

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

CABINET

27 AUGUST 2009

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDERS – ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY

AND HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES & OLDER PEOPLE

UPDATE ON CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL “DIAL-A-RIDE” SCHEME

KEY DECISION – NO

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with an update on the implementation and uptake during the first four month's operation of the pilot “Dial-a-Ride” scheme.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the information provided in respect of the first four months of operation of the Dial-a-Ride scheme.

3. Brief Summary of Relevant Facts

- 3.1 All concessionary travel schemes contain a statutory element which the Council, as a registered Travel Concession Authority (TCA), is required to offer to eligible persons (the over 60's and eligible disabled persons). The statutory concession consists of an English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS), bus pass entitling the holder to free off peak (09.30 – 23.00 hours, Monday to Friday, and all day at weekends and bank holidays), travel on local bus services throughout England. This is the minimum that TCA's are required to provide. Local authorities also have discretion to offer local discretionary travel concessions in addition / as an alternative to the National minimum. Local discretionary concessions are fully funded by the local authority.
- 3.2 For a number of years, the Council offered local discretionary concessions in the form of 24/7 travel on bus journeys starting or ending within the district boundaries; half fare travel on the “Chase Line” (Stafford – Birmingham) rail service, and travel (taxi) tokens as an alternative to a bus pass for eligible disabled persons and those aged 70 and over. Those who opted for travel tokens were given £53.50 worth of tokens for the scheme year (£114.50 for blind / partially sighted persons).
- 3.3 Budgetary constraints led to a decision to withdraw the above local discretionary concessions with effect from 1 April, 2009. However, in recognition of the fact that bus services are not always suitable for disabled people, in particular, and in order to ensure that they should still be able to gain access to local services, a local Dial-a-Ride service was introduced from April.

The scheme is being piloted for an initial 12 months and is being operated on the Council's behalf by Shire Travel International Limited.

4. Key Issues

- 4.1 At the time that the former travel tokens scheme was withdrawn there were 2,164 persons registered as disabled within the concessionary travel scheme who had previously opted to receive travel tokens in lieu of an ENCTS bus pass. A little over 700 people from this group (i.e. almost exactly one third), have so far opted to join the Dial-a-Ride scheme (compared to approximately 600 at commencement in April, 2009). Approximately 700 others opted for an ENCTS bus pass.
- 4.2 In addition to those detailed above, 2,084 others were previously in receipt of travel tokens by virtue of being aged 70 or over. All of these people were automatically sent an ENCTS bus pass when travel tokens were withdrawn.
- 4.3 While the Dial-a-Ride scheme is gradually increasing in popularity, the overall number of individual users and journeys made is lower than might be expected. Figures for the first 4 months of operation are given below:

Month	Cost	Journeys (users)	Average Journeys per day	Average Cost per Journey
April (24 operating days)	£6,294	169 (29)	7.04	£37.24
May (24 operating days)	£6,294	240 (35)	10.00	£26.22
June (26 operating days)	£6,819	350 (47)	13.46	£19.48
July (27 operating days)	£7,081	402 (67)	14.88	£17.61

REPORT INDEX

Background	Section 1
Details of Matters to be Considered i.e. Options Considered, Outcome of Consultations etc.	Section 2
Contribution to CHASE	Section 3
Financial Implications	Section 4
Human Resource Implications	Section 5
Legal Implications	Section 6
Section 17 (Crime Prevention)	Section 7
Human Rights Act Implications	Section 8
Data Protection Act Implications	Section 9
Implications Risk Management Implications	Section 10
Equality and Diversity Implications	Section 11
Other Options Considered	Section 12
List of Background Papers	Section 13
Annexes to the Report i.e. copies of correspondence, plans etc.	Annex 1, 2, 3 etc
Report History	
Report Author Details	

