

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Executive Decision Record

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Highways Operations
Date:	23 September 2021
Title:	Concessionary Fares and Contract Payments for Local Bus, Taxi-share and Community Transport Operators
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

Contact name: Kevin Ings and Lisa Cook

Tel: 07562 434680
0370 7792621

Email: lisa.cook@hants.gov.uk
kevin.ings@hants.gov.uk

1. The decision:

- 1.1. That the Executive Member for Highways Operations gives authority to continue to make concessionary fares reimbursement payments to local bus operators from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 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 published on 5 August 2021, to be met from existing budgets.
- 1.2. That the Executive Member for Highways Operations gives authority to extend the current policy of making 100% contract payments along with concessionary fares payments to Community Transport operators based on the average payments which operators received for 2019/20 for the period 1 October 2021 until 31 March 2022, to be met from existing budgets.
- 1.3. That the Executive Member for Highways Operations gives authority to amend the current policy of paying local bus and Taxishare operators 100% of contract payments irrespective of the service they operate, to a business-as-usual approach, i.e. operators are paid for the level of contracted services they operate.
- 1.4. That authority be delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment, in consultation with the Executive Member for Highways Operations, to make amendments to the payment arrangements before 31 March 2022 if the advice from central government on payments to operators changes.
- 1.5. That authority be delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment, in consultation with the Executive Member for Highways Operations, to make amendments to the payment arrangements beyond the 31 March 2022 as necessary in accordance with Government guidance, subject to costs being within allocated budgets.

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 11 March 2021 on the same subject. The current arrangements are due to expire on 30 September 2021.
- 2.2. The proposals 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.
- 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 decision is in line with the latest DfT guidance on payments to transport operators.
- 2.6. By continuing the policy of paying 100% contract payments and concessionary fares payments to Community Transport operators, the County Council is supporting the short-term survival of 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:

23 September 2021

**Executive Member for Highways Operations
Councillor Russell Oppenheimer**