

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member - Environment
Date:	19 November 2010
Title:	Concessionary Fares
Reference:	1866
Report From:	Director of Environment

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This paper outlines the progress to date of the project to transfer responsibility for concessionary fares from district or borough councils to Hampshire County Council from 1 April 2011 and asks the Executive Member to decide upon the level of scheme to be offered.
- 1.2. It seeks to set out the background to the project, the financial position to be considered, the future administration of the scheme and to outline the next steps in implementation.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. Since April 2008 those who have reached age 60 (this is now rising in line with the rise in female retirement age) and eligible people with disabilities resident in England have been entitled to a free annual bus pass allowing free off-peak travel on local buses anywhere in England. This scheme, funded directly by central government, has been operated in Hampshire by district councils, known as Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs), with Hampshire County Council acting as scheme administrators.
- 2.2. On 31 March 2010, Parliament approved responsibility for concessionary fares moving to upper tier authorities, such as Hampshire County Council, with effect from April 2011.
- 2.3. In order that the scheme can be published in December, as required by law, and so that pass holders can enjoy uninterrupted use of their passes after 1 April 2011, preparations are already underway and a decision needs to be made now on the level of scheme to be offered.

- 2.4. The statutory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS), as approved by Parliament, provides for free bus travel between 0930 and 2300 hours on weekdays and at any time at weekends. Many district councils have enhanced this to varying degrees, through their own funds, by the provision of discretionary concessions such as tokens or railcards, as well as by extension, in some cases, of the statutory pass scheme to community transport or by allowing bus travel at additional times. Some of these discretions are long established and pre-date the introduction of the national scheme.
- 2.5. The continuation of district variations was considered as an option in the new county-wide scheme but is not recommended. The County Council could only provide local variations if it identified and could evidence a specific local need which would not be met by the ENCTS scheme so that such evidence was sufficient to withstand scrutiny in the context of challenge from residents in other areas. Variations to meet need, based on individual circumstance, such as for disabled users, are proposed on a county-wide basis.
- 2.6. If a district or borough is able to establish evidence of a specific local need which would not be met by the ENCTS scheme they may provide this on a local basis themselves through their Well-being powers or ask Hampshire to administer this as a local enhancement or option on their behalf, subject to meeting the full costs incurred, including administration. The Executive Member is recommended to agree that the County Council should undertake this role, if requested, subject to all costs being met in full.
- 2.7. In 2008/09 Hampshire districts spent £15.1 million on concessionary fares, including administration and overhead costs of around six percent. There are 194,000 passes on issue in Hampshire. In addition, a further 56,000 people opt for discretionary travel benefits such as tokens or railcards as an alternative to the pass.
- 2.8. The statutory and discretionary funding will pass to Hampshire, but the amount which actually comes through to its budget is not certain. This is further complicated by being a "floor authority". Depending on the level of Government finance that is approved, the County Council will have to meet any resulting deficits in funding for whichever scheme it implements from 1 April 2011.
- 2.9. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has recently consulted on general local authority funding options covering the transfer of funding from district or borough councils, but the results of this are not expected until December or January, which is after the necessary Executive Member decision required to enable statutory publication of the scheme on 1 December 2010. Therefore an initial decision is now required before finalisation of the financial support being provided.
- 2.10. A multi-disciplinary project management team has been established to manage this change and a project plan has been developed.

2.11. The key outcomes by 1 April 2011 will include:

- the establishment of a standardised county-wide scheme to bring the varying schemes currently administered by district and borough councils into one consistent system;
- the seamless transfer of systems to ensure continued high levels of customer care;
- the establishment of a fully costed and funded scheme; and
- the commencement of new contracts to provide the back office functions of reimbursement administration and pass production for the new scheme.

2.12. After the new scheme is introduced in April 2011, there may be opportunities to consider further potential efficiencies and developments. These could include the procurement of all administration and customer interface functions in one contract and the development of smartcard features and web-based applications which could be used for a range of County Council services.

