

AT A MEETING of the ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION SELECT COMMITTEE of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Wednesday, 17 November 2010.

**PRESENT**

Chairman:  
p Councillor Sharyn Wheale

Vice-Chairman:  
p Councillor Geoff Hockley

Councillors:

p Ian Beagley	p Rupert Kyrle
p Adam Carew	p Steve Rippon-Swaine
a Vaughan Clarke	a Elaine Still
p Mark Cooper	p Marilyn Tucker
p Edward Heron	a Alan Weeks

Councillor Mel Kendal, Executive Member for Environment was also in attendance.

56. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors Elaine Still and Alan Weeks gave their apologies.

57. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that, where they believed they had a personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should normally at the time of the debate declare their interest, and having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the County Council's Code of Conduct, consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 12 of the Code.

58. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Committee held on 5 October 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Arising thereon:

Natural England had responded to questions forwarded

to them by the Committee, following their presentation to members at the last meeting. Natural England had also written to the Chairman offering a half-day visit to see their work in action. It was agreed that the Chairman and the Shadow Spokesperson for Environment, Councillor Adam Carew, attend this on the Committee's behalf.

59. **CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chairman reminded those present that the Environment & Transportation Select Committee was a meeting in public and not a public meeting.

Members were reminded that the extraordinary meeting was being held in order to hear the details of the Hampshire Concessionary Fares Scheme, prior to its consideration at the Executive Member for Environment's Decision Day on Friday, 19 November 2010.

Any recommendations made to the Executive Member for Environment regarding the Hampshire Concessionary Fares Scheme would be taken to his meeting in the form of a brief report. Any outcomes would be reported back to the Committee at the next scheduled meeting on 18 January 2011.

60. **DEPUTATION**

The Committee received a deputation from Ms. Rebecca Kennelly of Basingstoke Voluntary Services, requesting that the proposals for the Concessionary Fares Scheme are reconsidered, especially for enhancements in the area of Basingstoke and Deane.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Kennelly for her deputation, informing those present that the members of the Committee would take her points into consideration when proceeding with discussions.

61. **CONCESSIONARY FARES**

The Director of the Environment presented a report to the Committee on the transfer of concessionary fares to the County Council. The members of the Select Committee wished to note their thanks to the officer present for a well written and easily understandable report. Members heard:

(Take in report)

- That the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) was introduced in 2006, which allowed for off-peak bus travel Monday to Friday and all-day bus travel at weekends within district and borough

That the Environment and Transportation Select Committee agrees with the recommendations as set out in paragraphs 8.1 – 8.5 of the Executive Member for Environment's

council boundary areas. In 2008 the scheme extended to allow for travel throughout England.

- That concessionary fares were in existence prior to 2006, with evidence of some areas distributing travel tokens post-World War I. Some district and borough councils opted to keep such enhancements in place following the publication of the ENCTS in 2006.
- That finances for concessionary fares schemes operated by district and borough councils were, until 2009, based on population figures rather than the numbers of trips taken. As a result, some councils experienced overspend on their schemes due to inequity of funding. Amendments to funding formulae were made in 2009, and, following a national consultation by the previous government, a decision was taken to passport concessionary fares schemes to upper-tier authorities such as Hampshire County Council.
- That currently the concessionary fares schemes operated in district and borough areas experience a 64% uptake rate for eligible residents. The overall number of passes has seen a 12% increase in the previous year.
- That the new coalition government had released few details on the finance settlement to be received by upper-tier authorities for the operation of concessionary fares schemes, so calculations have been made based on previous funding minus previously given efficiency figures of 12%. It is not yet known if the recently announced comprehensive spending review will further increase efficiencies expected.
- That the public consultation on options for the concessionary fares scheme in Hampshire, which focused on where any extra funding should be allocated, ran for 12 weeks. This highlighted that all day travel (pre-9.30am) for all and travel tokens/vouchers were the highest priorities for local residents.
- That an Equalities Impact Assessment was completed as part of the planning for the concessionary fare scheme, which emphasised the need for Hampshire County Council to provide a scheme which met the needs of disabled service users. This resulted in a scheme which includes all day travel, companion passes, travel tokens/vouchers and half fare community transport travel for disabled pass holders.
- That the Executive Member for Environment has indicated that the Hampshire Concessionary Fares Scheme will be reviewed once final finance figures have been received from central government in the new year.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- That a recent Department for Communities and Local Government consultation had presented 48 financing options for concessionary fares schemes, so estimates

'Concessionary Fares' Decision Report.

