</p> <p>Some client groups may also be affected by other DBC proposed changes that impact on disabled people such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Sensory Impairment Service at Vane House.</li> <li>• C8 Cease funding to Aspire Service for school leavers with learning difficulties.</li> <li>• C2 Review of Statutory Minimum Service Costs.</li> <li>• W20 Blue Badge parking</li> <li>• S13 Removal of Social Fund Budget.</li> <li>• C5 Cease contract which provides support to vulnerable people aged 25+ who are homeless or at risk.</li> <li>• C6 End Drug and Alcohol Floating SupportS9</li> <li>• Reductions to Obesity funding.</li> <li>• C9 Cease funding for Information Co-ordinator provided through DAD.</li> </ul> <p>The impacts identified in this proposal have been added to the cumulative impact assessment.</p> <p>The proposal will not help to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Some disabled people may make</p>
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	<p>more trips alone if the pass is withdrawn and without a companion they may be more at risk from discrimination, harassment and victimisation by other members of the public.</p> <p>The ENCTS is a statutory scheme applied across England, providing the same opportunities to disabled people, in terms of eligibility. However the companion pass ensures that those disabled people who are unable to travel alone are also able to use their opportunity to travel by public transport. Withdrawing the pass would reduce choice and opportunity for this group of disabled people, unless they have the financial ability to pay for a carer/companion to travel.</p> <p>The proposal will not foster good relations with Companion pass holders.</p>
<b>Stage 5: Sign-Off</b>	Completed June 2016
<b>Stage 6: Reporting and Action Planning</b>	<p>Once any decision is made in respect of the companion pass its effects should be reviewed by officers on an annual basis.</p> <p>A number of options were suggested as part of the consultation process and these with others have been used to consider an options appraisal.</p> <p>It is recommended that further work is carried out to investigate options to retain the Companion Pass on the basis of:</p> <p>Developing Option 4 which is a combination of a more robust criterion and assessment for entitlement and an annual charge at a level to be determined.</p>

## Section 2 – The Activity and Supporting Information

### Details of the activity (including the main purpose and aims)

1. The Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007 gives authorities the duty to provide the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS).
2. The Transport Act 1985 and related legislation\* also gives local authorities the power, at their discretion, to offer discretionary enhancements to the statutory scheme, such as free travel before 09:30 or travel by other modes. (\*Transport Act 2000 as amended by the Concessionary Bus Travel Act of 2007 and Travel Bedford Borough Equality Analysis 3 Concessions (Eligible Services) Order Act 2009)
3. In addition to the statutory ENCTS, Darlington offers (but has no legal duty to), the facility for pass holders unable to travel independently to be accompanied on their journey by a companion (carer) at no charge. This enhancement is limited to bus journeys made within Darlington, Co Durham, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear. The pass holder is not required to have their companion with them for every journey, as this depends on the nature of their condition. Darlington Borough Council pays for journeys that start within the Borough in line with the statutory scheme.
4. There are therefore two types of Disabled passes:
  - (a) Disabled – single person use.
  - (b) Companion – Disabled person plus companion.
5. Discretionary services are under review as part of the current MTFP process. The proposal considers the removal of this discretionary companion pass from Darlington's Concessionary Travel Scheme as one element of managing demand and significant costs associated with the scheme..
6. Companion entitlement is currently assessed on an individual basis, with the applicant required to obtain a statement from a medical professional, during the application process, as to why they require a companion to accompany them. The entitlement is usually granted to people with severe disabilities.
7. There are currently 635 disabled companion passes (July 2015) in Darlington (When the consultation was carried out in April 2016 there were 665 companion pass holders):

ENCTS Disability Companion pass holders	No
Blind or partially sighted	51
Has a learning disability	176
Long term disability/injury preventing ability to walk	326
No arms or lack of use of arms	0
Not further specified	17
Profoundly or severely deaf	11
Unfit to drive	49
Without speech	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>635</b>

8. In 2014/15 there were 500,400 journeys made by Darlington disabled pass holders, of which approximately 92,000 journeys were made by pass holders with the companion entitlement.
9. Approximately half of all journeys made by disabled companion pass holders were made without a companion. The cost of providing free travel for the companions of disabled companion pass holders in 2014/15 was approximately £87,000.
10. These figures have been reviewed using 2015/16 data supplied by the North East Smart Ticketing system (NESTI) in May 2016.
  - DBC Companion pass holders made approximately 52,000 journeys in 2015/16.

- 20,000 of these journeys were made by the pass holder without a Companion. These journeys will still be paid for under ENCTS and there would be no financial saving.
- 32,000 journeys were made with a Companion. The journeys made by the pass holder will still be paid for under ENCTS, therefore 16,000 trips can be associated to the companion. These would then either be a) not made at all; b) the Companion would pay the commercial fare; or c) the Companion would use their own pass. The financial saving would equate to approximately £18,572 in options a) and b) and less under option c). Not all of this saving would be secured. See section 5 for further information

### **Consideration of Removing Companion Passes from the Darlington Scheme**

11. The current proposal as part of the MTFP is that any disabled person with a pass would still be able to travel for free but the companion would have to pay. The Council does not know what % of companions also have an ENCTS pass and would therefore still be eligible for free travel, or may be apply for a pass in their own right if the companion enhancement was no longer available. Any potential saving is also dependent on the agreement with bus operators for reimbursement in 2017/18, therefore the full amount may not be realised. Negotiation of the 2017/18 scheme starts in the autumn of 2016 and is undertaken for the whole of the Tees Valley by Stockton Borough Council under the new Combined Authority arrangements and for efficiency reasons.
12. Consideration will need to be given to how any change to the companion entitlement will affect the reimbursement arrangements with bus operators and how the scheme will work in practice. The other 4 Tees Valley authorities do not have a companion pass system in operation.
13. Other local authorities in the region that provide reciprocal arrangements with DBC will also need to be consulted i.e. Durham, Northumberland and Tyne & Wear (Nexus). These authorities also allow companions travelling with a Darlington Companion pass holder to travel for free, and in return Darlington pays for companions accompanying their pass holders to travel for free from the borough. This proposal will therefore impact on residents in other local authority areas with whom we have reciprocal arrangements.
14. This proposal and the recent changes to the assessment process, customer management system and 'hotlisting' to be introduced shortly aim to reduce the numbers using the scheme to the statutory minimum and help reduce fraudulent use as part of the series of measure being proposed to help manage demand and the costs associated with this scheme.

### **Who will be affected by the activity?**

#### **Whole population**

All bus pass holders issued with a Darlington disabled companion bus pass under the Darlington Concessionary Travel Scheme.  
 Any other disabled people who may be eligible but have not applied for a companion pass to date.  
 Carers/companions/family members who currently travel with the disabled person.

#### **Target population**

Directly - the existing disabled companion pass holders; and  
 Indirectly their companions.  
 Plus anyone who applies during the consultation period.  
 In addition Companion Pass holders from other boroughs that have a reciprocal agreement with DBC for the use of the passes (Nexus, Northumbria, Durham).

## Individuals

There are currently 635 disabled companion passes (July 2015) in Darlington (665 as of April 2016). The proposal will impact on the pass holder and their companion/carers. The breakdown of pass holders is below:-

### What data, research and other evidence or information is available which is relevant to the EIA?

National guidance on the assessment process is provided by the Department for Transport in its document: 'Guidance to local authorities on assessing eligibility of disabled people in England for concessionary bus travel; 8<sup>th</sup> April 2013'.

Information from other local authorities on the impact of removing this discretionary element from the Darlington Scheme (see page 27).

Data on the current use of the Companion Pass by existing pass holders – use/no use; frequency of use; accompanied or not.

## Section 3: Officer Assessment

Protected Characteristics	Potential Impact Positive/Negative/ Not Applicable			Potential level of impact				Summary of Impact														
	P	N	NA	H	M	L	nil															
Age	P	N	NA	H	M	L	nil	<p>Anyone aged 5 or over can apply for a disabled bus pass. Therefore, pass holders are all ages, (unlike the bus pass for older people which is only available to people of state pension age).</p> <p>40 of the 635 companion passes are issued to people aged 16 and under.</p> <p>50% of pass holders are aged between 17 and 50 with a further 40% aged 51-67.</p> <p>Analysis of age profile of companion pass holders:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age</th> <th>No of pass holders</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0-16</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17-33</td> <td>159</td> </tr> <tr> <td>34-50</td> <td>160</td> </tr> <tr> <td>51-67</td> <td>241</td> </tr> <tr> <td>68-84</td> <td>58</td> </tr> <tr> <td>85-101</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age	No of pass holders	0-16	40	17-33	159	34-50	160	51-67	241	68-84	58	85-101	6
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0-16	40																					
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85-101	6																					
Race	P	N	NA	H	M	L	nil	There is no identifiable impact on race.														
Sex	P	N	NA	H	M	L	nil	51% of companion pass holders are male and 49% are female.														
Gender Reassignment	P	N	NA	H	M	L	nil	There is no identifiable impact.														
Disability (summary of detail on next page)	P	N	NA	H	M	L	nil	<p>Potential that 635 pass holders in total will not have funded transport for companions/carers.</p> <p>Pass holders may be required to fund via other sources having a financial implication.</p> <p>The proposal does not impact on the pass holder's eligibility to travel as they will still receive a concessionary pass. However, it may impact on the companion/carer who will have to pay to accompany the pass holder. This could have an impact on the Disabled person if the carer/companion is not able to fund the travel costs.</p>														

<b>Religion or belief</b>	P	N	NA	H	M	L	nil	There is no identifiable impact.
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	P	N	NA	H	M	L	nil	There is no identifiable impact.
<b>Pregnancy or maternity</b>	P	N	NA	H	M	L	nil	There is no identifiable impact.
<b>Marriage/ Civil Partnership</b>	P	N	NA	H	M	L	nil	There is no identifiable impact.



