
Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Stage 1 Scoping and Assessing for Relevance

Section 1 Details of the Proposal

A. Title of Proposal: Withdraw financial support from Commercial Services

B. What is it?

C. Description of the proposal: There are a small number of commercial services across the Scottish Borders that the council provides financial support for. The support ensures that the commercial services can either continue at weekends or operate along areas of routes or at times where they are not commercially viable to operate. This proposal would involve withdrawing financial support to the following services. Peter Hogg - Service 20 Kelso - Jedburgh (£35k Per Annum) Borders Buses - Hawick Town Service (£24k Per Annum) Borders Buses - X95 Hawick to Carlisle (£63k Per Annum)

D. Service Area: Passenger Transport

Department: Infrastructure & Environment

E. Lead Officer: Grant, Gordon

F. Other Officers/Partners involved: (List names, job titles and organisations)

Peter Hogg of Jedburgh Borders Buses Dumfries and Galloway Council

G. Date IIA completed: 03/02/2026

Section 2 Will there be any impacts as a result of the relationship between this proposal and other policies?

Yes

If yes, - please state here

03/02/2026 Anti Poverty Strategy Environment Communities

Section 3 Legislative Requirements

3.1 Which groups of people do you think will be or potentially could be, impacted by the implementation of this proposal?

(You should consider employees, clients, customers / service users, and any other relevant groups).

In considering the impact of your proposal on people with equality characteristics, you should take into account the fact that the Equality Act 2010 covers:

- A. **Elimination of discrimination (both direct & indirect), victimisation and harassment.** (Will the proposal discriminate? Or help eliminate discrimination?)
- B. **Promotion of equality of opportunity?** (Will your proposal help or hinder the Council with this)
- C. **Fostering good relations?** (Will your proposal help to foster or encourage good relations between those who have different equality characteristics?)

Protected Characteristics:

Please describe the potential impacts, and how any negative impacts could be mitigated. Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

Age: Older or younger people or a specific age grouping

03/02/2026 Older People (including concessionary pass holders) Often more reliant on bus services for essential travel such as medical appointments, shopping, social interaction, and accessing services. Less likely to have access to private cars, especially in rural areas. More likely to experience isolation if services are reduced or removed. Younger People School pupils, college students, apprentices and young workers rely heavily on early morning, evening or weekend services. Young people in rural areas are particularly dependent on buses for employment, education, training and leisure. Loss of services may disproportionately affect opportunities, particularly for young people with the under 22 free travel scheme entitlement residing in rural areas who would be affected by any service reduction. People of a Specific Age Group (e.g., working-age adults without access to cars) People in low-paid or entry-level employment, especially shift workers, may face barriers getting to and from work, particularly for weekend or early/late shifts if these parts of the route are no longer commercially viable. This could particularly affect younger working adults at the start of their careers and older working adults who no longer drive. Potential Negative Impacts Withdrawal of support may indirectly discriminate against age groups that rely on subsidised transport, particularly older people and young people. Rural communities, where alternatives are limited, may see disproportionate age-based impacts. Mitigations Engage with operators to explore targeted alternatives, such as reduced-frequency services rather than complete withdrawal. Signpost users to community transport schemes, demand-responsive transport, or accessible taxis where available. Assess whether particular times of day (school peaks, GP appointment periods) require preservation. Potential Hindrance

Reduced services may limit older people's ability to access healthcare, shops, and community opportunities. Young people may lose access to education, training, and employment opportunities, especially if affordable alternatives are not available. Removing weekend or early/late services may worsen the employment prospects of young and economically vulnerable adults. Mitigations Prioritise retention of key journeys (e.g., early morning links to schools/colleges, timed connections for healthcare routes). Provide advance communication and support for affected age groups, including guidance on alternative travel arrangements such as CT. Consider targeted ticketing support or mobility grants for particularly affected groups if alternatives are more expensive. In terms of fostering good relations Community tensions may arise if the withdrawal is perceived as disproportionately affecting older or younger residents in rural towns. Loss of services may reduce intergenerational interaction, impacting community cohesion. Mitigations Transparent public engagement and consultation with age-related groups (e.g., older persons' forums, youth councils, schools). Clearly explain rationale, constraints, and efforts made to minimise harm. Encourage community-based solutions such as car-sharing schemes, volunteer transport, or social enterprise transport initiatives.