2.13. Detailed discussions with district and borough councils, stakeholders and other relevant parties have been undertaken to inform decision-making within the context of significant national and local budgetary constraints, which are unlikely to be fully clarified until the end of this calendar year.

2.14. The Environment & Transportation Select Committee met to review the matter on 5 October 2010, and will meet again on 17 November 2010 to undertake pre-scrutiny of the Executive Member Decision.

2.15. A formal 12 week public consultation programme was undertaken between July and October and included specially arranged Passenger Transport Forums, engagement with Older People's and Learning Disability Forums, Adult Services, Children's Services, community groups, district, parish and neighbouring authorities, transport operators, Corporate Equalities, direct mailings to a sample of current users and a public consultation exercise through Corporate Communications with extensive local media coverage encouraging contact by telephone, internet or post and using a standard consultation response form.

2.16. The consultation sought the views of users and other interested parties on the implications of introducing the basic statutory scheme only whilst seeking their priorities for a range of possible discretionary enhancements which the County Council could consider against emerging funding availability.

2.17. In all, approximately 5,000 consultation forms were issued. A list of formal groups who responded to the consultation appears in Appendix 1.

2.18. Over 1,600 written and electronic replies were received from a large section of individuals, groups, operators and local authorities have been received and these identified the top three priorities in order as:

- Travel before 0930;
- Issue of tokens; and
- Concessions on rail services.

Some 600 responses made travel before 0930 the top priority, 367 identified the issue of tokens and only 69 responses made rail concessions the top priority. Rail is therefore not included in Option 2 but is shown in Option 4.

2.19. At the same time an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) was developed to ensure compliance with all necessary equalities and discrimination guidelines and this is attached as Appendix 2.

2.20. The main sections of the community affected by possible changes to the concessionary fares scheme arising out of the EQIA include:

- (i) People who wish to access services prior to 0930, such as health appointments, paid or voluntary work, travel to places further afield or where services are limited and the main morning journey is before 0930. This section of the community wishes to see the retention of all day travel or at least an earlier start than 0930 as provided with the statutory scheme.
- (ii) People who are eligible to use a bus pass but cannot physically access bus services owing to frailty or disability.
- (iii) People who are eligible to use a bus pass but do not have a bus service available to them, though this is an issue of equity rather than equality.

2.21. The Statutory scheme is for travel by local bus, so does not address these issues. Availability of tokens as well as concessions on Community Transport are established in many parts of Hampshire as discretionary extras and withdrawal of these concessions will raise issues of mobility and independence for current users. Should no means of addressing these concerns be decided upon it is expected that there will be substantial challenge and opposition to the outcome from a large variety of objectors across the county. This is likely to include referrals to the Local Government Ombudsman and other formal challenges on grounds of the responsibility of the County Council under the Equality Act 2010.

2.22. Procurement for scheme administration and pass production has commenced and the results of this exercise will be reported later in the year. An interim one year agreement with district councils for customer interface pass applications from April 2011 was initially explored along with other options. The process will now be carried out by the County Council on a postal and web application basis supported by a telephone help line and with application forms available at local libraries. This will provide a single point of contact and help to realise maximum funding efficiencies. This approach will also retain opportunities to achieve further cost efficiencies if the function

is eventually merged with the scheme administration and pass production renewal procurement due from 2014.

