

EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a Cabinet Member



REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

Executive Decision Reference Number – SP15 20/21

Decision	
1	Title of decision: Concessionary Fares – 2021-22 Bus Operator Payments
2	Decision maker (Cabinet member name and portfolio title): Councillor Mark Coker – Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure
3	Report author and contact details: Debbie Newcombe, Sustainable Transport Programmes Co-ordinator Email: debbie.newcombe@plymouth.gov.uk Tel: 01752 307868
4	Decision to be taken: It is recommended that the following decisions are taken: Continuation of concessionary fares reimbursement payments to local bus operators at pre-Covid levels for the period April 2021 to March 2022, in accordance with Government guidance. Should concessionary patronage reach 80% of pre-Covid levels in any month, payments would be made based on actual trips. In the event of the pandemic continuing beyond March 2022, delegated authority should be granted to the Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure to approve the continuation of concessionary fares payments on this basis, subject to Government guidance not changing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure.
5	Reasons for decision: To comply with the advice issued by Central Government and help ensure the viability of our commercial bus operators to be able to continue to provide socially necessary bus services once the pandemic is over.
6	Alternative options considered and rejected: Options Considered Reimburse bus operators based on the number of concessionary trips actually undertaken by eligible passengers. Rejected: Given the significant reduction in both commercial and concessionary patronage levels since the start of the pandemic bus operators have suffered considerable financial losses. Continuing to reimburse bus operators purely on the number of actual trips undertaken would have a catastrophic effect on their


	business, leading to reductions in service frequencies or full service withdrawals.			
7	<p>Financial implications:</p> <p>Given that the proposed payments are based on pre-pandemic concessionary patronage trends, which were downwards, payments to operators will be lower than in previous years and hence the cost of the 2021/22 financial year payments can be met from within our existing budgets.</p> <p>Strategic Planning & Infrastructure has a Concessionary Fares budget to fund operator reimbursement, and this budget will not be under pressure as a result of the proposed payment method for the 2021-22 financial year.</p>			
8	<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? (please contact Democratic Support for further advice)</p>	Yes	No	Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which:
			✓	in the case of capital projects and contract awards, results in a new commitment to spend and/or save in excess of £3million in total
		✓		in the case of revenue projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of £1million
		✓		is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the local authority.
	<p>If yes, date of publication of the notice in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions</p>	2 February 2021		
9	<p>Please specify how this decision is linked to the Council's corporate plan/Plymouth Plan and/or the policy framework and/or the revenue/capital budget:</p>	<p>The provision of the concessionary travel scheme supports the sustainable growth in Plymouth by providing residents with sustainable transport options to access employment, education, healthcare, leisure and retail opportunities.</p> <p>Links to the Corporate Plan:-</p> <p>Growing Plymouth:- The concessionary travel scheme encourages use of the City's bus network by both residents and visitors, thereby supporting the long term financial viability of the network.</p> <p>Caring Plymouth:- The concessionary travel scheme provides valuable links to shops, healthcare, employment, education and leisure for those citizens who do not have access to a car or who may be on low incomes. Without this scheme some residents would face an increased risk of isolation, due to the full cost of bus travel, thereby constraining their independence and impacting on their wellbeing</p> <p>Links to the Plymouth Plan:-</p>		

		Through the provision of the concessionary travel scheme the Council supports the use of sustainable transport modes as set out in the Plymouth Plan specifically policies SPT9 (5)5, where it states that the local Planning and Highway Authorities with key stakeholders will deliver: “realistic sustainable transport choices and increasing the integration of transport modes so that people have genuine alternative ways to travel.” SPT9 (6), which seeks to get the most out of our existing network and encourage behavioural change, SPT9(9) (delivering transport projects which provide a safe and effective transport system) and SPT (10) of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan and policies HEA6 (Delivering a safe, accessible, sustainable and health enabling transport system), GRO4 (Using transport investment to drive growth) and GRO7(Reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change) of the Plymouth Plan.
10	Please specify any direct environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact)	<p>On 8 March 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and produced a number of key actions to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.</p> <p>The concessionary travel scheme supports the Councils efforts to reduce carbon emissions by providing an alternative sustainable transport option to the private car, and hence enabling behavioural change.</p> <p>Given that the scheme is free to the service user, this greatly encourages residents to leave their cars at home and use the bus. The income that this scheme generates for the bus operators goes some way towards contributing to the upgrading of their fleets to improve carbon emission rates.</p>

Urgent decisions

11	Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public?	Yes		(If yes, please contact Democratic Support (democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk) for advice)
		No	✓	(If no, go to section 13a)
12a	Reason for urgency:			
12b	Scrutiny Chair Signature:		Date	
	Scrutiny Committee name:			
	Print Name:			

Consultation				
13a	Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision?	Yes	✓	
		No		(If no go to section 14)
13b	Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision?	Councillor Mark Lowry – Cabinet Member for Finance		
13c	Date Cabinet member consulted	January 2021		
14	Has any Cabinet member declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision?	Yes		If yes, please discuss with the Monitoring Officer
		No	✓	
15	Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted?	Name	Anthony Payne	
		Job title	Strategic Director for Place	
		Date consulted	28 January 2021	
Sign-off				
16	Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted:	Democratic Support (mandatory)	DS101 20/21	
		Finance (mandatory)	djn.20.21.242	
		Legal (mandatory)	LS/36214/JP/230 221	
		Human Resources (if applicable)	N/A	
		Corporate property (if applicable)	N/A	
		Procurement (if applicable)	N/A	
Appendices				
17	Ref.	Title of appendix		
	A	Concessionary Fares – 2021-22 Bus Operator Payments		
	B	Concessionary Fares Equalities Impact Assessment		
Confidential/exempt information				
18a	Do you need to include any confidential/exempt information?	Yes		If yes, prepare a second, confidential ('Part II') briefing report and indicate why it is not for

		No	✓	publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box in 18b below. (Keep as much information as possible in the briefing report that will be in the public domain)				
		Exemption Paragraph Number						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18b	Confidential/exempt briefing report title:							
Background Papers								
19	Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are <u>unpublished</u> works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based. If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.							
Title of background paper(s)		Exemption Paragraph Number						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
N/A								
Cabinet Member Signature								
20	I agree the decision and confirm that it is not contrary to the Council's policy and budget framework, Corporate Plan or Budget. In taking this decision I have given due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not. For further details, please see the EIA attached.							
Signature			Date of decision		3/3/21			
Print Name	Councillor Mark Coker							