### Section 3: Officer Assessment - continued

<p><b>Mobility Impairment</b></p>	<p>P</p>	<p><b>N</b></p>	<p>NA</p>	<p><b>H</b></p>	<p>M</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>nil</p>	<p>If the Companion Pass is not available, it may not be possible for a carer/companion to travel with the disabled person. This may negatively affect those with mobility issues who aren't able to mobilise to a bus stop or board/alight the bus without the aid of their companion. This will be specifically relevant to those people in manual wheelchairs and those who have multiple disabilities.</p> <p>This may result in the disabled person not being able to make the journeys that they need to make and reduce access to health services, shopping, personal business, work etc.</p> <p>The companion would need to pay for the journey in their own right (unless they also have a bus pass). This may have to be funded by the disabled person, creating additional cost to the disabled person. Or the cost may be borne by the carer/companion. In either case this may result in a reduction in the number of trips that can be made by the disabled person. This could affect their access to other services and reduce their ability to lead an independent life. It could also mean they are more isolated and lead to mental health issues.</p> <p>Of the July 2015 baseline of 635 passes there are <b>326</b> people who currently have a disabled companion pass on the basis of mobility impairment.</p>
<p><b>Visual Impairment</b></p>	<p>P</p>	<p><b>N</b></p>	<p>NA</p>	<p><b>H</b></p>	<p>M</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>nil</p>	<p>If the Companion Pass is not available, it may not be possible for a carer/companion to travel with the disabled person. This may negatively affect disabled people with visual impairments who aren't able to distinguish which service is arriving/departing from a particular bus stop. Those with visual impairments may also require assistance in getting to a particular</p>

								<p>bus stop.</p> <p>This may result in the disabled person not being able to make the journeys that they need to make and reduce access to health services, shopping, personal business, work etc.</p> <p>The companion would need to pay for the journey in their own right (unless they also have a bus pass). This may have to be funded by the disabled person, creating additional cost to the disabled person. Or the cost may be borne by the carer/companion. In either case this may result in a reduction in the number of trips that can be made by the disabled person. This could affect their access to other services. It could mean they are more isolated and lead to mental health issues.</p> <p>Of the July 2015 baseline of 635 passes there are 51 people who currently have a disabled companion pass on the basis of being blind or partially sighted.</p> <p>There are 49 people who currently have a disabled companion pass on the basis of being unfit to drive pursuant to section 92 of the Road Traffic Act 1988. This may include those with a visual impairment (specifically restricted visual fields/unable to read a number plate from 20.5m).</p>
<p><b>Hearing impairment</b></p>	<p>P</p>	<p><b>N</b></p>	<p>NA</p>	<p><b>H</b></p>	<p>M</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>nil</p>	<p>If the Companion Pass is not available, it may not be possible for a carer/companion to travel with the disabled person. This may negatively affect those disabled people with a hearing impairment who have difficulty in distinguishing traffic noise, and require assistance with asking for a ticket from the driver.</p> <p>This may result in the disabled person not being able to make the journeys that they need to make and reduce access to health services, shopping, personal business, work etc.</p> <p>The companion would need to pay for</p>

								<p>the journey in their own right (unless they also have a bus pass). This may have to be funded by the disabled person, creating additional cost to the disabled person. Or the cost may be borne by the carer/companion. In either case this may result in a reduction in the number of trips that can be made by the disabled person. This could affect their access to other services and reduce their ability to lead an independent life. It could mean they are more isolated and lead to mental health issues.</p> <p>Of the July 2015 baseline of 635 passes there are 11 companion passes issued to people with a hearing impairment.</p>
<p><b>Learning Disability</b></p>	<p>P</p>	<p><b>N</b></p>	<p>NA</p>	<p><b>H</b></p>	<p>M</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>nil</p>	<p>If the Companion Pass is not available, it may not be possible for a carer/companion to travel with the disabled person. This may negatively affect disabled people with significant learning disabilities who aren't able to give instruction to the bus driver as to where they wish to travel to and who require help in getting to the relevant bus stop. There may also be those who require support with learning unfamiliar routes and who rely on their companion to assist them either some or all of the time.</p> <p>This may result in the disabled person not being able to make the journeys that they need to make and reduce access to health services, shopping, personal business, work etc.</p> <p>The companion would need to pay for the journey in their own right (unless they also have a bus pass). This may have to be funded by the disabled person, creating additional cost to the disabled person. Or the cost may be borne by the carer/companion. In either case this may result in a reduction in the number of trips that can be made by the disabled person. This could affect their access to other services and reduce their ability to lead an independent life. It could mean they are more isolated and lead to mental health issues.</p>

								Of the July 2015 baseline of 635 passes there are <b>176</b> people who currently have a disabled companion pass on the basis of a learning disability.
<b>Mental Health</b>	P	<b>N</b>	NA	<b>H</b>	M	L	nil	<p>If the Companion Pass is not available, it may not be possible for a carer/companion to travel with the disabled person. This may negatively affect those with severe mental health conditions, who may have memory and behavioural issues and require the support of a companion to travel independently.</p> <p>This may result in the disabled person not being able to make the journeys that they need to make and reduce access to health services, shopping, personal business, work etc.</p> <p>The companion would need to pay for the journey in their own right (unless they also have a bus pass). This may have to be funded by the disabled person, creating additional cost to the disabled person. Or the cost may be borne by the carer/companion. In either case this may result in a reduction in the number of trips that can be made by the disabled person. This could affect their access to other services and reduce their ability to lead an independent life. The potential to increase their isolation in the community may exacerbate their mental health issues.</p> <p>There are <b>49</b> people who currently have a disabled companion pass on the basis of being unfit to drive pursuant to section 92 of the Road Traffic Act 1988. This may include those with a specific relevant mental health diagnosis.</p>
<b>Long Term Limiting Illness</b>	P	<b>N</b>	NA	<b>H</b>	M	L	nil	<p>If the Companion Pass is not available, it may not be possible for a carer/companion to travel with the disabled person. This may result in the disabled person not being able to make the journeys that they need to make and reduce access to health services, shopping, personal</p>

								<p>business, work etc.</p> <p>The companion would need to pay for the journey in their own right (unless they also have a bus pass). This may have to be funded by the disabled person, creating additional cost to the disabled person. Or the cost may be borne by the carer/companion. In either case this may result in a reduction in the number of trips that can be made by the disabled person. This could affect their access to other services and reduce their ability to lead an independent life. It could mean they are more isolated and lead to mental health issues.</p> <p>Those who qualify for a disabled person's bus pass must have a long term disability; therefore many companion bus pass holders will have a specific relevant long term limiting illness.</p>
<b>Multiple Impairments</b>	P	<b>N</b>	NA	<b>H</b>	M	L	nil	<p>There is no evidence on the numbers of people with multiple impairments as the applicant only needs to provide evidence for one disability.</p>
<b>Other - specific categories in the ENCTS guidance i.e. without speech, no arms/lack of use of arms</b>	P	<b>N</b>	NA	<b>H</b>	M	L	nil	<p>Of the July 2015 baseline of 635 passes there are</p> <p><b>17</b> companion passes issued where no further detail has been specified.</p> <p><b>49</b> issued to people unfit to drive - pursuant to section 92 of the Road Traffic Act 1988</p> <p><b>4</b> issued to people without speech</p>

<b>Cumulative Impacts</b>	
<b>Change activities</b>	<b>Potential cumulative impacts</b>
This proposal should be considered in	There are 375 people within the 635 existing pass holders that

conjunction with the recent change to the assessment process for those applying for a disabled bus pass, as well as the re-assessment of existing disabled pass holders. This change only applies to those who apply/have applied under category D (has a disability, or has suffered an injury, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to walk) and G ( would, if he or she applied for the grant of a licence to drive a motor vehicle under part III of the Road Traffic Act 1988, have his/her application refused pursuant to section 92 of the Act (physical fitness) otherwise than on the ground of persistent misuse of drugs or alcohol) of the ENCTS.

The client groups affected here will be affected by welfare reform and other DBC charging and criteria changes.

Some client groups may also be affected by other DBC proposed changes within the MTFP that impact on disabled people such as:

- Review of Sensory Impairment Service at Vane House.
- C8 Cease funding to Aspire Service for school leavers with learning difficulties.
- C2 Review of Statutory Minimum Service Costs.
- W20 Blue Badge parking
- S13 Removal of Social Fund Budget.
- C5 Cease contract which provides support to vulnerable people aged 25+ who are homeless or at risk.
- C6 End Drug and Alcohol Floating Support
- S9 Reductions to Obesity funding.
- C9 Cease funding for Information Co-ordinator provided through DAD.

were issued a pass under categories D&G. The cumulative impact may be the loss of the companion disabled pass and a reassessment which results in the loss of the disabled pass as well.

Ability to fund additional costs for a companion to travel with them. This may increase the costs associated with activities.

Locations where services are delivered may change and this may change the travel requirements for certain client groups. This may increase the use of bus travel or make bus travel more complicated if clients have to change buses. This may reduce access to services.

Personal budgets will be affected if companion bus pass holders have to start paying for their companion to travel with them. Dependency on formal care services may increase.

Those who use their companion pass to remain in the community may be impacted if both services cease.

Independence may decrease further if service users rely on their companion bus pass and can no longer make those journeys.

If have a companion pass due to health conditions associated with drugs and alcohol, their ability to travel independently would decrease further.

Those who have mobility issues due to obesity and require assistance to travel may be impacted/future applications will not be possible.

Reduction in advice available to disabled people on how to travel to and access services with assistance, without companion entitlement.

The impacts identified in this proposal have been added to the cumulative impact assessment contained within the overall MTFP report.

## Section 4: Engagement Decision

The decision about who to engage with, and how and when to engage, is the key to effective EIA. Please see Annex 2 of the Equality Scheme for guidance on the engagement decision.

<b>Is engagement with affected people with Protected Characteristics required, now or during the further development of the activity?</b>	<b>Yes / <del>No</del></b>
<b>If YES, proceed to the next section. If NO, briefly summarise below the reasons why you have reached this conclusion.</b>	
n/a	



## Section 5 – Involvement and Engagement Planning

**Has the assessment shown that the activity will treat any groups of people with Protected Characteristics differently from other people? Yes/No**

**If yes, please state which groups and how**

The ENCTS companion pass operates for the benefit of the disabled and their companions and helps to provide protected groups access to facilities therefore promoting equality of opportunity. Consequently, the proposal to withdraw funding for the companion pass will affect the disabled and potentially their carers. Further, analysis has shown that 305 of the 635 holders of the companion pass holders are aged 51 or over.

**Will the differential treatment advance equality for people with Protected Characteristics? Yes/No**

**If yes, please state which groups and how**

**Will the differential treatment cause or increase disadvantage for people with Protected Characteristics? Yes**

**If yes, please state which groups and how**

Disabled people who have a companion disabled bus pass.

The disadvantage is financial i.e. the disabled person can continue to travel for free in line with ENCTS but their companion must pay.

The impact of this may be that it reduces their independence, affects their health & wellbeing and reduces their access to services.

## Involvement and Engagement Plan

Which organisations, groups and individuals do you need to involve or engage and how?