3. Finance, Equalities and Scheme Options

- 3.1. The Local Government grant settlement will not be known until December 2010 or January 2011, which is after the 2011/12 scheme has to be published. Officers have therefore attempted to use best approximations and cost ranges based on current data. The consultation paper from CLG set out a number of different options on how the funding might be redistributed from districts to counties, around a base figure of £15.1 million for Hampshire at 2008/09 figures. The extrapolation of some of these options gave a range of £14.0 to £15.8 million after "floor" damping – the most likely result for Hampshire. The base figure of £15.1 million is used in this report.
- 3.2. In the Pre-Budget Report in Autumn 2009, the then Government indicated its view that the transfer of the scheme to upper tier authorities, together with increased use of smartcards and a review of the reimbursement rates to operators, should result in a 12% efficiency reduction in the cost of concessionary travel. If this is factored into the funding settlement, this could reduce funding to Hampshire for the new scheme by up to £1.8 million (12% of £15.1 million). This would result in funding in the range of £12.3 to £13.9 million.
- 3.3. In addition, the Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010 indicated that central government funding to local authorities will be reduced by 7.1% per annum over the next two years. It is not known what the implications might be in relation to concessionary fares funding, so no allowance has been made in the cost tables in this report.
- 3.4. The cost of the options outlined in paragraph 3.28 range from £12.5 million to £17.08 million per annum, including administration costs of between £500,000 and £870,000 per annum to recognise, in particular, the greater costs involved in the issue and reimbursement of tokens. This compares to the current estimated total costs of £15.1 million per annum which also includes administration costs.
- 3.5. Being a "floor" authority there is currently no budgetary certainty available to predict funding ranges for a new county-wide scheme. At a minimum, the County Council will be liable to fund the statutory ENCTS bus pass scheme at a cost of £12.5 million. In addition, experience from other local authorities indicates there is a further statutory responsibility under Disability and Equality legislation to consider the needs of disabled and frail older residents who are unable to use the bus.
- 3.6. There is a significant risk that Government funding, when decided, will be insufficient to meet any or all of the scheme options under consideration. It is possible to vary a scheme in the future, once funding is confirmed, but starting with a scheme based more closely on statutory requirements, which

could be extended later, would better match the anticipated available funding, and is considered the prudent approach to take at this stage.

- 3.7. The annual increase in the cost of the concessionary fares scheme in Hampshire is predicted in 2011/12 to be 3.98%, which is included in the figures shown. It is expected that similar increases will be seen over future years. Contributory factors to this inflation include: bus fare increases, changes in age eligibility, demographic changes and wider changes in the economy which affect the propensity to travel. This annual growth and inflationary pressure of 3.98% is in excess of the current price inflation allowance of 2.5% built into the medium term financial planning assumptions. This would leave the council with an unfunded annual pressure of approximately 1.5% of the total cost of the Concessionary Travel budget which would equate to between £185,000 and £255,000 per annum depending on the option chosen.
- 3.8. For example, the percentage of pensioners in Hampshire is set to increase from 19.6% (2008 figures) to 22.1% by 2026. This equates to a 1% increase in those eligible for the scheme each year after allowing for changes in retirement age already announced. This demographic pressure is unlikely to be funded as part of the transfer of responsibility to upper tier authorities.
- 3.9. There are currently 194,000 passes on issue in Hampshire, of which 13,000 are classified as passes for the disabled. Of all eligible people, 64% take up the concessionary pass and new passes are currently being issued at the rate of 1,800 a month. The take-up rate could rise if the economic climate tightens and more people see the benefits of free travel.
- 3.10. There is also a potential financial risk to the scheme from current appeals by operators against the existing scheme reimbursement rates. These could require changes to the reimbursement formulae and the total amount paid to operators, as could a requirement to meet cost claims for increased vehicle capacity to cater for the additional patronage generated by the scheme. Currently there are four local appeals in Hampshire from Marchwood Motorways, Bluestar Buses, Stagecoach South and the Wilts and Dorset Bus Company. Costs prior to 1 April 2011 will remain with the district or borough, but ongoing costs will fall on the County Council.
- 3.11. The Department for Transport is currently consulting on how bus operator reimbursement should be calculated. A new approach to reimbursement and a new calculator has been proposed which indicates a lower rate of reimbursement to operators. If adopted, this may reduce funding from Government in line with the 12% savings referred to at 3.2, however operators may appeal against this, or claim extra capacity costs, which would be a cost pressure on the County Council. If bus operator income lowers they may discontinue some routes, leaving residents without transport and putting pressure on the County Council to provide an alternative.