Disability: A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This may be visible or invisible, progressive or recurring.

03/02/2026 People with a wide range of disabilities who use these services to access essential activities, including (but not limited to): Mobility impairments Sensory impairments Neurodivergent people People with long-term medical conditions People with mental health conditions In the Borders disabled people are more likely to rely on public and community transport due to lower car access and the additional barriers associated with driving, parking, or costs of taxis. Potential Impacts by Service Change 1) Service 20 Kelso – Jedburgh Impact: Loss or reduction in links to GP surgeries, health centres, social care, shops and community services. Disability-specific risks: Increased travel time and complexity of finding a connecting or alternative service Missed appointments due to fewer services available 2) Hawick Town Service Impact: Local accessibility within town curtailed, affecting short essential journeys. Disability-specific risks: Town service often provides short, frequent, low-floor access, removal can disproportionately affect those unable to walk long distances or manage steep gradients, particularly as Hawick lies within a steep valley. Increased isolation if door-to-door or short-hop journeys are lost. 3) X95 Hawick – Carlisle Impact: Reduction in early/late or less commercially viable sections/times. Disability-specific risks: Loss of evening/weekend options can block access to hospital visiting times, shift work, or social participation, important for mental health and preventing isolation. Longer waits can cause those with anxiety to feel more anxious. A. Elimination of Discrimination, Harassment, Victimisation Potential negative impacts Indirect discrimination risk if service withdrawal disproportionately disadvantages disabled users who cannot reasonably switch to alternatives (e.g., long walks to infrequent stops, inaccessible interchanges). Risk that any remaining services or alternatives are not fully accessible (e.g., non-low floor vehicles in community transport, lack of wheelchair spaces, poor audio/visual next-stop information). Mitigations Undertake an access audit of any replacement or alternative provision (vehicle accessibility, driver training, stop infrastructure, audio/visual announcements, interchange

quality). If services must reduce, protect the most access-critical trips (e.g., times aligned to health appointments, social care, essential shopping, supported employment/day services). Ensure clear, accessible information (Easy Read, audio formats, BSL video, large print) and provide longer notice periods for changes to support planning. B. Promotion of Equality of Opportunity Potential hindrance Reduced opportunities for disabled people to access healthcare, work, education, volunteering, and community life. Increased cost burden if forced to use taxis or private hire, particularly acute for low-income disabled residents. Mitigations Targeted retention of key journeys and links, and/or rebalancing frequency rather than removing whole periods (e.g., keep one early and one late return). Demand Responsive Transport or Community Transport with guaranteed accessible vehicles, trained drivers, bookable wheelchair space, and fares parity where possible. Integrated ticketing/through-ticket guarantees to minimise interchange barriers and protect affordable through-journeys. Currently in place between Telfords and Borders Buses Work with NHS and social care to align appointment times with any reduced bus patterns and explore non-emergency patient transport eligibility flexibilities. C. Fostering Good Relations Potential impacts Service withdrawal can heighten perceptions that disabled residents are being left behind, harming trust and cohesion. Reduced visibility of disabled people in public spaces (if travel declines) may reduce inclusive community interactions. Mitigations Co-design mitigations with local disability organisations, Access Panels, carers' groups, and service users in Kelso, Jedburgh, Hawick and along the X95 corridor. Provide transparent rationale, publish EIA findings, and explain how feedback shaped final decisions (e.g., preserved trips, enhanced DRT). Deliver disability awareness training refreshers for operators and front-line staff; incorporate feedback loops to resolve issues quickly.

Sex: Women and men (girls and boys)

03/02/2026 Not Applicable

Gender Reassignment: Anybody who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

03/02/2026 Not Applicable

Marriage or Civil Partnership: People who are married or in a civil partnership

03/02/2026 Not Applicable

Pregnancy and Maternity: (refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth).