Date of plan entry	Organisation, Group or Individuals	Date of event or activity	Type of activity – venue, channels, method and staffing
07/08/2015	Gordon Pybus, DAD	07/08/15	Meeting to discuss the proposal and approach to EIA in terms of involving disabled people.
	Darlington Residents	Feb 2016	Publications of MTFP proposals and Consultation period
	Neighbouring Local Authorities	March 2016	Discussions and emails with Durham, Tyne and Wear and Northumberland (also wider area through relevant community on the Knowledge Hub).
w/c 11 <sup>th</sup> April 2016	Darlington Association on Disability	w/c 11 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016	Letter outlining proposal and inviting comments on Impact
	RNIB	w/c 11 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016	Letter outlining proposal and inviting comments on Impact
	Guide Dogs	w/c 11 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016	Letter outlining proposal and inviting comments on Impact
	DBC Health and Social Care	w/c 11 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016	Letter outlining proposal and inviting comments on Impact
	Every Companion Pass holder	w/c 11 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016	Individual letter sent to every companion pass holder outlining proposal and inviting comments on the impact this will have on them personally.  This was a total of <b>665 letters</b> . For breakdown by eligibility criteria see <b>Table 1</b> below. (36 were aged 16 and under)
	Darlington Residents	w/c 11 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016	Concessionary Travel Website
	New Bus Pass applicants	w/c 11 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016	An insert is in the bus pass application forms for disabled people to gather impacts of new applicants who may also be affected.
	Darlington Councillors and Residents	14 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016	Special Place Scrutiny Committee on MTFP Proposals – Including W15
	Talking Newspaper	27 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016	Details of proposal included in weekly recording and sent to Northern Echo regular distribution list of people with visual impairment.
	Other Local Authorities in the North East Reciprocal arrangement	April/May 2016	Correspondence

	Other Authorities further a field	April/May 2016	Correspondence
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**Table 1**

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Number</b>
I am registered blind or partially sighted	97
I am profoundly or severely deaf	8
I am without speech	0
Long term disability affecting ability to walk	297
I do not have the use of my arms	0
I have a significant learning disability	200
I am unable to drive due to a medical condition	61
Not further specified	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>665</b>

## Section 6: Engagement Findings

	<b>Date/summary of engagement carried out</b>	<b>Summary of impacts identified</b>
<b>Age</b>		N/A
<b>Disability</b>	Consultation Letter (April 2016)	<p>83 responses to the consultation letter were received. (48 from the pass holder themselves and 33 from their carer/family)</p> <p>The impacts identified by pass holders, are set out as below, by number of comments received:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Impact on health, well being, social inclusion and independence (as wouldn't be able to make the same number of journeys as do currently) – 56</li> <li>2. Benefits will be affected/financial pressures felt – 52</li> <li>3. Couldn't go out unaided - 41</li> <li>4. Carer's allowance/carers would have to bear the cost of their journeys – 9</li> <li>5. Would be housebound – 7</li> <li>6. No longer require companion entitlement – 6</li> <li>7. Ability to travel won't be affected as travel with a pass holder - 1</li> </ol> <p>Letter received from DAD – see <b>Appendix 1</b></p> <p>Letter received from a constituent via Jenny Chapman MP – see <b>Appendix 2</b></p>
<b>Mobility Impairment</b>	Consultation Letter	<p>33 responses received – 97 pass holders (24 from pass holder and 9 from carer/family):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Impact on health, well being, social inclusion and independence – 24</li> <li>2. Benefits will be affected/financial pressures felt – 22</li> <li>3. Couldn't go out unaided – 12</li> <li>4. Would be housebound – 6</li> <li>5. Carer's allowance/carers would have to bear the cost of their journeys – 4</li> <li>6. No longer require companion entitlement – 2</li> </ol>
<b>Visual impairment</b>	Consultation Letter	<p>15 responses received – 97 pass holders (7 from pass holder and 8 from carer/family):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Couldn't go out unaided – 10*</li> <li>2. Impact on health, well being, social inclusion and independence – 9</li> <li>3. Benefits will be affected/financial pressures felt – 9</li> <li>4. Carer's allowance/carers would have to bear the cost of their journeys – 4</li> <li>5. Would be housebound – 1</li> <li>6. No longer require companion entitlement – 1</li> </ol> <p>*Comments included not being able to see which bus is arriving at the bus stop without a companion, and</p>

	Consultation Letter	<p>needing help to board and alight the bus.</p> <p>Letter received from resident – see <b>Appendix 3.</b></p>
<b>Hearing impairment</b>	Consultation Letter	<p>2 responses received – 8 pass holders (1 from pass holder and 1 from carer/family):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Impact on health, well being, social inclusion and independence – 1</li> <li>2. Benefits will be affected/financial pressures felt – 1</li> <li>3. Couldn't go out unaided – 1*</li> <li>4. No longer require companion entitlement – 1</li> </ol> <p>*Comments included being unable to hear the traffic, needing an interpreter as uses sign language, and needing help with day to day activities when out and about.</p>
<b>Learning Disability</b>	<p>Consultation Letter</p> <p><b>People's Parliament (25 April 2016)</b></p>	<p>23 responses received – 200 pass holders (9 from pass holder and 15 from carer/family):</p> <p>The impacts identified by pass holders, are set out as below, by number of comments received:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Impact on health, well being, social inclusion and independence – 17</li> <li>2. Benefits will be affected/financial pressures felt – 14</li> <li>3. Couldn't go out unaided – 11*</li> <li>4. Carer's allowance/carers would have to bear the cost of their journeys – 1 (parent)</li> <li>5. No longer require companion entitlement – 2</li> <li>6. Ability to travel won't be affected as travel with a pass holder - 1</li> </ol> <p>*Comments around not being able to identify which bus to get, relying on the Aspire team and the companion entitlement when needing to learn a new bus route, unable to tell the time or read a bus timetable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have a direct payment and employ's a PA uses the companion pass. SR will have to cut something else back if companion free travel stopped, I won't be able to afford to go out as much.</li> <li>• It's a big impact as although his Direct Payment is provided it is unlikely to be enough to cover all travel costs and therefore SR won't be able to achieve what the Direct Payment is meeting the need of – social interaction and social inclusion.</li> <li>• Its going to impact on a particular group of disabled people, those who require support to travel will be impacted. In effect it is taking away their right to free travel if they have to pay for their companion personally. How was</li> </ul>

	<p>DBC Budget Page</p> <p>DAD Young Leaders</p>	<p>the calculation of the amount of money that this proposal will save arrived at? Some people have said the companions are not always issued with a ticket.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The poor and disadvantaged are being targeted; it feels like you kick the dog that doesn't bark as don't have the powers of redress. Cuts can create stress and mental health issues which then causes further strains on public services/ resources. If people become hospitalised cost more.</li> <li>• Leads to multiple impacts on people, benefits can be stopped, and whilst awaiting appeal can't have free dental care. Obviously, whilst benefits stopped people have little or no money to pay for PA expenses including travel. If the companion element stops this would be a further strain on a person whose benefits have been stopped. Also, if they need support to attend (benefit) meetings again they may be liable for companion bus charges whilst benefit's suspended putting further strain on the person.</li> </ul> <p>Letters from People's Parliament – see <b>Appendix 5 and 5a.</b></p> <p>I am emailing you to ask if you can help in not allowing the withdrawal of companion bus passes. Don't know if you remember I have emailed in the past over cuts to services and this is another one. The person I care for is 47 years old and has Downs Syndrome and cannot travel independently so the pass is very important to his wellbeing as it allows him to socialise and visit different places which can only be beneficial to his mental health, also his healthcare services are two bus rides each way. Once again the disabled, vulnerable and low paid are at the front of cuts. I hope I can count on your support in keeping companion passes.</p> <p>Details of impacts received from DAD Young Leader's – see <b>Appendix 4.</b></p>
<p><b>Mental Health</b></p>	<p>Consultation Letter</p>	<p>7 responses received – 61 pass holders (all from pass holder):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Couldn't go out unaided – 7</li> <li>2. Benefits will be affected/financial pressures felt – 6</li> <li>3. Impact on health, well being, social inclusion and independence – 5</li> </ol>
<p><b>Long Term Limiting Illness</b></p>	<p>Consultation Letter</p>	<p>In order to qualify for a concessionary bus pass, the condition(s) must be long term, and or likely to recur; therefore see 'Disabled' above.</p>
<p><b>Multiple Impairments</b></p>	<p>Consultation Letter</p>	<p>Many of companion pass holders, by the nature of the pass have multiple impairments. Refer to 'Disabled'</p>

above and the following specific impacts:

"It will mean I won't be able to visit my daughter in Bishop Auckland or go out as I have been in hospital 4 times because I have passed out I have Angina, High Blood Pressure, 3 trapped nerves in my spine, my doctor filled the form in for me to get this pass as I do not feel safe going out on my own and with bus fares going up I wouldn't be able to take anyone with me which would mean me staying in."

"I was with my companion recently and had a very bad angina attack which needed hospital treatment if I hadn't had a companion with me when I did god knows what would of happened..... I have panic attacks too when I'm around people whom I don't know due to a assault... if my companion part of my bus pass was withdrawn I would be housebound completely..... which to be honest is freaking me out now just thinking about it... I know you have to make cut backs and yes I due understand but to cut companion part of my bus pass means I will not be able to go out as that freedom would be taking away from me personally..hoping you find another way to cut back."

"In view to withdraw the companion pass would be a hindrance to myself. I am visually impaired and have multiple illnesses I.e kidney disease, stomach disease to mention a few. I am always going to and from hospital appointments here in Darlington, Middlesbrough and Durham. By withdrawing the companion pass it will make a big difference to me because I need people to take me to these appointments, especially when I have injections in my eyes and I struggle to see. If people had to pay they wouldn't want to take me because it can turn out to be expensive with the amount of appointments I have. This would mean myself paying but because at the age of 47 I have medically retired and do not receive much money the cost would fall on me which would have an impact on my budget. Apart from hospital appointments getting about to do shopping without these people could become a struggle. There are times I travel to town and back myself but that is when I am not shopping or carrying things. I hope you take everything into consideration of my dilemma and of others before you come to the conclusion this concession art pass needs to be withdrawn."