- 3.12. The following table summarises the potential pressures on the concessionary fares budget from 1 April 2011 and for the foreseeable future. Costs are approximations:

Impact	%	Financial risk
Government Efficiencies	12%	up to £1.8 million
Annual scheme inflation	3.98% pa	£470,000 - £645,000 pa
Appeal outcomes	Unknown	Unknown
Formula Grant Reduction	Unknown	Unknown

- 3.13. Bringing together 11 different concessionary fare schemes into one consistent and equitable scheme across the county presents major challenges for new and existing users. Unless local variations are standardised across the county there will inevitably be inequalities and potential claims of discrimination.
- 3.14. District and borough councils offer a range of add-ons or alternatives, from their own funds, which are not part of the statutory scheme, from tokens to railcards and even help with TV licences, as well as enhancements to the pass scheme such as use on Community Transport, car or taxi-shares, the New Forest Tour, Hythe Ferry, companion passes for those unable to travel alone and all day travel on buses. All day travel is generally limited to the district of issue. An outline list of the principal current district concessions is attached as Appendix 3. Continuation of such existing localised variations from 1 April 2011 is not considered appropriate under equality and discrimination legislation and guidelines.
- 3.15. Concessions to military veterans and their dependents have been offered in one district, Rushmoor, but no take-up has been recorded.
- 3.16. Offering the basic statutory scheme would mean that users in all areas would receive a less generous scheme than at present. This is likely to create tensions with district and borough councils and users alike and may lead to challenges under Equalities and Discrimination legislation.
- 3.17. The attention of the Executive Member is drawn to the Equality Act 2010, which requires the authority to take account of the disabilities of disabled persons, even where this means treating them more favourably than others. This was cited by the Local Government Ombudsman report on the decision of Eastleigh Borough Council to withdraw tokens from its concessionary travel scheme (18 June 2010).
- 3.18. The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse

effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The criteria for concessionary travel under the Transport Act 2000, as amended, is shown in Appendix 4

- 3.19. Option 3 at paragraph 3.28 includes additions to the statutory scheme which aims to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and are designed to sustain independent living for residents eligible for concessionary travel, and in particular address the needs of disabled users in an affordable way by targeting support.
- 3.20. Under the current schemes almost 49,000 residents in eight districts choose tokens instead of bus passes. 7,000 residents choose railcards. Allowed use of tokens varies by district, but normally includes community transport and taxis. In some areas local bus, rail or ferry are included. Some users choose this option on grounds of personal mobility or lack of local bus services. In some areas tokens are offered to all who are entitled to a bus pass, irrespective of whether they would easily be able to use local bus services or not. This availability of tokens and the option of a railcard increases take up beyond those who would choose a bus pass and so increases overall cost. Of all these users, particular consideration needs to be given to those who cannot use buses on grounds of disability.
- 3.21. Option 3 allows for tokens in the form of voucher booklets to the value of £32 to be offered only to those who are eligible on disabled grounds, for use on voluntary car schemes, Dial-a-Ride, Call & Go and taxis. Vouchers are more secure and are directly linked to the user by photocard. Those who meet the age criteria and who also meet the disability criteria would qualify for tokens as an alternative to the bus pass. Currently the value of tokens issued ranges from £24 to £75, with some districts applying a handling charge. The value of tokens could be reviewed after the first year of operation once actual take-up is known. Take-up will be affected not only by making tokens available in all areas for disabled users, but also by extending disabled pass use to community transport in areas where this is not currently available.
- 3.22. Some users with learning difficulties or who are disabled are unable to travel alone. To address this it is proposed that companion passes, which are currently available in some areas, would be made available county-wide. This allows an individual who meets the criteria to travel with a companion, when required, or to travel alone. The companion cannot use the pass to travel alone.
- 3.23. In some areas, Car-share or Taxi-share services which offer a scheduled service at bus fares, but only run when needed, have proved an effective way of retaining transport where a conventional bus is not practicable. These now account for 10% of contracted services. Concessionary passholders currently travel free on these and it is proposed that this facility is retained.
- 3.24. Cango is a registered local bus service so forms part of the statutory scheme.

3.25. Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go cater for those who are unable to use local buses. At present some schemes accept tokens against full fare but do not accept passes whilst others accept passes for free or half fare travel. Some accept no concessions. It is proposed that the statutory bus pass be accepted on all these services on a half-fare basis to reflect the added value of the door-to-door service. Tokens would be an alternative for disabled or frail elderly users allowing travel at full fare.

