

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Executive Decision Record**

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Universal Services
Date:	13 March 2023
Title:	Concessionary Travel Reimbursement 2023/24 Update
Report From:	Director of Universal Services

Contact name: Caroline Mekky

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1. The decision:

- 1.1. That the Executive Lead Member for Universal Services approves a revised approach to concessionary fares reimbursement for local bus operators from 1 April 2023 until 31 March 2024, where reimbursement levels are based on the percentage of pre-COVID bus network that operators provide.
- 1.2. That the Executive Lead Member for Universal Services approves that up to £1.2 million per annum in 2022/23 and 2023/4 of the expected concessionary fares underspend be ringfenced to be used to support local bus services and related infrastructure in Hampshire.
- 1.3. That the Executive Lead Member for Universal Services delegates authority to the Director of Universal Services, in consultation with the Executive Lead Member of Universal Services and the Assistant Director for Legal Services and Monitoring Officer to determine the specific mechanisms through which the ringfenced sums are allocated to support local bus services and related infrastructure in Hampshire, based on the principles outlined in this report.

2. Reasons for the decision:

- 2.1. It is proposed that the County Council provide a higher level of concessionary fares reimbursement to the operators of bus services in order to support the industry whilst it navigates through an unprecedented period of rising costs, staff shortages and slow patronage growth by concessionary pass holders.
- 2.2. This approach has been the one adopted by the Council for the last two financial years and is recommended by the Department for Transport (DfT).
- 2.3. Ringfencing any underspend further achieves the aims set out in 2.1 as well as helping the Council achieve some of its National Bus Strategy ambitions of patronage growth as set out in its Bus Service Improvement Plan.

3. Other options considered and rejected:

- 3.1. To reimburse operators based on the actual number of passengers travelling. This option has been rejected as it would remove several million pounds from the bus industry in Hampshire which in turn would result in further service reductions.
- 3.2. Not to ringfence any underspend. This option has been rejected as it would not be consistent with the government objectives as set out in the DfT guidance issued in November 2022.
- 3.3. To use any underspend to meet other ongoing cost pressures. This option was rejected because the underspend is not expected to last into future years, with patronage from concessionary pass holders currently growing.

4. Conflicts of interest:

- 4.1. Conflicts of interest declared by the decision-maker:
- 4.2. Conflicts of interest declared by other Executive Members consulted:

5. Dispensation granted by the Conduct Advisory Panel: none.

6. Reason(s) for the matter being dealt with if urgent: not applicable.

7. Statement from the Decision Maker:

Approved by:

Date:

DocuSigned by:

Nick Adams-King

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13 March 2023

**Executive Lead Member for Universal Services
Councillor Nick Adams-King**