

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member for Environment and Transport
<b>Date:</b>	13 November 2018
<b>Title:</b>	Publication of the Concessionary Travel Scheme 2019-2020
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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### 1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That approval be given to provide the range of concessions detailed for the Hampshire Concessionary Travel Scheme for 2019/2020 and that this forms the basis of the draft scheme published on 1 December 2018.
- 1.2 That non-automatic renewal of older person's concessionary bus passes which have not been used in the 12 months prior to their renewal shall continue, but on request an eligible older person will be issued with a pass.
- 1.3 That authority is delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment to make minor variations to the final scheme from April 2019 as required, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport.

### 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The purpose of this paper is to seek approval to provide the range of concessions detailed for the Hampshire Concessionary Travel Scheme for 2019/2020.
- 2.2. This paper seeks to set out the background to the scheme and proposes the scheme for 2018/2019.

### 2. Contextual information

- 2.1. This report concerns the administration of concessionary travel, for which the County Council acquired responsibility in April 2011.
- 2.2. The published scheme is updated annually and the County Council is required to publish details of its draft Concessionary Travel Scheme for 2019/2020 by 1 December 2018. The final details of the scheme have to be published by 3 March 2019, 28 days prior to implementation on 1 April 2019. This report seeks approval from the Executive Member for Environment and Transport for the range of concessions as detailed.

- 2.3. The statutory scheme provides for free off-peak travel on local bus services for eligible older and disabled persons. Off-peak is defined as between 0930 and 2300 on Monday to Friday, and at all times at weekends and on Bank Holidays. The County Council has not been notified of any changes. Reimbursement rates are calculated by specialist consultants based on Department for Transport (DfT) guidance.
- 2.4. Since it commenced on 1 April 2011, the Hampshire scheme has incorporated a number of enhancements for those with disabilities. This followed a detailed Equalities Impact Assessment. It also extended the concession offered for all passholders on community transport and Taxishare schemes. These discretionary elements were included in the scheme which was approved by the Executive Member for Environment on 19 November 2010.
- 2.5. The enhancements to the statutory scheme are currently as follows:
- **Free travel at all times for holders of Hampshire disabled persons bus passes** on journeys commencing in Hampshire to destinations in England;
  - **Companion Travel** – The Scheme will allow certain Hampshire pass holders who have been issued with a ‘Companion pass’ to be accompanied by a companion who is eligible for the same free travel benefits as the pass holder. The companion may be anyone whom the pass holder considers appropriate to provide assistance;
  - **Half Fare Travel** on community transport services such as Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go providing that the pass holder meets all relevant eligibility criteria; and
  - **Alternative Discretions** - Travel vouchers worth £32 are offered as an alternative concession for those entitled to a disabled person’s pass. These are valid on participating taxis, voluntary car schemes, Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go services.

### 3. Passenger Transport Review

- 3.1. Public consultation was carried out to identify residents’ priorities for funding so that these could be reflected in the public transport budget savings of £1.1m required as part of the savings of £140 million that Hampshire County Council needs to make by April 2019 together with savings from the concessionary travel scheme.
- 3.2. The consultation ran from June to August 2018 and responses were received from 111 organisations and over 4,500 individuals.
- 3.3. Residents were asked to consider removing concessionary bus pass use from Dial-a-Ride and Call&Go community transport services. Since 2011, holders of older persons and disabled persons bus passes have received a 50% discount for travel on these services – this is a discretionary enhancement to the statutory scheme which is for local buses only.
- 3.4. Dial-a-Ride and Call&Go fares in many areas have not increased for a number of years and now can cover less than 20% of costs – the single most widely used fare is £1.50 single, £3 return for which passholders pay 75p and £1.50. Consultation did not support removing use of the bus pass on community

transport so instead the discount offered for holders of older persons and disabled persons passes be reduced from 50% to 25%. This will help make the services more sustainable in line with the Community Transport Operating Model approved by the Executive Member in March 2017 and give an annual saving of £60,000. This revision was approved by the Executive Member for Environment and Transport on 29 October 2018 as part of the Passenger Transport Review Decision Report.