"We are extremely disappointed and saddened to hear of this proposal. Our grandson William Smith came into our care over four years ago and the companion pass has proven itself to be invaluable for us as a family. We (William's grandparents) have had to give up full time employment (both work part time) to care

for William and rely heavily on this pass to take William to various appointments but more essentially to give him access to different environments and experiences to stimulate his emotional and social well being. William is unable to entertain himself and not physically able to walk long distances, Without the companion pass we fear he wouldn't be able to access the things he loves to do, and would virtually become house bound at weekends and school holidays and even some evenings thus affecting not only Williams well being but also us his grandparents. William is unable to go anywhere alone; he has no road sense or stranger danger. Neither myself or my husband drive and we have no family around to help us. Yet again the vulnerable people in our society are losing out."

"As his mother I am writing on his behalf because he is unable to express himself due to his autism, learning disabilities and mental health issues. If his carers/support workers were unable to travel with him for free, then he would have to pay for their fares himself. Therefore creating a barrier financially and his ability to travel freely without restrictions. This would limit his choices and it would affect his well-being and mental health. He would get very anxious if his daily living routines were to change, impacting on his independence and confidence too. The provision of the companion entitlement has helped him to gain independence and confidence, so withdrawing it would impact on him drastically, especially financially as he would have to limit his journeys significantly."

"I am writing on behalf of my son after receiving a letter regarding proposed withdrawal of companion entitlement. This would appear to be one of several consultations we have responded to, all of which will increase the cost of living a normalised life for a disabled person. As a quadriplegic person with learning disabilities, it would be impossible for him to ever travel unaccompanied. The reality is that the cost of a companion to travel with him would always fall on him and as he has no prospect of being able to work, this would have to met from his limited benefit income. This would translate to limiting the times that he could lead a social life, and get out and about for daily living. I have grave concerns that some of the most vulnerable members of society will be hardest hit and yet unable to respond to this consultation through learning or physical disability if they have no one to advocate on their behalf. This would give the Council a false impression that the change will have minimal impact, when the reality would be very different."

"I am extremely opposed to this, as I would be further limited in getting out and about. I was originally given



the pass due to deafness and mental health issues, however I now have severe mobility problems and can not go anywhere without someone to accompany me. I feel that if this entitlement was removed from my travel pass, I would not be able to travel to get to my medical appointments, to go shopping or visit friends and family, including my newborn Grandson. The only way I would be able to travel is that if I paid for passes for my carer to accompany me, which I will not really be able to afford. This would also mean that my carer would be unable to look after me in the way that my conditions require, as I am unable to propel myself in my wheelchair, and board buses on my own, and shopping would be something of an impossibility, as would medical appointments and social outings. If I were made to pay for their travel my income would suffer tremendously, and this would result in me not going anywhere or getting to see anyone. My thoughts are that yet again the disabled people are being targeted and treated less than fairly with this current proposal. I would only hope that you show some compassion and leave things as they are for the benefit of the disabled. Most services for the disabled have already been cut, and this feels like a final kick in the teeth for disabled people, almost like kicking us when we are down. It is not fair, and it is not right."

"I am deaf and have cerebal palsy and I am also in a wheel chair as I can't walk without assistance and I also talk using sign language and need an interpreter/carers to help me get about my day to day life so if I could not have a companion with me to do day to day life then I could not go into town for shopping or a look out to get me out the house, or to doctors appointments and dentist appointments or to go visit friends and family. If this was to happen the cost of my companion to travel with me would fall onto me and would mean that I would not be able to afford to go out and do the things I would like to do. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to let you know how this would affect me in the hope that this will not go ahead."

"This would affect my ability to travel to hospital appointments, any trips out of town, visit family and friends etc. Reason being I have arthritis in knees, neck and other joints also a lot of pain and dizziness because of this. I am also diabetic Type 2 with heart failure and need support from my wife who is my companion, therefore if the pass was withdrawn at 78 years old I would be restricted quite a lot as I can't walk very far and sometimes suffer with breathlessness, leaving my wife to pay for her own travel."

"If the pass was to stop for my carer, it would mean I

		<p>would not be able to go out as the cost would be down to me to pay and I could not afford it, therefore I would lose my independence as I cannot go out on my own. I am wheelchair bound and I have severe epilepsy. I can take up to 20-30 fits a day, and I have no other family members that can take me as my mother is also in a wheelchair and the rest of my family like my brother and sister take care of me and my mum as best they can. They are not able to travel on a bus with me, so I rely on my carer from Mencap. They take me out 3 times a week. I go into town, meet friends, do my shopping and they take me to doctors appointments and places like that, so as you can see my companion is needed and without it I would have no quality of life at all as my benefits only stretch so far. I have not wrote this letter myself my niece has written it for me as I cannot write.”</p> <p>“My family would urge that this entitlement is retained for those most in need and with severe disability. The pass holder is wheelchair bound and has learning difficulties, and lives with her 79 year old mum who has limited vision and they rely on a family member to escort them with any trips out of the home. The family member, who is an older sister, is on the minimum wage and has financial difficulties under normal circumstances. The withdrawal of this entitlement will lead to the pass holder and her mum not able to go out as often due to not being able to afford additional bus fares. Please can the Cabinet consider retaining this vital entitlement for those in most need and not dilute the quality of life for the pass holder and her mum.”</p>
<b>Other - Specify</b>		
<b>Race</b>		
<b>Sex</b>		
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>		
<b>Religion or belief</b>		
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		
<b>Pregnancy or maternity</b>		
<b>Marriage / Civil</b>		

**General comment received through DBC budget micro site:**

This proposal seems to impact on the most vulnerable people in Darlington. If you have already assessed a person as needing a companion bus pass, surely this shows that without the pass, they will then not be able to use their free bus pass.

For anyone who drives, it is hard to imagine relying solely on public transport, let alone if a person also needs a carer to use this public transport; it is taking away their total ability to be a citizen and take part in their community.

When making the tough decisions that the council has to make, this group of people must be a priority. If you can not travel into the town centre facilities such as the library and market place become little use.

**Feedback from the local authorities in the North East reciprocal agreement:****Durham County Council**

- Darlington would be standardising with the rest of the Tees Valley, but that is out of line with the majority practice in England.
- Anecdotally, attendees of the DCC 'Disability Parliament' express a strong appreciation of the companion entitlement and a wish that it was valid across the whole TV region. At present people who travel into Teesside are often confused as to why they can't board in the same way as they do the rest of the North East.

**Nexus**

- This will have little or no impact on Tyne & Wear reimbursement. We have 99.9% agreed 2 year fixed deals with our three large operators. It would seem unlikely that this proposal would significantly reduce the number of people boarding in Tyne & Wear.

Feedback was also gathered from local authorities further afield, which can be found below:

Staffordshire County Council	Our criteria is Higher Rate Care of DLA or 12 points on PIP for mobility, wheelchair bound or has a reason why they cannot travel alone (medical evidence is required). We allow companion passes for both disabled and older persons.
Devon County Council	<p>We've gradually tightened up on the eligibility criteria to restrict applications to those whose ability to access travel is severely restricted and would be virtually impossible without a companion. A lot of work has gone into educating our learning disability teams across the county and also working with certain schools and colleges to ensure we get genuine applications.</p> <p>We don't issue passes to children under secondary school age. This is in line with other DCC transport policies.</p> <p>We don't issue companions for travel training; one of the usual requests we get from enablers and support workers.</p> <p>As one would expect, those with severe disabilities simply don't travel very much so paying for the companion for those people doesn't cost a lot.</p>
East/West Sussex and Kent	We try to only issue to the most vulnerable clients who need support. We are lenient to those using it for travel training, as long as it is clear they wouldn't be able to travel without support; however we try to only issue 1 year passes if we think they should be travelling without a companion in future once successful.

	What is very clear is that this scheme could be part of an overall care package provided by the County Council. I believe it could reduce other transport budgets for adults and children by increasing the provision to all day, but we would need appropriate funding allocation to do so. If the scheme was to be reviewed I would strongly support a more joined up approach to how we use the concessionary bus pass and try and treat it more as a part of the care package instead of just another benefit.
Essex County Council	We follow the first principle of independent living; if someone needs to use something or someone to enable independent living, they should not be penalised for that requirement. Companion passes are designed to offer people with disabilities so severe that they are not able to travel without an accompanying carer (either all or some of the time) the ability to make use of their pass. The Companion Pass therefore gives an equal opportunity to make use of public transport. A person qualifies for the companion add-on to their pass where they can show that they are not able to travel alone, either all the time, or on a regular basis.

### Companion pass usage and cost - 15/16

In 15/16, approximately 52,000 journeys were made in Darlington by companion bus pass holders and their companions:

This figure is journeys made by DBC issued pass holders only. It does not include those people who come to Darlington using a Companion pass from outside the Borough; Darlington are required to pay for those people with whom we have reciprocal arrangements for their return journey from within Darlington

	Number of Journeys	Estimated Journey Costs	Estimated cost to DBC if Companion pass withdrawn
Journeys made by companion pass holder travelling unaccompanied	20,000	£23,216	£23,216 <sup>1</sup>
Journeys made by companion of pass holder travelling accompanied	32,000, therefore 16,000 journeys being made by the companion of the pass holder.	£37,145 <sup>2</sup>	Minimum £18,572 <sup>3</sup>

The approximate cost was £60,361. However 38% of these trips were by pass holders travelling without a companion and therefore there is no reason why these journeys would not continue going forward, with or without the companion pass. Therefore this element would not generate a saving.

The approximate cost of issuing free travel to companions in 15/16 was £18,572, i.e. 50% of £37,145. If the companion pass was withdrawn then there would be a change in travel behaviour amongst these pass holders. It is difficult to determine from the feedback what the reduction in trips would be or whether companions would opt to pay a commercial fare or use their own bus pass if they had one. However, 71% of pass holders make some trips on their own and they may opt to make more trips on their own, reducing the amount of saving that would be made.

<sup>1</sup> assuming pass holders continue to make same number of journeys

<sup>2</sup> Total ENCTS reimbursement/total ENCTS journeys in 15/16

<sup>3</sup> Assumes that pass holders make same number of journeys and companions pay. This does not include those people from outside Darlington who make return trips from Darlington with companion passes.

**386 companion passes were used in 2015/16 of which:**

Type of travel	Number of passes
Never travelled without companion	80
Only used without companion	31
Travelled both with and without companion	275, of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 109 travel for over 50% of trips without companion.</li><li>• 158 travel for over 50% of trips with companion.</li><li>• 6 have equal number of trips with companion and without companion.</li></ul>

**Concessionary fares negotiation**

As part of the move to the Combined Authority the Tees Valley Councils have a joint approach to the concessionary negotiation with the bus operators, which is led on our behalf by Stockton Borough Council. The payments are negotiated and agreed each year for the statutory scheme and any local enhancements. Any unexpected in year savings (or additional costs), due to significant changes affecting the scheme, are split between all 5 Tees Valley authorities, sharing the risks/costs as well as any savings/benefits. Therefore, the full saving may not be realised by DBC. The reduction/growth in trips and management of demand will be reflected in future year's settlements for the scheme.