3.26. Extending the level of the most generous district schemes throughout the county 'rounding up to the best' would depend on the outcome of the CLG funding review. It is not fully funded at present, even if all local funding passed to the County Council without deduction. It could only be funded by finding additional monies and therefore Option 4 in paragraph 3.28 below does not appear to be a viable option to consider further. Consideration has been given to district council variations. We understand that this is possible if funded by the district council using Well-being powers and within equalities guidelines.

3.27. In light of the consultation responses and the EQIA findings, current cost estimates of various options are shown below. Anticipated available funding is in the range of £12.3 to £13.9 million. (see paragraph 3.2).

3.28. Option 1. Statutory Scheme

	2011/12
Statutory Pass Scheme*	£12,000,000**
Administration Costs	£500,000
Total Estimated Cost	£12,500,000

*Includes local bus, Cango and numbered Car-share and Taxi-share services.

Option 1 assumes that tokens, which are available in eight districts, are withdrawn and replaced by bus passes. The estimates allow additional pass costs for users transferring from tokens to bus passes.

**Includes transfer from tokens.

The following options all represent possible enhancements to the statutory scheme.

Option 2. Statutory Scheme plus the top priorities for county-wide enhancements arising from the public consultation

	2011/12
Statutory Pass Scheme*	£12,000,000
"All day" time discretion (eg pre 0930) for all	

Users of most CT services do so because they meet disability criteria. (Note - there is likely to be some transfer of usage between tokens/vouchers and the ENCTS bus pass if both are made available for use on CT.)

With additional benefits for disabled people, there will be a rise in applications from those who previously qualified under age criteria.

Option 3 is an increase of £775,000 above the statutory scheme at Option 1.

Option 4. Statutory scheme plus best district concessions extended across the county

	2011/12
Statutory Pass Scheme	£10,660,000*
Companion Passes	£40,000
"All day" time discretion (eg pre 0930) (all users)	£660,000
Tokens	£3,560,000
Railcards	£330,000
Community Transport (Dial-a-Ride/Call & Go)	£220,000
All Ferries / Park and Ride/ New Forest Tour Bus, etc	£740,000
Administration Costs	£870,000
Total Estimated Cost	£17,080,000

*Reflects allowance for transfer to tokens

3.29. Option 4 is for illustrative purposes only and substantially exceeds current funding which is due to be reduced by 12% for Efficiencies, see paragraph 3.2 and is not therefore being pursued.

3.30. Option 3 is the preferred option as it provides the statutory scheme, meets the needs of disabled users and is affordable within the anticipated budget. Should the necessary funding become available, the next priorities for support would be the availability of tokens for those without a local bus service (cost £200,000 – see Option 2) and provision of travel before 0930 to all users (cost £595,000 [£660,000 in Option 2 less £65,000 in Option 3]).

3.31. All option cost estimates are based on current reimbursement rates and bus service networks, including the County Council's support for 220 contracts which cater for 1 in 6 bus journeys in Hampshire. In view of the national economic picture, Government funding is likely to reduce. Should changes to reimbursement rates occur, or the withdrawal of bus routes by commercial

operators result in more services needing support, there could be higher costs to the concessionary fares scheme which could impact on funding available for local bus support and vice versa.

