

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Decision Record

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment
<b>Date:</b>	11 February 2021
<b>Title:</b>	Concessionary Older Person Bus Pass Renewals
<b>Report From:</b>	Community Transport and Contracts Manager

**Contact name:** Kevin Ings

**Tel:** 0370 779 2621

**Email:** Kevin.ings@hants.gov.uk

### 1. The decision:

- 1.1 That a temporary change to the Concessionary Travel Scheme administered by Hampshire County Council be approved to change the automatic renewal of Older Person's Concessionary Bus Passes from those used in the last 12 months to 24 months as part of the Council's Covid-19 response measures.
- 1.2 To review the temporary change as part of preparing the scheme details for 2022/23 and in any event reinstate the 12 month renewal threshold for Older Person's Concessionary Bus Passes when it is clear that bus operations and usage have normalised, travel restrictions and social distancing guidance have been relaxed at a national level and the travel patterns of pass holders have stabilised if this happens first.

### 2. Reason(s) for the decision:

- 2.1 The proposal will allow people using an Older Person's Concessionary Bus Pass on passenger transport services in the twelve months prior to Covid-19 to automatically receive their replacement bus pass instead of having to request this even though they may not have used this on services since the start of the pandemic. They will then have a valid bus pass to use when they return to these services. The decision will contribute to the strategic objective of the County Council by helping older people to live safe, healthy and independent lives.

### 3. Other options considered and rejected:

- 3.1 Option 1: The arrangements for automatically renewing Older Person's Concessionary Bus Passes could remain unchanged. This would result in people who have not used their bus pass in the 12 months prior to their renewal date not receiving an automatic replacement bus pass. Given that journeys by Older Person's Concessionary Bus Pass holders on local bus

services are significantly below pre Covid-19 levels this could result in a large number of people having to request a replacement bus pass. This would provide a lower level of customer care and place additional pressures on customer facing staff resources.

**4. Conflicts of interest:**

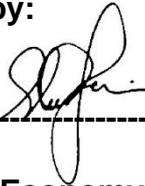
4.1 Conflicts of interest declared by the decision-maker:

**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:**

**12 February 2021**

**Director of Economy, Transport and Environment  
Stuart Jarvis**

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment
<b>Date:</b>	Xx February 2021
<b>Title:</b>	Concessionary Older Person Bus Pass Renewals
<b>Report From:</b>	Community Transport and Contracts Manager

**Contact name:** Kevin Ings

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### Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek a temporary change to the Concessionary Travel Scheme which will change the automatic renewal of Older Person's Concessionary Bus Passes from those used in the last 12 months to 24 months.

### Recommendation(s)

2. That a temporary change to the Concessionary Travel Scheme administered by Hampshire County Council be approved to change the automatic renewal of Older Person's Concessionary Bus Passes from those used in the last 12 months to 24 months as part of the Council's Covid-19 response measures.
3. To review the temporary change as part of preparing the scheme details for 2022/23 and in any event reinstate the 12 month renewal threshold for Older Person's Bus Passes when it is clear that bus operations and usage have normalised, travel restrictions and social distancing guidance have been relaxed at a national level and the travel patterns of pass holders have stabilised if this happens first.

### Executive Summary

4. This report seeks approval for a temporary change to the Concessionary Travel Scheme administered by Hampshire County Council which will allow the automatic renewal of Older Person's Concessionary Bus Passes which have been used in the 24 months prior to their renewal date instead of the current 12 month threshold. As many of these pass holders are not currently travelling on local bus services due to Covid-19 this will ensure that they still automatically receive their replacement bus pass when this is due instead of having to request one. They will then have a valid bus pass to use when they return to these services.

## Contextual Information

5. The Older Person's Concessionary Bus Pass is typically issued for a period of five years. Upon expiry, those bus passes used within the previous 12 months are automatically reissued to the user. The policy for the automatic renewal of Older Persons Concessionary Bus Passes has been in place since 1 January 2017. There is no impact upon a person's entitlement to a pass, and anyone who contacts the County Council to say that they have not received a new pass is issued with one. Disabled Person's Concessionary Bus Passes continue to be renewed automatically, as they are not based on use, subject to any appropriate review of eligibility.
6. This policy reduces the unnecessary cost of issuing passes to people who have moved away from the area, distress to relatives where a passholder has died, and to avoid the risk of fraud if a pass is delivered to an address where the passholder no longer lives.
7. There has been a significant decline in local bus patronage by Concessionary Bus Pass holders during the pandemic. If the current autorenewal policy were to remain unchanged and the current trend continues then there is likely to be a significant reduction in the number of Older Person's Concessionary Bus Passes automatically issued over the next twelve months with initial estimates putting this reduction at around 63%. The implications are that when pass holders return to using local bus services they will find their bus pass is out of date and will have to contact the Council to request a new bus pass. This will negatively affect significant numbers of customers and place additional pressures on customer facing staff resources.
8. A temporary change to the Concessionary Travel Scheme which will change the automatic renewal of Older Person's Concessionary Bus Passes from those used in the last 12 months to 24 months is therefore proposed. This will capture the usage of bus pass holders who were regular service users in the year prior to Covid-19 and ensure that these people have a valid bus pass to use when they return to these services. It will also ensure that older people have a valid bus pass to use for travel to a vaccination appointment if they have no other transport options.
9. Extending the automatic renewal period could result in an increase in the number of family relatives receiving a bus pass for a deceased individual given the severity of Covid-19 on older people. The risk of this is managed and reduced through a number of regular data cleansing exercises involving the use of information from Tell Us Once (daily), Royal Mail (annually before the largest number of renewals) and the government's National Fraud Initiative (biennial).
10. This temporary change will be reviewed as part of preparing the scheme details for 2022/23 in October 2021 and in any event kept under review and the 12 month renewal threshold for Older Person's Concessionary Bus Passes reinstated when it is clear that bus operations and usage have

normalised, travel restrictions and social distancing guidance has been relaxed at a national level and the travel patterns of pass holders have stabilised if this happens first.

7. In the period up to 31 March 2022 it is currently estimated that nearly 32,000 Older Person's Concessionary Bus Passes from some 200,000 passes currently in circulation will become due for renewal. Under the current approach many of these 32,000 passes would not be automatically renewed due to the lower number of journeys being made by bus pass holders. There are no additional costs in making this change.

### **Consultation and Equalities**

9. 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 Council's equality objectives. The proposal will provide a temporary extension which will change the automatic renewal of Older Person's Concessionary Bus Passes from those used in the last 12 months to 24 months. Given Covid-19 this is a positive change ensuring that many more older people will still automatically receive a replacement pass over the next year instead of having to contact the County Council to request one. The use of the Disabled Person's Concessionary Bus Pass, which is not based on use, remains unchanged. There should therefore be a positive impact upon those pass holders with protected characteristics from this action. However, there could be a small indirect negative impact on family relatives receiving a bus pass for a deceased individual.

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

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

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>	
<u>Title</u> Publication of the Concessionary Travel Scheme 2020-2021  Reports to Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment	<u>Date</u> 12 November 2019
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

<b>Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents</b>	
<p>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.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	