The cost of replacing 665 companion bus passes with disabled bus passes will be £1,543 (plus administration time in ordering the passes/organising a bulk renewal of passes). This one-off cost will also offset any potential saving.

## Section 6: Engagement Findings – Continued

### **a) How will the proposal help to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation?**

The proposal will not help to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Some disabled people may make more trips alone if the pass is withdrawn and without a companion they may be more at risk from discrimination, harassment and victimisation by other members of the public.

### **b) How will the proposal help to advance equality of opportunity?**

The ENCTS is a statutory scheme applied across England, providing the same opportunities to disabled people, in terms of eligibility. However the companion pass ensures that those disabled people who are unable to travel alone are also able to use their opportunity to travel by public transport. Withdrawing the pass would reduce choice and opportunity for this group of disabled people, unless they have the financial ability to pay for a carer/companion to travel.

### **c) How will the proposal help to foster good relations?**

The proposal will not help to foster good relations as it could potentially mean that those who can no longer travel with a companion become more socially isolated and/ or are unable to attend meetings/ appointments/ community groups, etc. Companions who used to travel for free in Darlington with a companion pass issued by a neighbouring local authority, may complain to their council if they can no longer travel for free in Darlington, this does not foster good relations.

### **During the engagement process were there any suggestions on how to avoid, minimise or mitigate any negative impacts? If so, please give details.**

Suggestions received from companion pass holders as below:

- "How about a companion fare - £1 return anywhere in Darlington and £4 return anywhere in the North East (day ticket). This would enable visits to other hospitals and occasional days out to continue."
- "Just a thought about withdrawing the companion pass, why not have senior pass holders pay 10 pence per journey I think they could afford that."
- "Solutions I would like to put forward:
  1. Possible £20/£30 year charge so the companion could travel free.
  2. Target people with Blue Badge holders half can move/walk very well and use public transport I see it every day.
  3. Means test the elderly most I know could use buses i.e. not cars and don't even use the bus passes they have and could easily afford to pay for the bus pass."

## Section 7 - Sign-off when assessment is completed

Officer Completing the Form:		
Signed	Name:	Gill Hutchinson
	Date:	June 2016
	Job Title:	Sustainable Transport Officer
Assistant Director:		
Signed	Name:	Dave Winstanley
	Date:	June 2016
	Service:	Transport & Capital Projects

## Section 8 – Reporting of Findings and Recommendations to Decision Makers

What does the review of the information show?	
a)	No negative impact on people because of their Protected Characteristics - continue with the activity and monitor progress on implementation
b)	Negative impact identified – recommend continuing with the activity; clearly specify the people affected and the impacts, and providing reasons and supporting evidence for the decision to continue
c)	<b>Negative impact identified - adjust the activity in light of the identified impact to avoid, minimise or mitigate the impact</b>
d)	Negative impact identified - stop activity and provide an explanation why

**An options appraisal has been developed as below, which sets out options to mitigate against the negative impacts identified:**

Option	Pro's	Con's
Retain the companion pass free of charge	Remove the negative impacts and reduce the multiple impacts for this group of disabled people	Do not achieve any savings
<b>Option 1</b> – Introduce a flat fare of 50p for all journeys undertaken by a companion.	Based on journeys undertaken by companions in 15/16, this will generate £8k, which could be used to offset the cost of providing subsidised travel.	Cost will fall to companion pass holders.  The need to travel with a companion will result in these residents experiencing a disproportionate cost to travel when compared to other disabled pass holders.

		<p>Some companion pass holders may not be able to make as many journeys as they do now, resulting in health and social impacts as identified through the EIA.</p> <p>Likely some companion pass holders will require additional support through Health and Social Care (Adults' and Children's) if they can no longer access the services they do now with the aid of a companion.</p> <p>For those with a significant learning disability/mental health issue such as dementia the introduction of a flat fare for companions may be confusing and form a barrier in participating in the flat fare scheme.</p> <p>Would require a commercial agreement with the bus operators.</p>
<p><b>Option 2</b> – Introduce an annual charge the level to be determined (i.e £20, £30, £40) for companion entitlement. (Nexus currently charge £12 p.a. for their pass holders to use the Metro system as well as buses)</p>	<p>Based on current companion pass holders, a £20 charge would generate £13,300 per year, which could be used to offset the cost of providing subsidised travel.</p> <p>The annual charge may be more convenient for companion pass holders than paying per journey as in option 1.</p>	<p>The cost to those companion pass holders, who make very few journeys per year with their companion, will be disproportionate compared to those who make many journeys and would therefore make a choice on whether to purchase the pass or pay for a small number of individual trips.</p> <p>The need to travel with a companion will result in these residents experiencing a disproportionate cost to travel when compared to other disabled pass holders.</p> <p>Associated cost to DBC of administering the scheme on an annual basis.</p>
<p><b>Option 3</b> – Introduce new more robust criteria for those applying for companion entitlement.</p> <p>This would apply to new</p>	<p>The current process relies on an applicant's GP to give details as to why they require companion entitlement.</p>	<p>There may be a cost in carrying out OT assessments for new applicants applying for companion entitlement.</p> <p>Associated cost to DBC of</p>



<p>and existing companion bus pass holders; in line with the new assessment process for disabled pass holders, and would include OT assessments and completion of a Health Care Professional Form.</p> <p><i>(Further consideration would need to be given to this business process and how it would work in practice).</i></p>	<p>The new process would take the onus off the GP, ensuring a more fair and equitable process.</p>	<p>administering the scheme.</p>
<p><b>Options 4 – Options 2 and 3 combined.</b></p>	<p>See above</p>	<p>See above</p>
<p><b>Option 5 – Install at stop audio announcements.</b></p>	<p>This would specifically benefit those who are blind/partially sighted and offer practical reassurance to those who have learning disabilities and mental health conditions.</p>	<p>This does not address the negative impacts for all companion pass holders.</p> <p>There is an associated cost to DBC.</p>
<p><b>Option 6 – Promote use of 'Journey Assistance Cards' to current companion bus pass holders.</b></p>	<p>May give companion pass holders more confidence to use public transport without the aid of companion.</p> <p>The cards make it easier for the driver to identify what extra help a pass holder needs.</p>	<p>Barriers to travelling without a companion will still exist for many bus pass holders.</p>

## Section 9 – Action Plan and Performance Management

What is the negative impact?	Actions required to reduce/eliminate the negative impact (if applicable)	Who will lead on action	Target completion date
<p>Impact on health, well being, social inclusion and independence (as disabled people who can't travel unaided, wouldn't be able to make the same number of journeys as do currently which will limit their</p>		<p>Gill Hutchinson</p>	<p>31/03/2017</p>

access to services.)	<p>Please refer to options appraisal above.</p> <p>Recommend further detailed work on options to retain a Companion Pass option.</p> <p>Develop Option 4 which is a combination of a more robust criterion and assessment for entitlement and an annual charge at a level to be determined.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To re-assess existing pass holders by 31/03/17</li> <li>- To introduce a new process for new applicants</li> </ul>		
Increased financial pressure on Benefits and individual budgets.			
Many companion pass holders are unable to make journeys unaided.			
The companion pass holders carer would have to bear the cost of journeys, and would impact on their Carer's Allowance.			
Certain companion pass holders would no longer be able to leave the house without the aid of companion due to the above.			
If Darlington were to withdraw from the North East reciprocal arrangement, this may have a negative effect on the number of people travelling into Darlington.			

<b>Performance Management</b>	
<b>Date of the next review of the EIA</b>	31/03/2017
<b>How often will the EIA action plan be reviewed?</b>	
<b>Who will carry out this review?</b>	Gill Hutchinson



Breaking Through Barriers

## Darlington Association on Disability Centre for Independent Living

Unit 1P Enterprise House  
Valley Street  
Darlington DL1 1GY

Tel: 01325 489999  
Text: 07624818780  
Fax: 01325 267758

10 June 2016

[Toconcessionarytravel@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:Toconcessionarytravel@darlington.gov.uk)

I am writing with regard to the current consultation and Equality Impact Assessment process, for the proposals to changes to remove the concessionary bus pass service.

Please find the following formal response from Darlington Association on Disability (DAD).

Whilst DAD acknowledge the council's financial position, DAD does NOT feel that this proposal should go ahead based on the following information.

- People have NOT been consulted in a way which has been accessible or fair. DAD would like to draw the council's attention to its duties under the Accessible Information Standard, and feel this is not compliant; including not providing Easy Read Format. Whilst we acknowledge that letters have been sent out to people who are impacted, the council need to understand that disabled people have received multiple letters about the many cuts which they will be impacted by, with multiple deadlines and meetings. DAD drew attention to the need for Easy Read information in the previous consultation on eligibility and assessment for bus passes. It cannot be assumed that everyone has someone to support them to access and understand the information and assist them with a response.
- This cut targets a particular group of people, who are in most need of support and are unable to travel without it, effectively meaning they will not be able to access free travel using their own statutory concessionary bus pass. So although they have a right to free travel, this proposal takes this away.
- DAD feels that this proposal will not achieve the cost saving outlined in the medium term financial plan, as the people who use social care and already pay a contribution would have increased disability related

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Established 1986



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

expenditure, and therefore the Care Act 2014 will require the local authority to take this into account.

- The local authority changed its eligibility for supported transport in a previous round of cuts. Part of the mitigating factors and rationale was that people would be able to use public transport to access day opportunities, even where people needed support as the concessionary bus pass could be used. This would no longer be the case.
- DAD are currently collating questionnaires, which identify multiple impacts due to the various cuts. The cuts to concessionary bus passes have been highlighted as one of the key proposals that will greatly impact on people's lives and their ability to connect to their community. Whilst many community services are under threat, such as the library, for many disabled people this proposal would mean the inability to access ANY local community service. Furthermore the council's proposals are over and above the many cuts and changes which have impacted on disabled people nationally, for example changes in Personal Independence Payments.
- The concessionary bus pass is a low level, low cost support which prevents the need for expensive alternatives. So for example if you live in Cockerton and the library closes, you then cannot access any transport people will not be able to access any library. More support will then be needed to be funded.
- The Care Act 2104 states that low level preventative support must be available to reduce escalation of needs (not just social care services) , and Darlington is in danger of removing the remaining low level services which are available.
- There are currently other proposals to charge for Carers service, this is yet another proposal which will put increased pressure on the 11,000 carers that the town relies to provide unpaid support, which save the public millions pounds a year.