- 3.32. On current bus accessibility figures, 1.19 million Hampshire residents live within 400 metres of a local bus service (92.5%) and 97,000 residents outside of this distance (7.5%). 63% of residents have a bus service which operates at a frequency of hourly or better. Tokens are a popular and established means of accessing alternative services such as Community Transport services (Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go) or taxis where there are no bus services or for those with restricted mobility. The proposal at 3.21 seek to address this in respect of disabled people or older people with restricted mobility if they met disability criteria.
- 3.33. An EQIA is an essential part of informing decision making with regard to changes in a front line service such as concessionary travel and the full EQIA is included in Appendix 2. The consultation process and widespread engagement with stakeholders and partners is central to informing the EQIA and this has been described in paragraphs 2.12 to 2.16. Details of consultees and responses are given in Appendix 1 and the top consultation priorities considered in Option 2 at 3.28. Public consultation has been open for 12 weeks until 8 October 2011, in line with the Hampshire Compact.
- 3.34. An EQIA requires the County Council to assess the effects on different sections of the community which are more likely to be excluded, with particular regard to age, disability, faith, gender, transgender, race, sexual orientation, maternity or pregnancy,. The EQIA looks at how the breakdown of users of the service compares with the community as a whole, whether some people will be unable to use or benefit from the changed service, and if any groups are disadvantaged, is that likely to be unlawful. Data on existing users is lacking in this respect and will form part of monitoring once the new scheme is established. The EQIA also asks how the initiative could improve equality of access.
- 3.35. The EQIA highlights the benefits of the statutory concessionary scheme in providing free bus travel for those over 60 and for disabled people. It also recognises that the statutory scheme does not cater for those who do not have a local bus service, who cannot travel alone, or who are unable to use the local bus. These limitations may affect the ability of those people to have the access to independent living, with regard to paid or voluntary work or access to health appointments.
- 3.36. The EQIA recognises that some users in all areas currently have benefits which are in addition to the statutory scheme and that withdrawal of these without alternative may lead to disadvantage, for example free travel to work if the statutory 0930 start is used. The EQIA recognises that cultural or ethnic backgrounds may create information barriers which must be overcome to ensure access to the service. The EQIA highlights that information provision also needs to recognise that some people may not be able to write, telephone, visit in person, access the internet or understand

the process, so restricting access to the scheme. Work with support groups and County Council Community Development Teams will be essential here as will the range of application media and use of plain English. The EQIA identifies that the statutory concession is only available to permanent residents which may disadvantage the traveller community or temporary migrant workers. If tokens were offered, limiting issue to disabled people would exclude those who did not meet the disabled criteria.

- 3.37. The EQIA process has identified the need to make the scheme as widely known and easy to join as possible and that selected benefits in addition to the statutory scheme will be needed to address specific needs.
- 3.38. Pass production and Scheme Administration are technical matters largely unaffected by the decisions above. This work is currently undertaken by outside contractors, Euclid for pass production, with contracts held by the TCAs and Consultant MCL for scheme administration. The contracts expire in March and June 2011 respectively, the latter to allow for overlap and ease of handover to a new supplier if required. Both contracts are currently out to tender so that new contracts will be in place by January 2011.
- 3.39. A process to operate the customer pass application process in-house from April 2011 is now being implemented following discussions with district and borough councils who advised that they did not wish to continue this role. This will ensure there is only one point of contact for customers at a time when many queries and concerns may be raised. Allowance will need to be made for additional IT and staff resources to oversee the establishment of the new scheme by April 2011. It is estimated that between 3 and 5.5 FTE posts will be required to staff the scheme. These could be found from staff currently employed by district councils who may transfer to the County Council under TUPE arrangements or from existing staff resources within the Environment Department.

4. Performance

- 4.1. Given the synergies with other Passenger Transport activities and operational management, it is considered that responsibility for administering the new concessionary fares scheme should rest with the Environment Department.
- 4.2. Regular reporting of key budgetary projections including costs, usage and other performance indicators will be considered accordingly through the usual financial and corporate structures.

5. Other key issues

- 5.1. In bringing the administration of concessionary travel in-house there is a potential to progressively develop the scheme by introducing a web-based self-service application system to meet corporate customer service objectives. This could eventually link up with other existing services,

including Blue Badge applications, Yellow card and disabled user library card schemes and possibly school transport pass production as well as other Smartcard-based initiatives across the County Council. Discussions on the customer interface for pass applications, integration of IT systems and processing of customer inquiries are ongoing between Environment and Adult Services, Registration Services, Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs departments and Hantsdirect to secure the most appropriate development of these aspects of the scheme.