Answer: 03/02/2026 Not Applicable

Race: including colour, nationality, ethnic origins, including minorities (e.g. gypsy travellers, refugees, migrants and asylum seekers)

03/02/2026 While people from all backgrounds use bus services, certain racial or ethnic groups may be disproportionately affected due to patterns of transport reliance and socioeconomic factors, particularly in rural areas of the Scottish Borders. Key potentially affected groups include: Asylum Seekers Increasingly present in some Borders communities due to dispersal and resettlement schemes. Typically have lower rates of car ownership, higher reliance on public transport, and may work in shift-based or low-paid roles requiring evening/weekend travel. Bus services play a vital role in integration, networking, language classes, social inclusion and accessing advice/support services. Scottish Government recently introduced entitlement to free travel for asylum seekers Potential Impacts of the Service Withdrawals 1) Service 20 – Kelso to Jedburgh Impact on Race groups Reductions in connectivity may affect minority ethnic families accessing training centres, voluntary sector support, ESOL classes or community hubs. Refugees/migrants reliant on this corridor may face barriers reaching services and employment. 2) Hawick Town Service Impact on Race groups Hawick is one of the more diverse towns in the Borders, including Eastern European workers, minority ethnic families and increasingly refugee households. Removal may disproportionately affect those without cars, limiting access to shops, healthcare, schools and community spaces. Could hinder integration and social cohesion if groups become more geographically and socially isolated. 3) X95 Hawick – Carlisle Impact on Race groups Weekend/early-late service changes could affect migrants working in shift-based employment, particularly the care sector Reduced mobility may hinder access to wider networks (Carlisle and other hubs), cultural organisations, or advice services for refugees and migrants. Equality Act 2010 Duties A. Elimination of Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation Potential Negative Impacts Indirect discrimination risk where racial or ethnic minority groups, who statistically are more likely to rely on buses, face disproportionate disadvantage. Language barriers may exacerbate the impact of sudden timetable changes or complex alternatives. Mitigations Ensure information on changes is translated into key languages used locally (e.g., Polish, Ukrainian, Arabic, Urdu, Romanian). Provide clear, simple communication formats, including pictorial timetables and online journey planners. Monitor emerging impacts through community groups, race equality organisations, and support networks. Engage directly refugee/migrant support organisations, and community councils. B. Promotion of Equality of Opportunity Potential Hindrance Reduced ability for minority ethnic groups, migrants and refugees to reach employment, training, benefits advice, legal assistance, English-language classes, or community integration events. Increased travel costs if forced to use taxis or non-subsidised alternatives, particularly affecting asylum seekers with extremely limited income. Young

people from minority ethnic backgrounds may face barriers accessing education or after-school activities. Mitigations Where cuts are unavoidable, retain key trips at times most vital for work, school and community integration. Consider supporting Demand Responsive Transport or community transport schemes that are affordable, reliable and accessible. Partner with community organisations to map essential trip purposes for minority ethnic residents. Ensure concessionary schemes are recognised on replacement services, and work to maintain fare parity on alternatives. C. Fostering Good Relations Between People of Different Racial/Ethnic Backgrounds Potential Negative Impacts If particular groups lose access to social, cultural or community networks, integration may suffer. Increased isolation or inability to travel may reinforce perceptions of “separation” or exclusion. Community tensions may arise if residents perceive service withdrawals as disproportionately affecting newer or minority communities. Mitigations Transparent communication on why decisions were made and how impacts have been mitigated. Joint engagement sessions with mainstream community groups and minority ethnic organisations to support dialogue. Use local community hubs, libraries and schools to disseminate information in inclusive ways.

Religion or Belief: different religious or philosophical beliefs, customs (including atheists and those with no aligned belief) e.g. Christianity, Islam, Hindu, pacifism, vegetarianism, gender critical.

03/02/2026 No Impact

Sexual Orientation: e.g. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Heterosexual

03/02/2026 No Impact

3.2 Fairer Scotland Duty

This duty places a legal responsibility on Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to actively consider (give due regard) to how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage when making strategic decisions.

The duty is set at a strategic level - these are the key, high level decisions that SBC will take. This would normally include strategy documents, decisions about setting priorities, allocating resources and commissioning services.

Is the proposal strategic?

Answer: Yes

If No go to Section 4

If Yes, Please describe the potential impacts, and how any negative impacts could be mitigated. Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

Low and/or No Wealth: enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future.