Personal negative impacts reported to us from disabled people include:

- Not able to access the community leading to social isolation and impact on wellbeing.
- Increased costs leading to impacting on finances, leading to debt issues.
- The inability to undertake key essential activities such as shopping for food.
- Deterioration of family opportunities.
- For people who need paid support, who are often the people with highest needs, they will be unable meet their assessed social care outcomes, as they will need to pay for the agency worker or personal assistant, and may be unable to do this.
- This will impact on carers as they will need to take on more, thus increasing the risk of the caring situations breaking down.
- If you are already having problems with benefits, bills etc which requires trips to town or other public buildings, people will be unable to afford this.

- There will be an inequality of impacts, as some groups of people will be harder hit than others, depending on how their support is funded or whether costs will be passed onto the individual.
- For people with very high needs, for example people with mental health need and autism, who need to be frequently supported to get out of the house, there will be a very high impact. This is because there is a need to go out more frequently and there will be a daily cost.

Please also ensure that these impacts are considered along side other impacts and that the multiple impacts are considered.

Yours Sincerely

Chief Executive  
Darlington Association on Disability

Jenny Chapman MP  
Member of Parliament for Darlington



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

13 MAY 2016

Paul Wildsmith  
Director of Resources  
Darlington Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Darlington  
DL1 5QT

Our ref: DA3367

11 May 2016

Dear Paul,

The above constituent has contacted me about the proposal to withdraw the bus pass for companions of people with disabilities.

Mr [redacted] tells me that this change would mean that his wife might not be able to travel because her carer would have to pay, and she would have to arrange for someone else to do her shopping. He says he thinks this is very unfair, and is asking how much the Council is expecting to save by making this change.

I would be grateful for anything you can tell me about this, so that I can advise my constituent.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Chapman MP

Darlington  
DL3

17 April 2016

Withdrawal of bus travel Facilities from Disabled People.

Further to my telephone request to provide me with an audio version of your original letter, the Darlington Talking Newspaper have had the good grace to record it and include it in the latest issue. This would not have been done as a matter of course, it resulted from a specific request. DBC is under an obligation to put into action their assertion that reports etc are available in other media. Judging from the reaction to my request, no such routine process is in place.

Firstly this process is not just a consultation. It MUST be an equalities Impact Assessment carried out with proper regard to the guidelines and the Equalities Act which underpins the procedures.

In case you are unaware of your legal duties under the act, I will briefly remind you. The council has a legal duty to take account of the needs of Disabled people EVEN IF THIS MEANS TREATING DISABLED PEOPLE MORE FAVOURABLY THAN NON DISABLED PEOPLE. Also if your policies and procedures result in a carer for a disabled people being adversely affected then the council may be guilty of Indirect Discrimination.

Secondly, you need to be aware that bus travel is just a means of getting from place to place. In itself it does not enable a disabled person to take part in the life of the community. You cannot ignore the needs of disabled people to get to, or find, a bus stop in the first place.

I am registered severely sight impaired / blind and am nowadays restricted to using very familiar routes if I am travelling by myself. This means that while I can manage a bus journey from Cockerton to town by myself, the risks of injury to myself on other bus journeys is too great for me to take in the same manner as other non disabled people. Note that, since the 'pedestrianisation' of the town centre and the subsequent relocation of bus stops, I have never been able to catch a bus back from town to Cockerton while on my own. I cannot locate the bus stops nor negotiate the crowds around the bus stop areas on High Row etc. Even if I walk down to the stops on Woodland Rd, buses very often leave me standing at the stop because I cannot recognise a bus coming nor its number. Despite what you might be led to believe buses very often do not stop unless they are hailed.

This gives the first two negative impacts

- If I am now to travel without a companion, on unknown routes I will not be able to find bus stops.
- If I am now to travel without a companion, I cannot recognise buses nor the bus number and so will very often be left standing at bus stops.

As far as any companion is concerned. They will be acting as carer and must be treated as such under the law. There are several points to be made here.

It is not easy to find anyone willing to act as a sighted guide AT THE TIME I REQUIRE ONE. The only incentives which I can offer under the existing arrangements is that they will not have to part with money as well as donating their time. Removal of the companion pass means that

EITHER

I must pay for my companion, which makes my 'free' bus pass redundant. This will not affect non disabled pass holders i.e. I will be treated less favourably.

OR

My sighted guide must pay themselves. As they are not travelling for their own benefit, they will effectively be penalised for acting as a carer for a disabled person.

Both of the above may be regarded as discrimination. The fact that the companion facility is not a statutory requirement is not relevant. The council provide this now and its removal will disadvantage disabled people. This is against the law.

Other aspects which you must take into consideration are the cumulative effect of

- The proposed closure of Vane House rehabilitation centre for VI's where mobility training is available (Training is done to provide people with the knowledge of essential routes (as described above). See the separate EIA on that proposal)
- The alteration of street lighting which I can personally attest to causing me massive problems because of the deterioration in the quality of light. I can no longer safely walk routes at night which I previously could. If I should need to go into town I will need to catch a bus and inevitably have to persuade someone to act as companion and sighted guide.
- The council's withdrawal of support from charities such as DAD. Although I do not use the service Shopmobility has been an essential part of disabled people's lives. If the proposal is adopted then not only might the above negative impacts apply but also if people do make their way into town then they will not be able to get around the town centre because of mobility problems.

As you have not seen fit to include any costings in your briefing paper I can only guess what they might be but this is a disproportionate measure designed to make systematic savings at the expense of the quality of life of disabled people.

Finally, should the recommendation to cabinet be to proceed with this proposal, then you are also under the obligation to provide mitigation to lessen the impact of the withdrawal of services on Disabled people.

Please include the full contents of this letter in the final report to cabinet as, unlike yourselves, they should be aware of the consistent disproportionate costs laid on disabled people in Darlington.



## **DAD Young Leader's**

Please find feedback regarding the budgets cuts from the DAD Young Leaders. I have submitted all of this information on to the mirco site online however, the Young Leaders wished to also have their views submitted in the format which I have attached.

Independent Supporter

Children and Young People Service (ChYPS)

Darlington Association on Disability

Aged 4 years  
old.

This is why we think it's important that our bus passes enable a carer

(with a carer) to travel free when accompanying us on a bus....

Carer for people

Some one who can not travel on  
my own

Some people are not able to

look after them self.

the carers will not travel with them

the carers and the  
passenger consistent  
to give to less  
able people.

Some people might be

poor or not afford  
it.

it is not fair

Aged  
23 years  
old.

Wednesday 25th May  
2016

This is why we think it's important that our bus passes enable a carer  
to travel free when accompanying us on a bus....

keep them safe  
leave A lone  
NO PICES GO GO GO  
it's unfair for anyone

Age 12  
years old.

This is why we think it's important that our bus passes enable a carer to travel free when accompanying us on a bus....

It's important that our bus passes enable a carer to travel free with us because it enables us to travel safely and some of us can't get on buses without support and also not everyone can go out without a carer and the carers keep the disabled person safe and help them get around in the community if they can't have a carer on the bus with them they will have their freedom of them.

Aged  
17 years  
old.

This is why we think it's important that our bus passes enable a carer to travel free when accompanying us on a bus....

I think is shocking because people can't afford to pay bus fair, and some people need them so the carers can take them out

keep them  
safe

Be left alone

Aged 22  
years old

**This is why we think it's important that our bus passes enable a carer to travel free when accompanying us on a bus....**

- Some people want to be able to look after themselves in the public
- The carers are important for safety
- It would be taking away dignity and independence as people may not be able to get around
- Some carers will not be able to pay to travel
- Some people may not be able to pay or look after their own money

Aged 14 years old.

Without my  
carer's it  
would be  
hard to  
get places.

This is why we think it's important that our bus passes enable a carer  
to travel free when accompanying us on a bus....

I C A N S E E M Y  
F r e n d s

- School and home  
happy because I can see  
my friends

Without my care!  
I would be worried and sad.

Not fair that they pay  
money. They should

go for free because they help me

-they might feel fed up, because it can  
be expensive.

Agood 17 year old.

This is why we think it's important that our bus passes enable a carer to travel free when accompanying us on a bus....

home

scille

Issad Fosrye  
Happy  
Tarcy Ben  
Emily

Rive Rain ← these  
Eillee carers  
MTCAN carers

Moher  
Carri Araye Scioolf

I think they

might not be very  
happy to pay.

We might have to use  
the minibus. Everybody  
would be angry.



- Aged 17 years old.

**This is why we think it's important that our bus passes enable a carer to travel free when accompanying us on a bus....**

To pay the bus driver and to show the bus pass

To know when to press the button and get off at the right stop

To take me to meet friends

If I didn't have a carer with me, I would feel sad and unhappy

I would have to wait more or not go out as much

- Aged 14 years old.

**This is why we think it's important that our bus passes enable a carer to travel free when accompanying us on a bus....**

I need a carer with me to keep me safe

To help me get long distances

It would make me sad for them to pay because we won't be able to get the bus as much.

I would not know what stop I need to get off at if I didn't have a carer

**A letter on behalf of Darlington's Peoples Parliament regarding the proposed cuts**

Darlington's Peoples Parliament is a self-advocacy group for people with a learning impairment (disability) or autism.

From the preparation work and the meeting with Councillor Copeland, Mark Humble and Helen Watson and my own observations here are some of the potential impacts from some of the cut proposals:

- Change

Change for everyone can be difficult, a person with a learning impairment may find this more difficult to navigate as it will take more time and practice to get use to the new change for example a change to the library may mean a new bus route for access, getting use to a new service/staff and building, learning the new lay out of the library etc. However, change for a person on the Autistic Spectrum can have more impact than that. For an autistic person the change itself can be overwhelming and so could the new sensory input arising from the change(s).

Life will always incur change but it would be useful to bear in mind when these changes happen in public spaces if they can be accommodated to suit autistic people and I would also suggest people with Dementia. Therefore, consider reception areas, noise, and decor, providing a quiet space, clear and adequate signage and perhaps an online 'virtual tour' which could be accessed before the visit.

Making public facilities and spaces accessible for everyone not only positively impacts the disabled person but potentially on their family/carers were they exist.

One of our member's is concerned about what will happen to the groups currently run for children in the library. She has a disabled son and is worried about the effect this change in his routine will have on him.

- Concessionary companion bus travel

This is the main impact Parliament members have discussed.

