



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT

TOPIC - CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL TRANSFER TO COUNTY COUNCIL – CONSULTATION

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Corporate Director (Governance), the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Principal Scrutiny Committee and all Members of the relevant Scrutiny Panel (individual Ward Members are consulted separately where appropriate). In addition, all Members are notified.

Five or more of these consulted Members can require that the matter be referred to Cabinet for determination.

Contact Officers:

Case Officer: Andy Hickman, Tel: 01962 848 105, Email: ahickman@winchester.gov.uk

Committee Administrator: Nancy Graham, Tel: 01962 848 235, Email: ngraham@winchester.gov.uk

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Government has decided that responsibility for the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme for older people and people with disabilities should move from District Councils to County Councils from 1 April 2011. The details of the new scheme are due to be agreed by the County Council in October 2010 and as part of this decision making process, the County Council is undertaking a consultation on what the new scheme should consist of.
- 1.2 Since April 2008, those who have reached age 60 and eligible people with disabilities resident in England have been entitled to a free annual bus pass giving free travel on local buses between 0930 and 2300 during the week, and at any time at weekends. Many District Councils have provided different additional benefits in their own areas including companion passes, as well as allowing use of passes on community transport and buses at other times of

day. As a result, benefits vary from district to district. The County Council's consultation is aimed at ascertaining which of the discretions are considered to be priorities in order that they can design a countywide scheme which provides equal benefit to residents across Hampshire.

- 1.3 Funding levels from the Government for the new scheme are not known yet and are unlikely to be available until the end of this year. The County Council is likely therefore to have to decide upon which scheme to introduce prior to knowing what level of funding is approved by Government. As such there is a risk that the County Council will have to pick up some or all of the costs of the new scheme and so will need to consider options which are affordable.
- 1.4 In Winchester District two discretions above the Statutory scheme are currently allowed under the scheme administered by the City Council:
 - Disabled persons companion passes are issued.
 - Pass holders are permitted to use the concessions from 9am rather than 9.30am.
- 1.5 Loss of these discretions would be unfortunate and would have impacts on established travel habits and patterns. The 9am scheme start was introduced in response to the needs of users, particularly where bus services are infrequent and a bus before 9.30am may be the only option to reach a certain destination or appointment. A further discretionary element of the scheme, which the City Council currently allows, is for disabled persons to be issued with a concessionary travel pass for travelling companions. This increases the cost paid in reimbursement to bus companies but is considered very important in order to assist disabled persons to travel. Currently around 42 companion passes are issued in Winchester District. Loss of this aspect of the scheme would have serious impacts on those people who require a companion in order to be able to travel on buses, often to reach important services.
- 1.6 In terms of identifying priorities to the County Council as part of their consultation, it is considered that both current discretions offered in Winchester District are invaluable to users and should be retained but that the 9am start is the first priority for the reasons set out in the draft attached consultation response.
- 1.7 During the consultation with City Council Councillors the issue of how the needs of residents who do not have the benefit of bus services should be addressed particularly as the scheme will be taken over from District Councils some of which offer additional benefits such as travel tokens and rail cards. It is felt that the County Council should be asked to consider how it can address such issues and whether there is a possibility of offering such

benefits as an alternative to the concessionary bus pass. This is shown as priority 3 on the attached consultation response form.

DECISION

That the consultation form as attached to this Notice be submitted as the City Council's response to the County Council's consultation.

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

As the City Council currently administers the Concessionary Travel Scheme, it is appropriate that it responds to the County Council's consultation. It is considered that the two current discretions offered by the City Council should be retained in the new arrangements if possible, given the benefits for disabled people and the timetables of some services. There may be some benefit of asking the County Council to consider adopting a 9.30am arrival time rather than a 9.30am commencement of travel if the current Winchester City Council discretionary 9am start time cannot be maintained within the new arrangements.

It has also arisen through the Member consultation that the County Council should be asked to consider how they could meet the needs of residents who don't benefit from local bus services and as such whether an alternative to the bus pass could be offered. This is shown as Priority 3 on the consultation response form.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Not known at this stage.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON THE DECISION

Portfolio Holder for High Quality Environment.

FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

n/a

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR OFFICER CONSULTED

n/a

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

n/a

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision: 03.09.10

Councillor Bell – Portfolio Holder for High Quality Environment

Concessionary Fares Consultation - July 2010



You may be aware the Government has decided that responsibility for the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme for older people and people with disabilities should move from District Councils to County Councils from the 1 April 2011. The details of the new scheme are due to be agreed by the County Council in October 2010 and as part of this decision making process we would like to consult you on what the new scheme should consist of.

Since April 2008 those who have reached age 60 and eligible people with disabilities resident in England have been entitled to a free annual bus pass giving free travel on local buses between 0930 and 2300 and at any time at weekends. Many District Councils have provided different additional benefits in their own areas including tokens, companion passes and railcards, as well as allowing use of passes on community transport, ferry journeys and buses at other times of day. As a result, benefits vary from district to district which cannot be continued in a new countywide scheme, as they would not provide equal benefit to residents across Hampshire.

Funding levels from the Government for the new scheme are not known yet and are unlikely to be available until the end of this year, after we have decided upon which scheme to introduce. Depending on what level of funding is approved by Government, there is a large risk that the County Council will have to pick up some or all of the costs of the new scheme and so we need to consult on options which have to be affordable.

