

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

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| Decision Maker: | Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment |
| Date: | 8 October 2020 |
| Title: | Publication of the Concessionary Travel Scheme 2021-2022 |
| Report From: | Director of Economy, Transport and Environment |

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to provide the range of concessions detailed for the Hampshire Concessionary Travel Scheme for 2021/2022 (“the Scheme”).

Recommendations

2. That approval be given to provide the range of concessions detailed within this report for the Hampshire Concessionary Travel Scheme for 2021/2022 and that this forms the basis of the draft scheme to be published on 1 December 2020.
3. That authority is delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment, in consultation with the Executive Member for Economy, Transport, and Environment, to make minor variations to the final Scheme as may be required, and to implement the Scheme.

Executive Summary

4. This paper seeks to set out the background to the scheme and proposes the scheme for 2021/2022.

Contextual information

5. This report concerns the administration of concessionary travel, for which the County Council acquired responsibility in April 2011.
6. The published scheme is updated annually, and the County Council is required to publish details of its draft Concessionary Travel Scheme for 2021/2022 by 1 December 2020. The final details of the scheme have to be published by 3 March 2021, 28 days prior to implementation on 1 April 2021. This report seeks approval from the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment for the range of concessions as here detailed.
7. 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 09:30 and

23:00 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.

8. 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 some community transport services and Taxishare schemes. These discretionary elements were included in the scheme, which was approved by the Executive Member for Environment on 19 November 2010.
9. 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;
 - **25% Discount** on Community Transport Services such as Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go providing that the pass holder meets all relevant eligibility criteria.
 - **Alternative Discretions** – Travel vouchers worth £36 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.
10. As part of its response to Covid-19, the County Council temporarily extended the hours of operation of the Hampshire ENCTS bus pass scheme from its current 09:30 to 23:00 on weekdays, and at all times at weekends and on public holidays, to all days and all times. This change, which was introduced on 20 March 2020, enabled those people with an older person’s bus pass to access special ‘older peoples’ early opening hours both to reduce social contact and obtain high demand products. The temporary extension was removed on 15 June 2020 to help commercial operators manage the increased patronage resulting from the easing of the lockdown restrictions. This helped key workers who were returning to work make their journeys more easily given the social distancing requirements which services were operating to.

Equalities

11. The proposals in this report 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. Under the proposals in this report, Scheme eligibility and the concessions offered for 2021/22 remain unchanged from eligibility in the current year and therefore there will be no further impact upon those groups with protected characteristics.

Finance

12. The overall size of the budget is £13.2 million. This covers the cost of issuing concessions and reimbursement costs to operators for concessionary travel. Operator re-imburement payments account for the most significant part of the budget and are made by the County Council as advised by consultants who process these claims from operators in accordance with the scheme detail on behalf of the Council. The proposed scheme is affordable from within the current budget provision.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

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

Other Significant Links

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| Links to previous Member decisions: | |
| <u>Title</u> Title Date Publication of the Concessionary Travel Scheme 2019/20 | <u>Date</u> 12 November 2019 |
| Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives | |
| <u>Title</u> Date 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.)

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| <u>Document</u> | <u>Location</u> |
| None | |

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

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 by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

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

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- 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.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

Under the proposals in this report, Scheme eligibility and the concessions offered for 2021/22 remain unchanged from eligibility in the current year and therefore there will be no further impact upon those groups with protected characteristics.