6. Timelines/next steps

6.1. The key timelines to be met include:

Receive updated guidance from the Department for Transport	October 2010
Environment & Transportation Select Committee pre-scrutiny	17 November 2010
Executive Member approval	19 November 2010
Commence relevant Human Resource impact consultation	November 2010
Publish the agreed scheme	1 December 2010
Communicate new scheme to existing and new users	December 2010
Award Relevant contracts for scheme administration	December 2010
Update funding projections in light of Revenue Support Grant details	January 2011
Commence new scheme	1 April 2011

6.2. The project team will continue to follow the agreed project plan and report regularly to the Environment Department Project Board, Departmental Management Team, Executive Member and Cabinet as required.

7. Future direction

- 7.1. The transition of this scheme from district to county level is highly sensitive from user, administration and funding perspectives. The project team and Project Board are aware of the complexities of the work and will ensure that close liaison with users, district and borough councils, internal and external stakeholders, Members and transport operators is maintained to enable a smooth transfer from 1 April 2011 whatever level of scheme is decided upon.
- 7.2. Should more funding be made available from Government, the next priorities for funding would be the issue of tokens for those without a bus service (£200,000) and the availability of travel for all before 9.30am (£595,000). On

the basis of our present understanding of available funding, the preferred option is as shown at 8.2 below.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1. That the approach set out in the report to establish a new concessionary fares scheme for Hampshire from April 2011 be approved.
- 8.2. That Option 3 in section 3.28 of the report, providing the statutory scheme plus selected additions to meet the needs of disabled users at a cost of £13.275 million per annum, be approved, on the basis of the County Council's present understanding of the likely available funding.
- 8.3. That the additional enhancements most favoured in the public consultation, all day travel and tokens for areas not served by buses, be identified as priorities for consideration should sufficient funding be made available by central Government to all the further enhancements of the Hampshire Concessionary Fares Scheme.
- 8.4. That the Concessionary Fares Scheme be reviewed when the Government funding position and the County Council budget are finalised.
- 8.5. That approval is given for the County Council to administer additional local concessions if district or borough councils request and fund these in full, including administration costs.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

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.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

1.1. See attached Appendix 2.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. Not applicable.

3. Climate Change:

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

- Maintaining journey opportunities by bus will result in fewer journeys being made by private car.

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

- This recommendation will have a significant positive effect on sustainable transport provision.

CONCESSIONARY FARES CONSULTATION RESPONSES SUMMARY

October 2010

This document summarises the processes and findings of the Concessionary Fares public consultation exercise held by Hampshire County Council in 2010.

In March 2010 the Government finalised proposals to transfer the administration of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme from District Councils to County Councils with effect from April 2011.

As part of preparation for this transfer Hampshire County Council held a public consultation exercise on the subject in order to inform decisions about the future level and administration of the scheme to be implemented from 1 April 2011. This consultation took place between 12 July and 8 October 2010.

Against a backdrop of uncertain policy and funding frameworks owing to the formation of a new government and the wider economic situation, the consultation form produced sought the views of residents, groups and organisations across Hampshire on the following:

1. Comments if the statutory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme only were to be provided - free local bus travel between 09:30 and 23:00 (all times weekends & bank holidays) to people of eligible retirement age and eligible people with disabilities over 5 years of age.
2. If sufficient funding were available what priorities should be considered as additional discretionary enhancements should your travel requirements not be met with a bus pass allowing free travel between 0930 and 2300 and at any time at weekends?
3. What is the best way to issue passes in the future?
4. What are your current travel habits?
5. What is your background?

This form was made available in hard copy and via Hantsweb and approximately 5,000 hard copies were issued during the course of the consultation. The number of forms downloaded from Hantsweb, however, is unknown.

9 specially convened Passenger Transport Forums were convened across the county which were attended by approximately 350 people representing district, borough and parish councils, transport operators, care groups, disability groups, residents associations, pensioners associations and many others. Many more were invited and A full list of organisations invited to the Forums can be provided on request.

