

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT		
SUBJECT:	CONCESSIONARY FARES SCHEME 2013/14		
DATE OF DECISION:	19 FEBRUARY 2013		
REPORT OF:	SENIOR MANAGER PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND SUSTAINABILITY		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
Not Applicable

BRIEF SUMMARY

The report seeks agreement on the local enhancements and the reimbursement rate to bus operators for the Concessionary Fares Scheme 2013 -14.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) To approve the scheme in Appendix 1 subject to the calculations in recommendation (ii) below;
- (ii) To reimburse bus operators at 48p in the £ plus 6.9p marginal capacity operating cost per trip and 0.2p per journey administration fee, in accordance with the guidance given by the Department for Transport (DfT) using their reimbursement calculator;
- (iii) To withdraw the issue of local disabled persons bus pass;
- (iv) To retain the ticket types used in the calculation of the average fare to include day tickets, carnet (multi-trip), single and returns as per the guidance issued by the DfT;
- (v) To delegate authority to the Senior Manager Planning, Transport and Sustainability to enter into arrangements with some smaller operators to agree reimbursement at a fixed rate in accordance with the DfT guidance for 2013/14;
- (iv) To delegate authority to the Senior Manager Planning, Transport and Sustainability in consultation with the Executive Director of Corporate Services following consultation with the Cabinet Members for Environment & Transport and Resources to do anything necessary to implement the Concessionary fares Scheme 2013 including but

not limited to the service of statutory Notices (including Variation and Participation Notices) and participation in and determination of any appeal against the proposed Concessionary Fares Scheme or reimbursement arrangements for 2013/14.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To enable the Council to comply with the statutory requirement to serve bus operators with a minimum 28 days notice of the Concessionary Fares Scheme for 2013-14. This includes the local enhancements to the Scheme and the rates of reimbursement that will apply. The changes to the local enhancements proposed are part of the Council's need to provide a scheme within the budget available.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- .2. The option of reducing the operating hours to the minimum permitted (0930 – 2300 Monday to Friday) together with the withdrawal of companion passes was considered but rejected, as it is unlikely to save much if any money.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

3. The Council is required by law to give bus operators 28 days notice of the scheme and reimbursement rate that will apply. The bus operators have been given four months notice period of the proposed scheme to allow them to make representations to the Council in relation to the Scheme methodology, content and reimbursement arrangements before a final decision is made. This report confirms the reimbursement rates for operators (as opposed to the methodology to be used) and the local enhancements above the statutory minimum the Council will provide. Bus operators then have 56 days from the start of the scheme to appeal to the Secretary of State on the proposed reimbursement arrangements. No comments have been received so far.
4. Under the current scheme, the eligibility criteria for disabled people is more generous than that required by the national statutory scheme. The Council currently provides a discretionary local concession pass for those disabled people who do not meet the national concession criteria which requires people to be in receipt of higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) from the Department of Work and Pensions. Those in receipt of the lower rate mobility component or any rate of care component of DLA, currently qualify for a local bus pass. This pass allows free travel within the City boundary only. This report removes the issue of the local disabled persons bus pass from the Scheme as set out in the Council's budget proposals published in December. Pre issued passes will continue to allow travel until the pass expires by the end of 2014. A large number of pass holders will still be able to qualify for a pass but will need to provide additional proof of qualification for a national pass. The proposals were included in the Council budget consultation process. No comments have been received on the withdrawal of the local pass in response to that consultation exercise. An Equality Impact Assessment was completed and is attached and considered at Appendix 2.
5. In order to calculate the reimbursement rate the Council uses the DfT reimbursement calculator. Data is input using last year's data for usage, single, day and weekly tickets, trip length, nominal fare change since 2005/6,

which then calculates the reimbursement rate for the following financial year and the margin capacity costs. For small operators who run very few services it is possible to agree a fixed figure to reduce administration costs to the Council and the operator. In addition, operators are paid 0.2p for administration.

6. The Council will continue with the provision of free travel from 0900 until 0030 on weekdays for Southampton residents in recognition of the desirability of assisting local people to access services and facilities provided for residents outside of the core operation hours of the national scheme. For other pass holders the statutory minimum travel times of 0930 to 2300 will apply. There are no restrictions on weekend travel for all pass holders. Blind persons will continue to qualify for free travel at any time. Those people who are unable to travel alone and provide evidence of this can obtain a companion pass.
7. Appendix 1 shows the details of the scheme for 2013/14.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

8. It is estimated that the cost of the concessionary fares scheme can be met from the revenue budget of £4,830,800 in 2013/14 as contained within the Environment and Transport Portfolio. Revised guidance from the Department for Transport has been issued and this has been used to calculate the reimbursement rate of 48.0 p in the £, a marginal capacity operating cost per trip of 6.9p and a journey administration fee of 0.2 p.

Property/Other

9. There are no property or other implications.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

10. Concessionary fares are governed by the Transport Acts of 1985 and 2000, and the Concessionary Fares Act of 2007. If it is agreed that in the future, no enhancements over and above the statutory minimum will be offered, then the 1985 Act does not apply.

Other Legal Implications:

11. The provision of a concessionary travel scheme in accordance with the national minimum is a statutory duty. A discretionary power exists to provide a scheme that extends entitlement of services over and above the national minimum. Any discretion must be exercised in a reasonable manner. Any scheme must be made having regard to the Human Rights Act 1998 (with which any national minimum scheme will be deemed to comply) and the Equality Act 2010. The Council is satisfied that the reversion to the national criteria in respect of disabled users is wholly in accordance with equalities legislation. It is a statutory requirement that the Council has to publish details of its final scheme 28 days in advance of the scheme introduction on 1 April 2013.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

12. The provision of concessionary travel accords with the policy direction of the City's adopted Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2016 by helping the Council meet its targets for increasing the use of sustainable transport modes (and bus travel in particular) and also increasing accessibility and promoting social inclusion.

KEY DECISION? Yes

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1.	Proposed 2013/14 Scheme details
2.	Equalities Impact Assessment

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
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Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out.	Yes
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Other Background Documents

Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at: See appendix 2

Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
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1.	None	
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