

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Environment and Transport
Date:	14 November 2017
Title:	Publication of the Hampshire Concessionary Travel Scheme 2018-19
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to seek approval to continue the current range of concessions contained within the Hampshire Concessionary Travel Scheme for 2018/2019.
- 1.2. This paper seeks to set out the background to the scheme and proposes the scheme for 2018/2019. It also reviews the changes made to the renewal arrangements for the Older Person's Concessionary Pass during 2017/18.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. This report concerns the administration of concessionary travel, for which the County Council acquired responsibility in April 2011, and is distinct from a proposal by the County Council to lobby Central Government to change legislation in order to introduce a nominal charge for pass renewal, and to run a 'concessionary fare pilot scheme', post 2019, which would involve a nominal charge for concessionary fares to reinvest and sustain services going forward.
- 2.2. Hampshire County Council acquired responsibility for the administration of concessionary travel in April 2011.
- 2.3. The published scheme is updated annually and the County Council is required to publish details of its draft Concessionary Travel Scheme for 2018/2019 by 1 December 2017. The final details of the scheme have to be published by 3 March 2018, 28 days prior to implementation on 1 April 2018. This report seeks approval from the Executive Member for Environment and Transport to continue the current range of concessions.
- 2.4. The statutory scheme provides for free travel between 0930 and 2300 on Monday to Friday, and at all times on weekends and on Bank Holidays, for

eligible older and disabled persons. The County Council has not been notified of any changes. Reimbursement rates are calculated by the retained consultants based on Department for Transport (DfT) guidance.

2.5. 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. These were included in the scheme which was approved by the Executive Member for Environment on 19 November 2010.

2.6. The enhancements to the statutory scheme are as follows:

- **FREE travel at all times for Disabled Hampshire Pass holders** 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;
- **Half Fare Travel** on Community Transport Services such as Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go providing that the pass holder meets all relevant eligibility criteria; and
- **ALTERNATIVE DISCRETIONS** - Travel vouchers worth £32 are offered as an alternative concession for those entitled to a disabled person’s pass. These are only valid on participating taxis, voluntary car schemes, Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go.

3. Renewal Arrangements for the Older Persons Concessionary Pass

3.1. Older Person’s Concessionary Passes are initially awarded for up to five years after which time they are subject to automatic renewal. Prior to renewal a number of safeguarding checks are undertaken to try to ensure that the County Council does not incur the cost of issuing passes to people who have either died or moved away from the area. Despite these checks a significant number of re-issued passes are still returned to the council.

3.2. In order to reduce the unnecessary cost of passes which are no longer being used, it was agreed for the 2017/18 scheme that an Older Person’s Concessionary Pass would not be issued automatically if it was not being used. Approval was given not to automatically renew a pass if it had not been used in the six months prior to its renewal. So far this has only been applied where passes have not been used in the previous 12 months, as analysis of renewals in March 2017 suggested that a larger than average number of pass holders would be affected, and at that time the anticipated resulting queries could not be accommodated with ease. It is recommended that six months continues to be the target, to be met once processes are established to accommodate resulting enquiries within acceptable timeframes and standards.

However, regardless of the non-usage period applied, there is no impact upon a person's entitlement to a pass, and anyone who contacts the council to say they have not received their new pass is issued with one. The change came into effect for renewals after 1 January 2017.

- 3.3. Some 40,000 passes were due for renewal in March 2017 and of these 30,000 were old format cards for which no journey information was available. 10,000 cards provided usage information, and of these 3,355 passes were not automatically renewed due to lack of card usage. To date 1,270 (38%) passes have subsequently been requested by those people who did not automatically have their Older Person's pass renewed. A further 34,000 passes due to be renewed in the months before the next bulk renewal in March 2018 are being dealt with in the same manner.
- 3.4. The cost to the council of issuing a pass and keeping it active for five years with no travel is £2.40. The change of process has generated an initial saving of £5,000 for the County Council in production costs as well as a further saving of £5 per pass where passes are returned by post and records updated manually. This is in addition to any distress avoided for relatives where the passholder has died, and also reduces the risk of potential fraud where a pass is used by someone else.
- 3.5. There are currently a further 45,000 passes due for renewal in March 2018, and it is proposed that approval to not automatically renew an Older Person's Concessionary Pass which has not been used during the previous six months should continue for the 2018/19 scheme. Disabled Persons' passes continue to be renewed automatically subject to any appropriate review of eligibility.

4. Ensuring that passes are used properly

- 4.1. During 2018, Hampshire County Council will introduce electronic hotlisting of invalid passes to reduce the risk of improper use and the resultant cost to the County Council. A misused pass could cost the County Council £568 in a year.
- 4.2. Bus passes will be hotlisted only in the following circumstances:
 - the original pass has been reported either lost or stolen and been replaced with a new pass, or
 - a passholder has been written to and the letter has been returned by the Royal Mail indicating the pass holder has moved address, or
 - a passholder has been written to, asking for up to date proof of eligibility or to return the pass and they have not done so.
- 4.3. An invalid pass will be withdrawn and retained by the bus driver. If a pass is withdrawn and the driver is satisfied that the user is the person identified on the pass, the user will still be able to make that journey. However,

subsequent journeys will need to be paid for until either the correct pass is used or a new valid pass obtained.

- 4.4 Currently invalid passes are withdrawn when identified by bus company staff, and this change would utilise the Smartcard capability of the new ticket machines.

5. Finance

- 5.1. The overall size of the budget is £13.9 million. This covers the cost of issuing concessions and reimbursement costs to operators for concessionary travel. The proposal in this report is to continue the current scheme and is expected to have a cumulative saving of at least £25,000 in production costs over the five year pass renewal cycle, but a clearer picture will appear as the cycle progresses.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1. That the Hampshire Concessionary Travel Scheme for 2018/2019 maintains the range of concessions currently provided, and that this forms the basis of the draft scheme published on 1 December 2017.
- 6.2. That non-automatic renewal of Older Person's Concessionary Passes which have not been used in the six months prior to their expiry shall continue to be the target for the 2018/19 Hampshire Concessionary Travel Scheme, but on request an Older Person will be issued with a pass for the 2018/19 Scheme.
- 6.3. That authority is delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment to make any variations to the final scheme from April 2018 that may be required, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

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

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u> Executive Member – Environment Agenda item 1: Concessionary Fares	<u>Date</u> 19 November 2010
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u> 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.)

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

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. 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 under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

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

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

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

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. As the proposals will not amend existing eligibility, there should be no impact upon those groups with protected characteristics.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. It is considered that the decision will have no impact on crime and disorder.

3. Climate Change:

a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

The concessionary scheme enables eligible residents to use public transport as an alternative to the private car.

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

The concessionary scheme supports use of public transport which minimises carbon emissions.