Section 1

1. Background

- 1.1 All concessionary travel schemes contain a statutory element which the Council, as a registered Travel Concession Authority (TCA), is required to offer to eligible persons (the over 60's and eligible disabled persons). The statutory concession consists of an English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS), bus pass entitling the holder to free off peak (09.30 – 23.00 hours, Monday to Friday, and all day at weekends and bank holidays), travel on local bus services throughout England. This is the minimum that TCA's are required to provide. Local authorities also have discretion to offer local discretionary travel concessions in addition / as an alternative to the National minimum. Local discretionary concessions are fully funded by the local authority.
- 1.2 For a number of years, the Council offered local discretionary concessions in the form of 24/7 travel on bus journeys starting or ending within the district boundaries; half fare travel on the "Chase Line" (Stafford – Birmingham) rail service, and travel (taxi) tokens as an alternative to a bus pass for eligible disabled persons and those aged 70 and over. Those who opted for travel tokens were given £53.50 worth of tokens for the scheme year (£114.50 for blind / partially sighted persons).
- 1.3 Budgetary constraints led to a decision to withdraw the above local discretionary concessions with effect from 1 April, 2009. However, in recognition of the fact that bus services are not always suitable for disabled people, in particular, and in order to ensure that they should still be able to gain access to local services, a local Dial-a-Ride service was introduced from April. The scheme is being piloted for an initial 12 month period, with a formal review after 6 months of operation.
- 1.4 Shire Travel was selected as the preferred partner in the pilot scheme as it was already a partner with the Council in providing Shopmobility scooters in Cannock, Hednesford and Rugeley town centres, and operated a local commercial ring and ride scheme.
- 1.5 The scheme operates for six days a week (Mondays – Saturdays, excluding bank holidays), between 9.30am and 8.00pm*, using two 16 seater minibuses, one with tail lift access for wheelchairs. (*In order to cover these operational hours, one vehicle runs from 9.30am – 5.00pm; and the other from 9.30am – 2.30pm and 5.00pm – 8.00pm, totalling 15.5 hours per day.) Customers are required to book their journeys during office hours on the operational day before they wish to travel, in order to enable the operator to schedule pick ups, plan routes etc. Hospital appointments in neighbouring districts are also accommodated, where practicable, but scheme members are required to book these a week in advance because they are operationally more difficult to work around.

Section 2

2. Details of Matters to be Considered

- 2.1 Matters to be considered are contained in the main body of the report, above.

Section 3

3. Contribution to CHASE

- 3.1 The operation of the Scheme contributes to Healthier Communities, Housing and Older People and Environment aspects of CHASE.

Section 4

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Financial implications are referred to throughout the report.
- 4.2 Included in the Concessionary Fares approved budget for 2009-10 is £80,000 to meet the cost of providing a Dial-a-Ride service for an initial 12 month period. Subject to a review of the popularity and effectiveness of the service, £80,000 has also been built into the base budget from 2010-11 onwards.

Section 5

5. Human Resource Implications

- 5.1 There are no human resource implications arising out of this report.

Section 6

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Council's duties and powers with regard to concessionary travel are contained in the Transport Acts 1985 and 2000 and the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007. These empower the Council to operate the Dial a Ride service referred to in the report.

Section 7

7. Section 17 (Crime Prevention) Implications

- 7.1 There are no crime prevention implications arising out of this report.

Section 8

8. Human Rights Act Implications

- 8.1 There are no Human Rights Act implications arising out of this report.

Section 9

9. Data Protection Implications

- 9.1 There are no Data Protection implications arising out of this report.

Section 10

10. Risk Management Implications

10.1 There are no risk management implications arising out of this report.

Section 11

11. Equality and Diversity Implications

11.1 Statutory national and local discretionary concessionary travel schemes improve access to services for elderly and disabled persons.

Section 12

12. Other Options Considered

12.1 This report is for information purposes only.

Section 13

13. List of Background Papers

13.1 None

Annexes to the Report

Report History

2009-10 Concessionary Travel Scheme – Dial-a-Ride Service	Cabinet	19 March, 2009

Report Author Details:

Steve Partridge, Support Services Manager, ext. 4427