In addition to the Passenger Transport Forums, various other representative groups were consulted including the Learning Disabilities Board, The Older Peoples Wellbeing Transport Group, District Council liaison group, Link Network, Personalisation Expert Panel, Community Involvement Teams, as well as most relevant groups within the Adult and Children's Services departments.

Lastly, direct mailings to 1,100 existing concessionary travel users were made to ensure representation from those most likely to be directly affected by any changes to the scheme.

A series of Press Releases were issued during the consultation period across the county alerting residents to the consultation process and urging responses.

Analysis of responses

As a result more than 1,600 completed forms were eventually returned to the County Council. The total number of people expressing a view is higher than 1,600 as many of the returned forms were on behalf of groups, organisations and councils as represented below:

Parish/Town Councils	28
Voluntary Groups	27
Pensioner groups	6
Voluntary Transport Groups	5
District Councils	11
Residents Associations	3
Transport User Groups	3
Adult Services Hampshire County Council	2
Access Group	1
Camra	1
College	1
Housing Association	1
National Park	1
Training Project	1

A full list of these groups and those invited to respond is available on request.

Post Codes

The highest number of responses came from the following post codes:

BH25	New Milton	20
GU11	Aldershot	11
GU14	Farnborough	30
GU34	Alton	63
GU35	Bordon	13
GU46	Yateley	12
PO10	Emsworth	11

PO12	Gosport	68
PO14	Fareham West	18
PO15	Locks Heath	19
PO16	Fareham East	25
PO7	Denmead	43
PO8	Clanfield	27
PO9	Rowlands Castle	44
RG20	Tadley	11
RG21	Basingstoke	38
RG22	West Basingstoke	60
RG23	Oakley	13
RG24	Popley/Chineham	24
RG25	South Basingstoke	56
RG26	North Basingstoke	51
RG27	Hartley Wintney	12
RG28	Whitchurch	12
SO21	North Winchester	38
SO22	West Winchester	69
SO23	Winchester	65
SO24	Alresford	18
SO30	Hedge End	30
SO31	Hamble	73
SO32	Bishops Waltham	58
SO40	Totton	31
SO41	Lymington	53
SO42	Brockenhurst	11
SO45	Waterside	54
SO50	Eastleigh	32
SO51	Romsey	41
SO53	Chandlers Ford	16
SP10	Andover	46
SP11	North Andover	31

Areas with less than 10 respondents have been omitted for reporting clarity.

In analysing these returns the following statistical data was determined:

Gender	44% Male 56% female
People with disabilities	335
Ethnicity	98.5% White 1.5% other
Average age of respondent	69

In answering the **funding priority** questions the top 3 priority responses were:

Priority 1

Travel before 0930	600
Tokens	367
Keep existing bus passes	176
Provide concessions on rail	69
Provide concessions on Community Transport	22
Companion passes	21
Provide concessions on Ferries	19
Charge a fee/means test	17
Provide concessions on taxis	12
Travel after 2300	7

Priority 2

Travel before 0930	127
Tokens	99
Provide concessions on rail	79
Provide concessions on Ferries	55
Provide concessions on Community Transport	31
Charge a fee/Means test	28
Provide concessions on taxis	26
Companion passes	22
Keep existing bus pass	14

Priority 3

Travel before 0930	40
Provide concessions on rail	30
Tokens	29
Companion passes	16
Extension to taxis	15
Provide concessions on Ferries	13
Provide concessions on Community Transport	8
Keep existing bus passes	7
Charge a fee/means test	7

There were numerous individual comments, which did not fit neatly into these categories

Referring to **application methods** the top priorities were:

Keep as existing	473
Council Offices	331
By post	326
On line	124
Through post offices	50
Automatic renewals	20
Libraries	17
By telephone	17

Locally (unspecified)	15
Community/village halls	14
At Bus Stations	5
Provide bus passes for life	4

Next steps

Having received these responses the decision over the type and level of concession to be offered from 1 April 2011 will be decided by the Executive Member for Transport at 1000 on 19 November 2010 in the Mitchell Room of Queen Elizabeth Court, Winchester. A public information and communications plan is being developed which will be followed once a decision is available.