

Report title: Concessionary Fares and Park and Ride Services		AGENDA ITEM 5(PSEG/18/19)
Report to: Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee		
Report author: Helen Morris, Head of the Integrated Passenger Transport Unit		
Date: 17/10/19		For: Discussion
Enquiries to: Helen.Morris@essex.gov.uk		
County Divisions affected: All Essex		

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To update the Committee on findings following consultation on changes to concessionary fares on Park and Ride Services. A summary of consultation responses can be found in appendix A.

2. Background

- 2.1. The requirement set out in the Transport Act 2000 and Concessionary Travel Act 2007 is that Essex County Council must provide passes valid for journeys run between 09:30AM and 11:00PM Monday to Friday and all day on weekends and bank holidays. This is called the “statutory offer”. Essex County Council currently uses its discretionary powers under the Acts to offer pass holders travel from 09:00 to Midnight Monday to Friday. This was not proposed for change in the consultation.
- 2.2. Essex County Council is also required to leave bus operators no better nor no worse off than had the concessionary travel scheme existed. It does this by reimbursing the bus operators.
- 2.3. Essex County Council also allows passes to be used on the three County Council operated Park and Ride schemes at Sandon and Chelmer Valley in Chelmsford and at the Colchester Park and Ride Scheme. These include the Broomfield Hospital shuttle bus service from the Chelmer Valley site. The extension of the scheme to allow pass holders to use Park and Ride schemes is estimated to cost taxpayers around £470,000 a year. It is this provision for concessionary travel on Park and Ride services that was the subject of the consultation.
- 2.4. This year ECC will spend £18.1m per year of taxpayers’ money reimbursing operators for accepting bus passes. Under the law, ECC has to leave them no better or worse off than they would have been if the scheme did not exist.

- 2.5. Given the financial pressures set out above, ECC developed the proposal set out below and went out to consultation in April 2019 to ask Essex residents whether taxpayers should continue to fund the non-statutory park and ride scheme concession.
- 2.6. The proposal set out in the consultation was that, from April 2020, to change from offering free travel on the Park and Ride services for people who hold the older person's bus pass, to charging a fare of £1.50. The new charge would apply at all times. Before 09:00, disability pass holders (who currently pay full fare before 09:00) will also be able to pay £1.50. Disability pass users will still be able to travel free after 09:00 on production of their pass.

Older pass holders:

Time:	Before 9am	After 9am
Current	Full fare	Free
Proposed	£1.50	£1.50

Disabled pass holders:

Time:	Before 9am	After 9am
Current	Full fare	Free
Proposed	£1.50	Free

- 2.7. ECC have determined that the proposal will allow it to protect the most vulnerable groups and retain a concession for older people, while reducing the cost of providing the scheme.

3. Session Aims

Members are asked to discuss the findings from the consultation with officers and make recommendations regarding next steps.