03/02/2026 The proposal will likely have significant adverse impacts on individuals and families with low or no wealth. These effects relate to access to employment, healthcare, and affordable shopping, and may increase financial pressure and social exclusion. The following mitigations should be considered Key essential journeys are retained, Affordable alternatives are put in place, Communication is clear and accessible, Targeted support and monitoring are implemented, Partnerships with employers, advice agencies and community organisations are utilised.

Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies

03/02/2026 People experiencing material deprivation are highly susceptible to negative impacts from reductions in supported bus services. Loss of transport can deepen poverty, limit access to essential goods and services, increase living costs, and worsen social exclusion. The following mitigations should be considered Key “lifeline” journeys are maintained, Affordable alternatives such as DRT or community transport are provided, Clear and inclusive communication is delivered, Targeted support is available for those most affected, and Ongoing monitoring is embedded.

Area Deprivation – where you live (e.g. rural areas), where you work (e.g. accessibility of transport), see rural proofing guidance

03/02/2026 People living or working in areas of deprivation, particularly rural or isolated communities, are likely to face significant negative impacts from the withdrawal of financial support for the three bus services. These include reduced access to essential services, increased isolation, barriers to employment, and the risk of widening inequality between rural and urban areas. The following mitigations should be considered A basic level of lifeline connectivity is retained, Affordable and accessible alternatives (e.g., DRT/CT) are implemented, Clear communication and targeted support are provided, and Ongoing monitoring and rural-proofing adjustments are built into implementation.

Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parents' education, employment and income

03/02/2026 People from lower socio-economic backgrounds are likely to experience significant negative impacts from the withdrawal of financial support for these services, particularly in rural or deprived areas of the Scottish Borders. Potential impacts include reduced access to employment, training, education and affordable goods, increased cost of living, and greater risk of social exclusion. The following mitigations should be considered, Retention of essential, opportunity-critical trips Affordable and accessible alternatives Clear communication and targeted support Engagement with employers, education providers and community groups Ongoing monitoring and adjustment

Care experienced people

Answer: 03/02/2026 Care experienced people are highly vulnerable to transport reductions because they often lack family support, financial resilience and private transport access. Bus services play a vital role in employment, education, stability, wellbeing and connection. The proposal carries significant risk of negative impacts, including: Isolation Missed support Barriers to employment and training Reduced participation Increased financial pressure The following mitigations should be considered Key essential journeys are protected Affordable alternatives are put in place Social work and throughcare services are actively involved Targeted support is available for those most affected Monitoring and responsive adjustment are built in

Carers paid and unpaid including family members

03/02/2026 Carers, both unpaid family carers and paid care workers, are significantly vulnerable to reductions in supported bus services. Transport plays a central role in: Delivering care Maintaining stable care arrangements Supporting carers' wellbeing Enabling care workers to reach clients Preventing crises and hospital admissions Sustaining employment in the care sector The proposal carries substantial risks, especially in rural areas and for low-income carers. The following mitigations should be considered Caring-critical journeys are protected DRT and community transport provide reliable, affordable alternatives Carers

and care providers are actively involved in planning Targeted support is offered where needed Ongoing monitoring allows responsive adjustment

Homelessness

03/02/2026 <p>People experiencing homelessness are highly vulnerable to reductions in supported bus services. Transport is deeply linked to access to:</p>Housing supportFood and basic needsHealthcareEmployment and trainingSafety, warmth and community support<p>The proposal is likely to have significant negative impacts, particularly for those in rural areas</p><p>The following mitigations should be considered,</p>Essential support-access journeys are retainedAffordable and accessible DRT and community transport options are implementedStrong partnership working is in place with homelessness and support agenciesTargeted assistance is provided for the most vulnerableOngoing monitoring ensures timely adjustments

Addictions and substance use

03/02/2026 People experiencing addictions or substance abuse are highly vulnerable to disruptions in public transport. Reliable, affordable travel is essential for: Treatment engagement Harm reduction Crisis intervention Employment and volunteering Maintaining support networks Preventing relapse The proposal is likely to have significant negative impacts, particularly for rural, low-income or homeless individuals with complex needs. The following mitigations should be considered Key recovery-critical journeys are preserved Affordable DRT and community transport alternatives are provided Strong partnership with addiction services is embedded Clear communication and targeted support are available Monitoring ensures early identification of rising risks