That the Executive Member for Environment writes to all Borough and District Councils in Hampshire to request that their Council offices provide an access point for Hampshire Concessionary Fare Scheme application forms.

That the Environment and Transportation Select Committee conduct a pre-scrutiny of any refreshed Hampshire 'Concessionary Fares' Scheme once the actual level of funding from central government is known.

- couldn't be made on the expected method of budget allocation to the Hampshire Scheme.
- That the suggested Scheme would cost Hampshire County Council £13.275 million per annum, slightly above mid-point on the estimated range of funding expected.
  - That the figures given in the 'Concessionary Fares' report were based on the previous year's use of concessionary fares schemes, rather than 100% take-up across the County.
  - That a half-fare for community transport was suggested as it represented a fair starting point for the Scheme, given that a value could not be given to the budget. This could be reviewed in future.
  - That the minimum age at which individuals are eligible for a concessionary fares pass may be subject to change. Currently those over 60 years of age are able to apply for a concessionary fares pass, in future the lower-age limit could be between 65 and 70.
  - That the ENCTS is not means-tested. The coalition government have ruled out changing this.
  - That placing advertising on travel vouchers and bus passes (smartcards) has been explored but the revenue gained would be minimal (<1% of total cost of the Scheme).
  - That railcards have been explored but would be unaffordable based on funding estimates.
  - That borough and district councils will be able to provide their own enhancements separate to the Hampshire Concessionary Fares Scheme under wellbeing powers, but this would have to be funded locally.
  - That offering travel tokens/vouchers to disabled pass holders across Hampshire would result in a more equitable scheme than exists currently, as not all borough and district areas offer this enhancement.
  - That the concessionary bus pass would be a smartcard with photo ID, which bus drivers would be expected to inspect to ensure fraud is not taking place. Smartcard technology should also allow for lost/stolen cards to be cancelled.
  - That there may be a number of individuals over 60 who could be classed as disabled but, for whatever reason, have not been assessed, and therefore would be unable to access the concessionary fares services most suited to their needs. Close working will be ongoing with Adult Services to identify such cases and provide solutions.
  - That data sharing protocols are already in place with providers of community transport in order to ensure those most likely to be disadvantaged have the most appropriate service available to them.
  - That individuals will be able apply for concessionary fares passes via a telephone hotline, online, in local libraries and through the post.
  - That alternative means of applying for concessionary

fares passes will be available after the launch of the internet self-service tool.

An amendment to the recommendations contained within the 'Concessionary Fares' report was proposed by Councillor Adam Carew and seconded by Councillor Rupert Kyrle. The amendment read:

'That the Environment and Transportation Select Committee recommend to the Executive Member for Environment that the additional enhancements of all day travel and tokens for areas not served by buses be included as part of the Hampshire Concessionary Fares Scheme.'

A recorded vote took place.

For:	Cllr Adam Carew, Cllr Mark Cooper, Cllr Geoff Hockley, Cllr Rupert Kyrle
Against:	Cllr Ian Beagley, Cllr Edward Heron, Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine, Cllr Marilyn Tucker and Cllr Sharyn Wheale

The amendment was not carried.

A recorded vote took place on the recommendations as set out below.

For:	Cllr Ian Beagley, Cllr Mark Cooper, Cllr Geoff Hockley, Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine, Cllr Marilyn Tucker and Cllr Sharyn Wheale
Abstained:	Cllr Adam Carew, Cllr Rupert Kyrle

Councillors Adam Carew and Rupert Kyrle wished it to be formally noted that they strongly agreed with a hybrid of recommendations B and C.

## RESOLVED

- A That the Environment and Transportation Select Committee agrees with the recommendations as set out in paragraphs 8.1 – 8.5 of the Executive Member for Environment's 'Concessionary Fares' Decision Report.
- B That the Executive Member for Environment writes to all Borough and District Councils in Hampshire to request that their Council offices provide an access point for Hampshire Concessionary Fare Scheme application forms.

- C That the Environment and Transportation Select Committee conduct a pre-scrutiny of any refreshed Hampshire 'Concessionary Fares' Scheme once the actual level of funding from central government is known.