The Consultation Options are:

1. To provide the statutory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme only - free local bus travel between 09:30 and 23:00 (all times weekends & bank holidays) to people of eligible retirement age and eligible people with disabilities over 5 years of age
2. If sufficient funding is available what priorities should we consider as additional discretionary enhancements should your travel requirements not be met with a bus pass allowing free travel between 0930 and 2300 and at any time at weekends?

Additionally we would like to find out information on a number of other points:

- What is the best way to issue passes?
- What are your current travel habits?
- What is your background?

Concessionary Fares Consultation - July 2010

Concessionary Fares Consultation response form

Individual or organisation name and contact details

Name: Winchester City Council
Address: City Offices, Colebrook Street, Winchester, Hampshire..
Postcode: S023 9LJ
Contact phone number or email: ahickman@winchester.gov.uk Tel 01962 848105

Information recorded on this form may be used in computerised records. Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 this information will be treated in a secure and confidential manner.

1. Comments on providing the statutory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme only

<p>In Winchester District as current Travel Concession Authority, two discretions above the Statutory scheme are allowed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Disabled persons companion passes are issued.2. Pass holders are permitted to use the concessions from 9am rather than 9.30am. <p>Loss of these discretions would be unfortunate and would have impacts on established travel habits and patterns.</p> <p>The 9am scheme start was introduced in response to the needs of users particularly where bus services are sparse and a bus before 9.30am may be the only option to reach a certain destination or appointment.</p> <p>A further discretionary element of the scheme, which the City Council currently allows, is for disabled persons to be issued with a concessionary travel pass for travelling companions. This increases the cost paid in reimbursement to bus companies but is considered very important in order to assist disabled persons to travel. Currently around 42 companion passes are issued in Winchester District. Loss of this aspect of the scheme would have serious impacts on those people who require a companion in order to be able to travel on buses often to reach important services.</p>
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Concessionary Fares Consultation - July 2010

2. If sufficient funding is available what priorities should we consider as additional discretionary enhancements should your travel requirements not be met with a bus pass allowing free travel between 0930 and 2300 and at any time at weekends?"

Please put your preference in priority order below and outline the travel need it is trying to address (i.e I have no access to bus services, or I need to travel before 0900 etc)

Priority 1: Allowing free travel from 9am.

This discretion would allow users to access services and appointments particularly where bus services are infrequent and a bus before 9.30am may be the only option to reach a certain destination or appointment. An alternative to a 9am start for the scheme may be to consider adopting a 9.30am arrival time at destination if the current Winchester City Council discretionary 9am start time cannot be maintained within the new arrangements.

Note that buses from further points in the district may take up to an hour to reach their destination, and some routes have only hourly or even two hourly service..

It would not result in additional journeys, and would still come within the 'off peak' period after the school and commuter rush.

Priority 2: Funding disabled person's companion passes.

Loss of this aspect of the scheme would have serious impacts on those people who require a companion in order to be able to travel on buses often to reach important services. Although it is listed as priority 2 it is still seen as equally important as the 9am start in all aspects except for the fact that it benefits less people.

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Priority 3: Addressing needs of residents who do not benefit from bus services.

We would ask HCC to consider what alternatives might be offered county wide to address the needs of those who do not have access to bus services.

What is the best way to apply for and issue passes in future?

Where do you go for the following services and how do you travel there?

	Where do you travel to for this service?	How do you get there? E.g. own car, lift from friends or family, train, bus, taxi, walk, cycle.	How often do you travel there?
Hospital			
Doctors			
Dentist			

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Food shopping			
Social trips			
School/College			
Work			
Post Office			
Library			
Other:			

Are there any journeys that you would like to make but are currently unable to, owing to a lack of transport?

Destination you would like to travel to	Why do you want to travel to this destination? E.g. health, shopping, leisure	How often would you like to travel? E.g. daily, twice a week

Do you have any general comments on the provision of transport services in your area?

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Monitoring form

Data Protection Act 1998

To monitor the effectiveness of this consultation and help us complete our Equalities Impact Assessment on the proposed changes we need to record certain personal details about the people who respond. It is for this reason ONLY that you are asked to provide the information below which will be treated in the strictest confidence and used only for statistical purposes. We asking for this information in order to ensure that as many people as possible have a say.

Information recorded on this form may be used in computerised records. Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 this information will be treated in a secure and confidential manner.

The completion of this part of the form is purely voluntary and optional

Are you? Male Female

What is your age

How would you best describe your ethnic origin?

- | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White – British / Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed | <input type="checkbox"/> Black |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> White – Eastern European | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White – Rest of World | <input type="checkbox"/> White – Western European | |

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) defines a disabled person as “a person who has or has had in the past a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”

Under this definition, do you consider yourself to be disabled? Yes No

What is your sexual orientation?

What is your faith background?

Please complete and return this form by **31 August 2010 in hard copy or electronically** to the address below.

For further information or if you need any help in completing this form please contact Mark Miller, Concessionary Fares Project Manager, Passenger Transport, Environment, Hampshire County Council, The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 8UD
Telephone: 01962 845077 or **email:** mark.miller2@hants.gov.uk

Thank you for taking part in this consultation.