

THROUGH TICKETING

Overview



Executive Summary

The term through ticketing for the purpose of this report encompasses the ability to travel between different bus services operated by the same or different operators and the addition of different modes of travel such as rail and ferry. This report sets out these definitions of through ticketing and what is currently available in Plymouth.

Background

Through ticketing can take a number of forms but in its essence is usually used to describe a ticket which enables the passenger travel between one public transport service and another. Setting up these tickets within a deregulated bus industry is not simple and requires careful attention to competition law to avoid issues around cartels, detailed discussion on data sharing and how revenue is apportioned between partners. A successful ticketing scheme usually requires good partnership working between the Local Authority and the bus operators and most significantly requires a good deal of will on behalf of all parties.

Powers provided in the Transport Act 2008 give Local Authorities the opportunity to mandate a multi operator ticketing scheme but significantly the bus operators are able to set the price and therefore without a positive working relationship a resulting ticket could be unaffordable.

Smart ticketing

Although through ticketing can and does exist in simple formats such as paper tickets purchased from drivers the introduction of smart ticket machine technology on board buses does open up further opportunities. The UK's interoperable ticketing technical standard is known as ITSO and Plymouth has worked in partnership on a regional project over the last few years with all bus companies and Local Authorities in the South West to either upgrade or replace ticket machines to meet this standard. The ITSO standard spans all forms of transport and has been featured in all recent rail franchise tender documents in recent years. The benefits include improved boarding times which result in fewer delays and specifically in relation to through ticketing the ability to encode ticketing products with specific acceptance rules which will work regardless of the ticket machine supplier. The data collected can be used to give accurate revenue reimbursements to bus operators based on actual journeys made.

However, regardless of the technology the introduction of such a ticket is still dependent upon the will, partnership working and satisfaction of legal requirements to introduce a product.

Electronic Money

As part of the regional project mentioned above which is led by the public/private company South West Smart Applications Limited a new form of smart ticketing will be available in Plymouth subject to the findings of a current trial in the Bristol area and the buy in of local bus companies. Known as E Money a company called sQUID has been awarded a contract to provide an independent smart card which will be useable on all ITSO ticket machines. The technology is

similar to the wave and pay function offered by certain UK banks and credit card companies such as Barclaycard. In the case of the sQUID card customers are able to load up credit in advance or automatically top up their balance online and then deductions are made each time they travel. However, this is purely a payment mechanism and in order to meet the spirit and objective of through ticketing require the actual multi operator tickets to be available in the first place.

Bus operators

Commercial bus operators will consider further expansion or the introduction of new through tickets subject to the detail required. Despite been easier for the passenger in terms of use it is unfortunate that electronic ticketing enabled through the ITSO specification does entail significant cost and complexity to set up and maintain.

Ferry operators

Recent discussions with ferry operators in the City reveal that they are very keen on both the technology and the principles of increased through ticketing. A general summary would be that they would be likely to support such a roll out subject to the operational and revenue detail.

Rail operators

Further through ticketing with rail services will be very complex but certainly possible if the companies can be convinced. The current postponement of the Greater Western franchise will make any discussion on this matter in the short term unlikely.

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Through tickets currently available in Plymouth

Ticket	Definition
Return – single operator	Available for an outward and return journey on a particular operator.
Day ticket – single operator	Available for unlimited journeys within a defined area on a particular operator
English National Concessionary Ticketing Scheme	Known as the concessionary bus pass the physical pass is fully interoperable both as a flash pass to the driver and also encoded with ITSO technology to allow smart recording on certain ticket machines.
Plus Bus	A national initiative allowing rail passengers to add on bus travel to their train ticket within their destination location. This is available in Plymouth.
Plymouth Green Travel Pass	A Plymouth City Council led partnership between Plymouth Citybus, First Devon and Cornwall, Target Travel and Western Greyhound allowing unlimited travel on any bus service within defined areas which cover 3 different zone options from a City Centre only zone through to a Country Zone extending as far as Dobwalls and Kingsbridge. Set up as a travel plan initiative and currently only available to employees of nine current member employers in the City, the cost of the tickets are

	deducted directly from salaries. The products have migrated to the ITSO technical standard and are in the process of being accepted by all Operators.
Ferryrider	An agreement between Plymouth Citybus and the Cremyll Ferry enabling travel on the Cremyll Ferry and on Plymouth Citybus services between Stonehouse Bridge and the City Centre.
Dayrider + Ferry	An agreement between Plymouth Citybus and the Cremyll Ferry enabling travel on the Cremyll Ferry and unlimited travel on Plymouth Citybus services within the City.
Explorer Plus	An agreement between Stagecoach Devon and Plymouth Citybus allowing unlimited travel on both operators
Dartmoor Sunday Rover	Available on Sunday and Public Holidays. Unlimited travel on most bus services in Devon including First Devon and Cornwall buses in Plymouth and various train services including the Tamar Valley line trains between Plymouth and Gunnislake.
Travel on Plymouth's subsidised bus services	As part of the contract process Plymouth City Council ensures that other operators tickets are accepted on subsidised bus services.