In 2012 the Department of Health's Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework found that only 7% of adults with a learning disability were in some form of employment the majority was part time work. Therefore, it is likely that a lot of adults with a learning impairment will be reliant on benefits. Therefore their disposable income and ability to increase their income is limited. So an increase in travel costs to someone on a limited budget may mean they have to face some difficult decisions on re-budgeting and potentially go without things.

Not everyone who has a companion bus pass has a companion with them every journey. However, were people in this group are likely to use the companion element is to do the things that they specifically need support with. These are things like:

- **Appointments for medical, housing, financial and social care.** A concern here is that the person won't use support for appointments and therefore, won't participate fully in the appointment. This could lead to reduced outcomes and also, potentially a need for additional appointments as issues are not addressed correctly costing more to the Council and services to staff and accommodate additional appointments.

A person with a learning impairment may use support in these situations to improve their communication, help to recall things they wanted to discuss, support to ask questions or to advocate on their behalf, support to understand the information given and opportunities to discuss again afterwards.

Being fully involved in these appointments improve the person's choice and control, independence and likelihood to adhere to advice i.e. if the doctor has been able to explain the reasons why a lifestyle change is needed or a new medication. Additionally a person using a Personal Budget should have the opportunity to be fully involved to get the best out of the paid support the Local Authority is providing.

Potentially a person may stop attending appointments will all of the impacts listed above.

A lack of choice and control over a person's life is likely to negatively impact on their mental health and self esteem.

If a person stops/reduces the appointments they attend this could impact negatively on carers. Additionally, as previously mentioned this could have a cost to public services if issues are not addressed in a timely manner leading to deterioration and then a need for support from A&E, hospital admissions, social care crisis team referrals etc.

There are another group people who use the companion element of bus travel but who cannot travel alone either as a result of their learning impairment, physical impairment(s) or both.

If these people end up having to pay for their companion then effectively they have lost their concessionary bus travel. This group of people may have the same reduced outcomes as above if they stop attending appointments. Additionally people's opportunity for social, volunteering and leisure are potentially reduced if they can't go out as much and this again can affect a person's health and wellbeing.

As a result of a person's physical or learning impairment or autism it maybe that it is preferable for them to go out more regularly but for shorter periods of time. If they are paying companion bus travel they may have to reduce this to keep costs down.

- **Shopping and budgeting**

If the person stops using a companion were support has previously been required for these tasks could reduce established good practice. For example healthy eating, sticking to a budget, meal planning etc. This is low level support for some people but potentially has huge effects on their capability to then, with or without further support, feed and clothe themselves effectively. Nutrition and clothing again will impact on health, behaviour, happiness, wellbeing.

Some people with a learning impairment and/or autism may need support around money. This could leave them potentially 'vulnerable' to financial abuse if they don't use support were it is beneficial.

For some people a condition of their financial protection is that they need to collect their funds with a Personal Assistant with them. This could be needed a couple of times a week. Therefore the person has to pay for a companion to attend with them (where buses are needed).

- Increase in care charges

This would obviously be an impact on people on a potentially limited budget as previously discussed.

- Carers financial contributions

Potentially a family/carer could decline a Personal Budget to support them in their caring role if there was a charge. This could mean overall that the carer gets to a point where they can't continue to support the person at home anymore earlier than if they had had some support or respite along the way. This then could mean the individual moving into residential support or supported living at an earlier date increasing the cost to the Local Authority.

The effect of a caring role for some people can both positively and negatively impact on their health and wellbeing and therefore this can pass on a cost to the NHS and Social Care were the effects are negative.

- Reduction in housing related support

This is a concern as this is likely to affect people who don't necessarily qualify for social services support but do require support to successfully gain, maintain and adhere to housing tenancy agreements. Bill paying support may also be linked to this.

There was a mention that housing officers would be available to support people but it is unclear if this would just be for homeless people and/or what this support would look like. Some people using housing related support really benefit from this low level regular support where the worker and the person are able to build up a relationship.

Parliament members were in favour of the Future's Fund being utilised for housing related support if this does end up being an area that is cut.

Project Worker for Darlington's Peoples Parliament

JUN 20 11 00

Dear Jenny I have Written this document which follows talking about the current benefit cuts which we Have spoken about. I won't be able to attend the meeting but I was wondering if someone could take a look at my document and possibly express my views on my behalf. I look forward to your response and thank you for taking the time to read THIS LETTER

YOUR sincerely

The current aim of the financial cuts is to reduce the huge national debt incurred by the labour government. The current government seems to be focusing on reducing spending in public sectors that are primarily focused on HELPING the poor and disadvantaged. It is alleged that these cuts are tailored to certain members of society to find work but little thought has been given to this concept as we live in an age where there is little chance of people getting one job that will provide a basic living wage. It seems that the poor and disadvantaged are being targeted in order to compound their situation. All the while large corporations are allowed to flourish and reap huge of profit whilst avoiding proportionate tax , bills in addition little is done to use positive encouragement to the money and the economy will begin a faster downward spiral that we will struggle to recover from. As the economy fails society declines as poverty becomes more it is hard to believe that we are living in the twenty first century. The first and second world war governments has not changed the global market economy of our old generation of our parents past twentieth-century .





**Equality Impact Assessment Record Form 2012-16**

Section 1: Service Details and Summary of EIA Activity

<b>Title of activity:</b>	Proposal to charge for Blue Badge Parking in all Council off-street car parks
<b>Lead Officer for EIA:</b>	Bill Westland
<b>Telephone:</b>	01325 406305
<b>Service Group:</b>	Economic Initiative
<b>Service or Team:</b>	Regulatory Services
<b>Assistant Director accountable for this EIA</b>	Bill Westland
<b>Who else is involved in carrying out the EIA:</b>	Sue Dobson & Lucy Humphreys

<b>What stage has the EIA reached? Provide date and a brief note of where you're up to. List any consultation or engagement. Facts, figures and findings go elsewhere.</b>		
<b>Stage</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Summary of position</b>
<b>Stage 1: Initial officer assessment to identify whole population likely to be affected</b>	25.02.16	7,230 residents who hold a blue badge plus visitors to Darlington with a blue badge.
<b>Stage 2: Further assessment to identify target population</b>		Blue badge holders with: Mobility impairment, Visual impairment, Learning Disability, Long Term Limiting illness, Multiple Impairments.
<b>Stage 3: Further assessment to identify individuals</b>	18.3.16  17.5.16  24.5.16	500 blue badge holders then selected at random and sent a questionnaire to complete to consider the impacts of this proposal; from this we received 126 responses at a response rate of 25%.  We also invited a small group of 12 blue badge holders to a focus group to discuss the impacts in more detail which took place on 17.5.16

		A final meeting was held between DBC & Gordon Pybus of DAD to discuss the outcomes from the wider responses we have received and to further consider impacts not already raised.
<b>Stage 4: Analysis of Findings</b>	24.5.16	The findings are detailed in Section 6. In summary a number of negative impacts on people with disabilities (blue badge holders) have been identified. (Inability to handle coins, ticket dispensers, physical effort of an additional trip to the vehicle to display a ticket, access to the 4 pay machines). These can be mitigated by taking a number of actions. One impact cannot be mitigated and that is the financial impact of paying for parking. But there is no requirement in providing blue badges or disabled off-street parking bays to offer these without charge.
<b>Stage 5: Sign-Off</b>	1.6.16	Bill Westland
<b>Stage 6: Reporting and Action Planning</b>	1.6.16	Options have been considered and a number of mitigating actions are identified in Section 9

## Section 2: The Activity and Supporting Information

<b>Details of the activity (main purpose and aims)</b>
Information gathering from organisations representing residents with a disability and directly from blue badge holders to understand the impact of introducing a parking charge for blue badge holders.  Access audit of Pay & Display ticket machines in the Council's off-street car parks to identify any physical, visual or cognitive barriers which could make it difficult for disabled people to obtain a parking ticket.
<b>Who will be affected by the activity? (groups and numbers)</b>
<b>Whole population</b>
Whole population plus visitors.  In 2014/2015 Darlington had 1473005 visitors to the town centre car parks (data collected through parking tickets sold).
<b>Target population</b>
Disabled Drivers and passengers.  7,230 Darlington residents hold a Blue Badge, which equates to approximately 6.8% of the population. In early February 2016 a survey of Town Centre car parks over the period of one week (Mon – Sunday) indicated that on average 8% of vehicles parked in the Councils off street car parks display a Blue Badge. With the most popular locations for blue badge holders to park being Abbots Yard and Commercial Street car parks.
<b>Individuals</b>
N/A
<b>What data, research and other evidence or information is available which is relevant to the EIA?</b>

BS8300:2009 +A1:2010 'Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people – code of practice.'

Operational guidance to local authorities: parking policy and enforcement - Last updated 25.3.15.

See annex 1 for further detail on the survey of Blue Badge holders using off street car parks.

### Section 3: Officer Assessment

**Use this table to record officer views on potential equality impacts. As the activity and assessment develop, views may change – record them here.**

Protected Characteristic	Potential Impact:	Potential level of impact:	Summary of Impact
	Positive Negative Mixed N/A	High Medium Low Nil	
Age	Negative	High	See section 3.  Almost 70% of Blue Badge holders are aged over 64.
Race	N/A	Nil	
Sex	N/A	Nil	
Gender Reassignment	N/A	Nil	
Disability (summary of detail on next page)	Negative	High	See section 3
Religion or belief	N/A	Nil	
Sexual Orientation	N/A	Nil	
Pregnancy or maternity	N/A	Nil	
Marriage/Civil Partnership	N/A	Nil	

Section 3: Officer Assessment – continued

**The Council must consider disabled peoples' impairments when making decisions about 'activities'. This list is provided only as a starting point to assist officers with the assessment process. People with similar impairments may experience completely different impacts. Consider the potential impacts and summarise in the Disability section on the previous page.**

<b>Mobility Impairment</b>	N	Medium	Ability to access pay machines, operate them, and display ticket in vehicle. Impact will be in some cases the physical challenge of doing this.
<b>Visual Impairment</b>	N	Low	Ability to read and understand parking charges and how to pay them. Impacts may apply to some drivers (e.g. colour blind) and to passengers.
<b>Hearing Impairment</b>	N/A	Nil	
<b>Learning Disability</b>	N	Low	Ability to read and understand parking charges and how to pay them.
<b>Mental Health</b>	N/A	Nil	
<b>Long Term Limiting Illness</b>	P	High / medium	Issues picked up under other characteristics.
<b>Multiple Impairments</b>	P	High	Issues picked up under other characteristics.
<b>Other - Specify</b>	N/A		None identified

**Potential Cumulative Impacts**

The proposed charge is only one proposal that will impact on disabled. The cumulative impacts of the Council's MTFP proposals should also be considered as some groups with protected characteristics will feel multiple impacts.

