

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Executive Decision Record

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment
<b>Date:</b>	11 March 2021
<b>Title:</b>	Passenger Transport Contracts and Concessionary Fares Payments
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

**Contact name:** Lisa Cook

**Tel:** 07562 434680

**Email:** [lisa.cook@hants.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.cook@hants.gov.uk)

### 1. The decision:

- 1.1. That that Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment gives authority to make concessionary fares reimbursement payments to local bus operators from 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021 based on the percentage of the pre-COVID bus network that they operate during the period, in line with the latest Department for Transport (DfT) guidance (issued on 13 January 2021), to be met from existing budgets.
- 1.2. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment gives authority to extend the current policy of making 100% local bus and Community Transport contract payments to operators, 100% concessionary fares payments to community transport operators and 80% contract and concessionary travel payments to Taxi-share operators, to cover the period from 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021, to be met from existing budgets.
- 1.3. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment gives authority to revert to pre-COVID payment arrangements for Taxi-share services as soon as social distancing requirements are able to be safely removed and services are able to return to pre-COVID service.
- 1.4. That authority be delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment, in consultation with the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment, to make amendments to the payment arrangements before 30 September 2021 if COVID related restrictions are significantly reduced and local bus and community transport services are able to safely return to pre-COVID levels, in line with any guidance issued by the DfT.

### 2. Reasons for the decision:

- 2.1. This report updates and modifies the arrangements put in place by a decision made by the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment on 19 November 2020 on the same subject. The current arrangements are due to expire on 31 March 2021.

- 2.2. The proposals to continue ongoing payments to local bus, community transport and taxi-share operators will enable the County Council to provide key transport services to members of the public, many of whom are older and disabled members of the community. As and when the need for social distancing eases, it is anticipated that demand will grow and therefore these services will be important to Hampshire's recovery. This is particularly relevant in the case of the local bus services used by school and college students to access their place of education.
- 2.3. The decision will contribute to Hampshire's economic recovery, enabling passengers to access their place of employment in addition to health, retail, social, educational and leisure facilities.
- 2.4. The decision will contribute towards Hampshire's strategic aim of enabling its residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives.
- 2.5. The latest DfT guidance from 13 January 2021 on concessionary fares funding suggests that Local Transport Authorities match concessionary fares payments to the level of service provided by the operator, e.g. if 90% of the pre-COVID 19 network is operated, then concessionary fares should be reimbursed at 90% of pre-COVID levels. Any resulting revenue shortfall for operators should be dealt with through the Coronavirus Bus Service Support Grant (CBSSG) process. This eases the financial burden on Local Transport Authorities of continuing to support the public transport network.
- 2.6. By continuing the policy of paying 100% contract payments to Community Transport and local bus operators, and concessionary fares payments to community transport operators the County Council is supporting the short-term survival of Hampshire's bus operators and the Community Transport sector, as well as contributing to the viability of the longer term transport network, and to Hampshire's longer term economic recovery.

### **3. Other options considered and rejected:**

- 3.1. To match concessionary fares payments to operators based on actual passengers carried. This option was rejected as it would be contrary to DfT guidance. Given the low numbers of passengers during the pandemic, it would undermine the local bus network and the operation of community transport and taxi-share services. This would result in either no service or a reduced service being provided and would be harmful to the delivery of essential journeys and the recovery of passenger transport services in Hampshire. A reduction in payments to local bus operators would undermine this vital support.
- 3.2. To withdraw County Council support from local bus, community transport and taxi-share services. This option was rejected as it would have a negative impact on Hampshire's core network for essential journeys and economic recovery leaving passengers across Hampshire unable to access employment, health, retail, social, educational and leisure facilities. This would also be in contradiction to the County Council's long-term decarbonisation and climate change objectives.

### **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:**

-----

**11 March 2021**

**Executive Member for Economy, Transport and  
Environment  
Councillor Rob Humby**