- 3.5. Separately to asking for community priorities, residents' views were sought for the idea of a 50p per journey charge for the use of Older Person's Bus Pass on local bus services as this would help retain funding for supported services in the future. The question was asked for information purposes only as such a charge would require a change of the law.
- 3.6. Of current passholders who responded (2,104), 54% would be willing to pay a 50p charge and a further 20% might be persuaded if the funding helped to retain or improve services. Of respondents as whole (4,399), 47% favoured the charge compared to 44% who opposed the charge.

#### **4. Concessionary Travel Vouchers**

- 4.1. Travel vouchers worth £32 are offered as an alternative concession for those entitled to a disabled person's pass. These are valid on participating taxis, voluntary car schemes, Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go services.
- 4.2. The initial value of vouchers was set for 2011 and it is proposed that the value of the vouchers offered be increased to £36 from April 2019 which would be in line with CPI since the start of the scheme. This will benefit an average of 3,500 residents at a maximum cost of £14,000 if all vouchers are redeemed.

#### **5. Renewal Arrangements for the Older Persons Concessionary Bus Pass**

- 5.1. In order to reduce the unnecessary cost of issuing passes to people who have moved away from the area, distress to relatives where a passholder has died and to avoid the risk of fraud if a pass is delivered to an address where the passholder no longer lives, it was agreed that from 2017 an older person's concessionary pass would not be issued automatically if it was not being used.
- 5.2. There is no impact upon a person's entitlement to a pass, and anyone who contacts the Council to say they have not received their new pass is issued with one. The change came into effect for renewals of Older Persons passes after 1 January 2017 and it is proposed to continue this arrangement.
- 5.3. Disabled Persons' passes continue to be renewed automatically subject to any appropriate review of eligibility.

#### **6. Proposed new discretionary enhancements to the statutory scheme:**

- **Free travel at all times for holders of Hampshire disabled persons bus passes** on journeys commencing in Hampshire to destinations in England; (unchanged)

- **Companion Travel** – The Scheme will allow certain Hampshire disabled person’s bus passholders who have been issued with a ‘Companion pass’ to be accompanied by a companion who is eligible for the same free travel benefits as the pass holder. The companion may be anyone whom the pass holder considers appropriate to provide assistance; (unchanged)
- **25% Discount** on Community Transport Services such as Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go providing that the pass holder meets all relevant eligibility criteria; and
- **Alternative Discretions** - Travel vouchers worth £36 are offered as an alternative concession for those eligible for a disabled person’s bus pass. These are valid on participating taxis, voluntary car schemes, Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go services. (Increased value)

## 7. Finance

- 7.1. The overall size of the budget is £13.1 million. This covers the cost of issuing concessions and reimbursement costs to operators for concessionary travel. A number of budget efficiencies such as not automatically renewing unused passes have been approved in previous years. The revision to the discretionary discount offered to bus pass holders on community transport, which was approved by the Executive Member as part of the Passenger Transport Review Decision Report on 29 October 2018, will provide a saving of £60,000 per annum.

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	no
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	no
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	yes

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>	
Executive Member for Environment and Transport Passenger Transport Review 2018	<u>Date</u> 29 October 2018
Executive Member for Environment and Transport Revised Community Transport Operating Model 8131	23 March 2017
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>	
Transport Act 2000 as amended by the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007	<u>Date</u> 2000,2007

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

DocumentLocation

None

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equality Duty**

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

**Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:**

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### **1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

The proposals in this report, and in particular the current range of concessions which have been retained, have been developed with due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty and the County Council's equality objectives.

The decision assessed is to publicise a scheme, which includes the reduction in discretionary discount for bus pass holders on dial-a-ride and call-and-go services. The County Council has taken the decision to protect its support for an extensive community transport service. As part of the overall Passenger Transport review, where increased charges will take effect as a result of changes, the increase has been judged to be reasonable in terms of value for money and the sustainability of the services, thus ensuring that charges are as affordable as possible.

### **2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

2.1. It is considered that the decision will have no impact on crime and disorder.

### **3. Climate Change:**

a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

The concessionary scheme enables eligible residents to use public transport as an alternative to the private car.

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

The concessionary scheme supports use of public transport which minimises carbon emissions.