Those involved within the criminal justice system

03/02/2026 People involved in the criminal justice system are particularly vulnerable to transport reductions. Consistent access to travel is essential for: Compliance with legal obligations Attendance at support and rehabilitation services Employment, training and community integration Reducing reoffending Public protection and community safety The proposal carries significant risks, including increased breach rates, reduced engagement in rehabilitation, and heightened risk of crisis or reoffending. The following mitigations should be considered Justice-critical journeys are retained Affordable and reliable DRT alternatives exist Strong partnership with Justice Social Work and courts is embedded Clear communication and targeted support are provided Monitoring and flexible adjustment mechanisms are in place

3.3 Consumer Duty

This duty places a legal responsibility on Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to have regard to the matters listed below.

This applies to strategic matters so only complete this section if you have marked “Yes” in Section 3.2

How will the proposal impact on users or potential users of the service? E.g. Will the proposal affect the way in which people can access services, will it improve the range of choice accessible to service users, will it improve or hinder access to information for service users?

03/02/2026 The proposal to withdraw financial support from Services 20, the Hawick Town Service and the supported elements of the X95 is likely to reduce the ability of some users to access essential public services, employment, education and community facilities. For many residents, particularly those in rural areas or without access to private transport, the changes may reduce travel choice and limit the predictability and affordability of public transport options. There is also a risk that access to information may become more complex if service patterns change or if alternative transport relies on digital booking systems, which may not be accessible to all users. Clear, non-digital communication and easily understood guidance will therefore be essential. To meet Consumer Duty principles, the Council must ensure that users, especially vulnerable groups, are treated fairly, receive clear information, and can understand any changes to service availability. Where possible, the Council should ensure that essential journeys remain accessible, affordable alternatives are provided, and that information about changes is shared early, widely and in accessible formats.

If there are any negative impacts, do you intend to mitigate these and, if so, how?

3.4 Armed Forces Covenant Duty (Education and Housing/ Homelessness proposals only)

This duty places a legal responsibility on Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to actively consider (give due regard) to the three matters listed below in Education and Housing/ Homelessness matters.

This relates to current and former armed forces personnel (regular or reserve) and their families.

Is the Armed Forces Covenant Duty applicable?

No

If Yes:

For each of the following Covenant Duties, You should cover these two points:

The unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces;

The MOD Statutory Guidance gives the following examples – Link for this can be found here:
[MOD Statutory Guidance](#)

- Danger
- Geographical Mobility
- Separation from Family
- Service Law
- Unfamiliarity with Civilian Life
- Hours of Work
- Stress

How is the proposal impacted by the following principles?

If there are any negative impacts, do you intend to mitigate these and, if so, how?

Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

The principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces;

How is the proposal impacted by the following principles?

If there are any negative impacts, do you intend to mitigate these and, if so, how?

Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

The principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.

How is the proposal impacted by the following principles?

If there are any negative impacts, do you intend to mitigate these and, if so, how?

Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

3.5 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Scottish Borders Council (SBC) has a duty not to act, or fail to act, in a manner incompatible with the requirements of the UNCRC.

This only applies to certain matters, where SBC is acting under:

- An Act of the Scottish Parliament.
- Regulations made under an Act of the Scottish Parliament.
- A general (common law) legal duty.

Is the UNCRC Duty applicable?

No

If “Yes”, please complete below

If you have answered yes for any of the Articles, please specify whether it is positive, negative or neutral, the nature of the impact, as well as any mitigations put in place if the effect is negative. Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

Which of the General Principles of the UNCRC are engaged?

Non-discrimination (Article 2)

Impact:

Best interests of the child as a primary consideration (Article 3)

Impact:

Right to life, Survival and Development (Article 6)

Impact:

Right to be heard (Article 12)

Impact:

Other:

Impact:

Section 4 Full Integrated Impact Assessment Required

Select No if you have answered “No” to all of Sections 3.1 – 3.5.

Yes

If a full impact assessment is not required briefly explain why there are no effects and provide justification for the decision.

Signed by Lead Officer: Grant, Gordon

Designation: Principal Transport Officer

Date: 11/02/2026

Counter Signature Director: Curry, John

Date: 12/02/2026