

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 9 August 2018

Report of the Head of Service Public & Integrated Transport

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Discretionary Concessionary Travel - Results of Public Consultation

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

At its meeting on 8 February 2018, Full Council approved an increase in the charge made to disabled NoWcard holders for travel before 0930 Monday to Friday from 50p to £1, subject to consultation, with the outcome to the consultation to be presented to Cabinet for final approval.

Consultation has now been carried out, an equality analysis has been undertaken and this report presents the findings.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order C19 have been complied with.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Approve an increase to the charge made to disabled NoWcard holders for travel before 9.30a.m. Monday to Friday from 50p to £1.
- (ii) Authorise officers to amend the Joint Concessionary Travel Scheme and liaise with bus operators to ensure that they make the necessary arrangements for collection of the fare.

Background and Advice

The county council operates the mandatory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme. In Lancashire this scheme is called NoWcard. The NoWcard is a

partnership between the authorities of Lancashire County Council, Cumbria County Council, Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council.

The NoWcard scheme allows free bus travel (and free travel on Blackpool Tramway to Wyre residents) for NoWcard pass holders from Mondays to Fridays between 9.30am and 11pm and all day on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays.

As a discretionary enhancement to the national scheme the county council, Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council also allow holders of a disabled person's NoWcard to travel at a 50p flat fare on journeys on local bus/tram services that begin before 9.30am on Mondays to Fridays.

There has been no increase of the 50p charge for over 10 years.

On 8 February 2018, Full Council agreed to consult on proposals to increase this charge from 50p to £1 with the outcome to the consultation to be presented to Cabinet for final approval. The consultation has now been carried out and an analysis of it is available on the council's [website](#). The key findings are summarised below.

Consultations

The public consultation ran for eight weeks between 26 March 2018 and 21 May 2018. In total, 179 completed questionnaires were returned (48 paper questionnaires and 131 online questionnaires).

Paper questionnaires were made available at libraries and transport interchanges. The consultation questionnaire was also available online at www.lancashire.gov.uk in PDF, Microsoft Word, large print and easy read versions. Some local forums were also invited to take part in the consultation and different versions (braille and audio CDs) were made available to them. Assisted completion of questionnaires was available on request.

Over 400 stakeholders who may have interests in the proposals or may be potentially affected were emailed at the beginning of the consultation to inform them that the consultation had started. The consultation was also publicised via press release, posters at libraries and interchanges, Twitter and Facebook.

The main section of the questionnaire covered two topics: respondent's use of disabled person's NoWcards and respondent's views on the proposal to increase the flat fare per journey for disabled person's NoWcard from 50p to £1 for travel before 9.30am from Monday and Friday.

Key findings summarised:

- 53% of respondents said that they have a current disabled person's NoWcard.
- Of those respondents who said that they had used their disabled person's NoWcard in the last 12 months, 29% said that they had used their NoWcard for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday on every or most days in the last 12 months. About a further 16% said that they used their NoWcard for

travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday a few times a week in the last 12 months.

- Of those respondents who said that they had used their disabled person's NoWcard for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday in the last 12 months, 58% said that they generally spent 50p each day on their disabled person's NoWcard for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday.
- Nine respondents stated they made more than one bus journey prior to 9:30am which would greatly increase their fare.
- Respondents who said that they had used their disabled person's NoWcard for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday in the last 12 months were then asked why they travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday using their disabled person's NoWcard. The most common responses to this question were for medical appointments (64%), for leisure (31%) and for shopping (30%).
- 49% of respondents disagreed with the proposal and 42% agreed with it.
- Respondents were asked to explain how the proposal would affect them. 25% said it would have little or no affect, 19% said money is tight/less money for other essentials.
- 20% said that if the proposal happened it would mean that they would travel less often by bus/tram.
- 38% said it is important for them to be able to pay their bus fare with one coin.
- When respondents were asked if there was anything else that they thought we needed to consider or that the proposal could do differently, 18% proposed an alternative way of changing the NoWcard scheme (using the NoWcard as an electronic purse so that coins are no longer needed).

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Disabled NoWcard holders who rely upon bus travel before 9.30am will need to pay £1 instead of 50p. The 50p charge has not been increased for over 10 years.

Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council also operate a discretionary 50p charge as part of the Joint Lancashire Concessionary Travel Scheme. For journeys commencing in Lancashire the charge will be £1 and for journeys starting in Blackburn and Blackpool the fare will remain at 50p for pass holders. A communication plan will be required for bus operators and pass holders to ensure this is made clear for users.

The reconfiguration of commercial bus operator's ticket machines will be required, to take account of the new fare.

Risk management

No significant risks have been identified.

Financial

The increase in charge detailed in this report will achieve savings of £43,000 in 2018/19 and a further £44,000 in 2019/20, therefore £87,000 in total. These savings have been built into the budget for both 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Time may be required by bus operators to update their ticket machines. This may create some delay in achieving savings.

There may be a cost of up to £5,000 associated with the reconfiguration of the bus ticket machines by the bus operators, which it is anticipated will be funded from within the Concessionary Travel budget for 2018/19.

Legal

Changes will need to be made to the Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council Joint Concessionary Travel Scheme.

Equality and Cohesion

The Equality Analysis is attached at Appendix 'A'. In summary:

- The proposal will make it more expensive for disabled people to travel before 9.30am. Consultation revealed only a small percentage of holders tend to travel at these times. However, for those who do need to travel before 9:30 a.m. to begin work, fulfil college or university timetables or attend medical appointments the proposal may significantly adversely affect their ability to participate in public life and may not assist in advancing equality of opportunity for this group. Disabled people are twice as likely to be unemployed as non-disabled people and are less likely to have qualifications than non-disabled people. If individuals were to feel it was no longer viable to attend college or university or to remain in work, these disadvantages would increase.
- Any effects will particularly be felt by those making a journey which requires more than one bus trip prior to 9:30am. Although occurrences of this were quite low amongst consultees (9 consultees), it must be recognised that the adverse impact upon this group will be significant.
- A number of consultation respondents did feel that the proposal discriminated against disabled people unfairly. However, it should perhaps be noted that holders of older persons NoWcards pay full fare before 9:30 a.m. and these fares have increased substantially since 2008 and most will have risen by more than 50p per journey.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
Consultation Responses	2018	Liz McClarty/ (01772) 532423
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
NA		