For the general population there may be increased congestion and less access to on-street pay and display bays as blue badge holders may be parking in on-street bays and on yellow lines in increased numbers.

The charge may deter volunteer drivers from continuing their volunteer role where they are themselves blue badge holders. Specifically there may be an impact on the volunteer driving services provided by the third sector.

This proposal may also have negative impact on retail town centre businesses with a loss of trade to out of town and other towns. Some disabled shoppers will choose not to use Darlington but to go elsewhere where parking is free. Previously Darlington drew disabled people from outside the area due to shopmobility and free parking.

#### Section 4: Engagement Decision

<p><b>Do you need to engage now, or during the development of the activity, to better understand how the activity might affect people because of their protected characteristics?</b></p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>
<p><b>If YES, proceed to the next section.</b> <b>If NO, briefly summarise below the reasons why you have reached this conclusion.</b></p>	
<p> </p>	

#### Section 5: Involvement and Engagement Planning

<p><b>Has the assessment shown that the activity will have a different effect on people because of their protected characteristic(s)?</b> Yes</p>
<p><b>If yes, please state which groups and how</b></p> <p>The current policy on charging means that drivers with a blue badge receive preferential treatment in that they are not charged for parking in off –street car parks. The proposed policy change would introduce the same charge for registered disabled drivers and drivers with registered disabled family members as other members of the public using the Councils car parks.</p>
<p><b>Will the difference advance equality for people with that protected characteristic?</b> No</p>
<p><b>If yes, please state which groups and how</b></p>
<p><b>Will the difference cause or increase disadvantage for people with that protected characteristic?</b> Yes</p>
<p><b>If yes, please state which groups and how</b></p> <p>The proposal to remove free parking for Blue Badge holders will potentially have a financial impact on families with a registered disabled family member. There will be a direct financial impact on blue badge holders who will have to pay for parking off-street, unless they choose to and are able to park elsewhere. This will be most onerous on regular users of the car parks such as people in employment, attending regular meetings, or in a volunteering role.</p> <p>Where a disabled person is alone in a vehicle the additional travel to go to a pay machine, return to the vehicle and enter the vehicle to display the ticket can be onerous. This is particularly so for the more</p>

severely disabled including those needing to use rear loading vehicles.

Generally the more severely disabled will be penalised by the charge as they need a wider space to exit and enter their vehicle, and this isn't always available in on-street bays. Many also cannot use other forms of transport.

<b>Involvement and Engagement Plan</b>			
Which organisations, groups and individuals do you need to involve or engage and how?			
<b>Date of plan entry</b>	<b>Organisation, Group or Individuals</b>	<b>Date of event or activity</b>	<b>Type of activity – venue, channels, method and staffing</b>
25.02.16	DAD – Darlington Association on Disability	24.3.16	Meeting between Owen Wilson, DBC and representative of DAD to discuss initial plan for this consultation and sound out early views from DAD.
25.2.16	Blue Badge holders	18.3.16	500 blue badge holders selected at random and sent a letter explaining the proposal and a questionnaire to asses' impacts. From this we received 126 responses at a rate of 25% which is above average for this type of engagement. The comments from the responses have been collated with wider responses from the general MTFP consultation that relate to blue badge holders to consider overall response.
25.5.16	Blue Badge holders	17.5.16	Cohort of 12 blue badge holders then invited to participate in a focus group to discuss in more detail the proposals and the potential impact of these. (Seven attended).
11.5.16	DAD – Darlington Association on Disability	24.5.16	Meeting with representative of DAD to discuss response received within questionnaires and focus group session and to discuss further impacts not yet considered.

#### Section 6: Engagement Findings

	<b>Date/summary of engagement carried out</b>	<b>Summary of impacts identified</b>
<b>Age</b>	17.5.16 – Blue badge focus group meeting	Focus group felt a high proportion of disabled people will be elderly and on one or more benefits. They are not affluent and therefore will need to find ways to avoid paying parking charges.
<b>Disability</b>		

<b>Mobility Impairment</b>	<p>24.5.16 – raised in meeting with representative of DAD.</p> <p>17.5.16 – Blue badge focus group meeting</p> <p>18.4.16 – response from 500 questionnaires sent out</p>	<p>The location of the pay and display machine is important because having to display a ticket in the car doubles the trip. The type of machine is very important. There is a misconception regarding the advertising statement of DDA compliant. No such thing legally exists.</p> <p>Independent driver of rear loading vehicle will need to unload, close up, get ticket, open up rear loading ramp, and get back in to place ticket on display.</p> <p>Independent driver with wheelchair in boot. Will need to use crutches to crab walk along side of car to boot. Get wheelchair out, rest, get ticket, return to car and do all in reverse if can't get wheelchair alongside of car to place ticket on display</p> <p>On street parking where there is lack of drop kerbs for wheelchair users. Driver needs to park close to kerb or transfer to wheelchair on the road side. Then travel along the road until reaching a drop kerb.</p> <p>The location of the machine can be problematic for people with a mobility impairment. Having to put ticket in car doubles the trip.</p> <p>Parking on street, either on yellow lines or in parking bays, is not always feasible for some disabled people as they are unable to fully open doors or use tailgate lifts/hoists. Therefore they have to use car parks and they would then have to pay.</p> <p>Blue badge holders generally struggle to use other forms of transport and there is therefore an equality of access issue.</p> <p>Need to locate disabled bays closer to ticket machines as well as consider wider &amp; more bays as current bays are too tight for some with mobility impairment to navigate in and out of.</p>
<b>Visual Impairment</b>	24.5.16 – raised in meeting with Gordon Pybus of DAD.	Screen glare can be a problem for many wheelchair users because of the height they are to the machine.
<b>Hearing impairment</b>		
<b>Learning Disability</b>		

<b>Mental Health</b>	17.5.16 – Blue badge focus group meeting	In many cases avoiding parking charges will mean they make fewer trips and this will impact adversely on their physical and mental well-being (for example isolation). (The number of on-street disabled parking bays has reduced in recent years and they are extremely well used). A real concern that people will not leave the house, resulting in depression and other mental health problems.
<b>Long Term Limiting Illness</b>		
<b>Multiple Impairments</b>		
<b>Other - Specify</b>	24.5.16 – raised in meeting with representative of DAD.  17.5.16 – Blue badge focus group meeting	Issue with pay and display machines as no machine can cater for people who have problems holding money.  A potential impact on carers, increasing costs for those providing care, resulting in a reduction in the number of journeys made or a choice to not spend money on something else which could have impacts on health and well-being.  In one case an attendee stated she would have to give up her part time work if the charge is imposed, driving her further into poverty. She see this as a removal of choice and an equality issue as she is unable to park on street as this is limited to 3 hours and her working day is longer than that.
<b>Race</b>		
<b>Sex</b>		
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>		
<b>Religion or belief</b>		
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		
<b>Pregnancy or maternity</b>		
<b>Marriage / Civil Partnership</b>		

Section 6: Engagement Findings – Continued

Please explain your findings for each area of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

a) Does the activity help to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation?



No
<b>b) Does the proposal help to advance equality of opportunity?</b>
No
<b>c) Does the proposal help to foster good relations?</b>
No

<b>During the engagement process were there any suggestions on how to avoid, minimise or mitigate any negative impacts? If so, please give details.</b>
<p>During the consultation on this proposal it was raised that currently DBC do not enforce the free 3 hour rule for blue badge holders in off street car parks, with DBC allowing blue badge holders unlimited free parking in off street car parks. The focus group explained disabled people feel that there is not enough monitoring of spaces now which leads to misuse. If they have to pay they will want more monitoring and enforcement to take place.</p> <p>One suggestion to mitigate the impact was regarding potential transferrable tickets to allow blue badge holders to move between council car parks under a single ticket. Thought needs to be put to whether this would be one broad transferrable ticket or whether it would be better to have Long to Long and short to short tickets due to the significant difference in pricing structures.</p> <p>Another suggestion to mitigate the impact of imposed charging may have would be to remove or review the £10 cost for the badge which is an additional financial burden.</p>

Section 7 - Sign-off when assessment is complete

<b>Officer Completing the Form:</b>		
	<b>Name:</b>	Lucy Humphreys
	<b>Date:</b>	1.6.16
	<b>Job Title:</b>	Policy and Research Officer
<b>Assistant Director:</b>		
<b>Signed</b>	<b>Name:</b>	Bill Westland
<b>Bill Westland</b>	<b>Date:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2016
	<b>Service:</b>	Economic Growth

Section 8: Report Findings to Decision Makers

**Any report to decision makers should clearly identify impacts, options and reasons. What does the EIA show? More than one may apply:**

Negative impacts identified. Adjustments to mitigate these have been proposed.

Section 9: Action Plan and Performance Management

What is the negative impact?	Actions required to reduce/eliminate the negative impact (if applicable)	Who will lead on action	Target completion date
Some disabled people will find it difficult to insert coins in to the payment machines because of dexterity issues.	Pay by phone is available in all the Council's car parks and avoids the need to go to the pay machines. Need to more widely promote this.	Bill Westland	February 2017 but in any case prior to introduction of charge
Some of the pay machines are difficult to access by wheelchair and the controls and instructions are not readable from a seated position	The Council is currently procuring new pay machines. These will be designed to be accessible and locations will be assessed for access before installation. The charge will not be introduced until the new machines are in place.	Assistant Director Regulatory Services	February 2017 but in any case prior to introduction of charge
Disabled people have an increased need to use more than one parking location in a single trip (shopping etc) because of limited mobility	A transferrable ticket will be allowed for blue badge holders so that a ticket purchased in any short stay or long stay car park can be used in any car park of the same type (i.e. short stay to short stay and long stay to long stay).	Assistant Director Regulatory Services	February 2017 but in any case prior to introduction of charge
The more severely disabled using rear-loading vehicles have to re-enter the vehicle through the rear doors to display a ticket – this is laborious and time-consuming	Pay by phone is available in all the Council's car parks and avoids the need to go to the pay machines. Need to more widely promote this.	Bill Westland	February 2017 but in any case prior to introduction of charge

**Performance Management**

<b>Date of the next EIA review</b>	<b>October 2017</b>
<b>Further review dates</b>	<b>October 2020</b>
<b>Who will lead the review?</b>	<b>Assistant Director Regulatory Services</b>

