

		AGENDA ITEM 5
		EDEH/26/12
Committee:	Economic Development, Environment and Highways Policy & Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	15 November 2012	
PASSENGER TRANSPORT CONCESSIONARY FARES		
Enquiries to:	Christine Sharland, Governance Officer 01245 430450 Christine.sharland@essex.gov.uk	

At the full Council meeting on 16 October 2012 a motion was put forward around examining the feasibility of extending the concessionary travel scheme. The original motion was moved by Councillor M Mackrory and seconded by Councillor D Kendall. Subsequently it was moved by Councillor D Finch, Deputy Leader of the Council and seconded by Councillor S C Castle, Cabinet Member for Education, Lifelong Learning and the 2012 Games that the Motion be amended to read as follows:

‘Council recognises that young unemployed people are particularly disadvantaged by the current economic situation and that they deserve support to move onto the first steps to permanent employment.

Council acknowledges that the cost of transport to Job Centres, Job Interviews, Work Experience and Apprenticeships can be a real barrier to young people and applauds the considerable amount of work that ECC is already doing to support young people in this area.

Council, therefore, requests the Cabinet Member responsible to ask the Economic Development, Environment and Highways Policy and Scrutiny Committee to examine the feasibility of extending the concessionary travel scheme to include 18-24 year olds in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance or undertaking apprenticeships; noting that the ‘BITE’ card for 14-18 year olds is already in place and that any changes to concessionary fares must be contained within the existing budget for passenger transport.’

The amendment was accepted by Councillors Mackrory and Kendall and, therefore, the amendment became the substantive Motion.

Following full Council a briefing paper was sought on behalf of the Committee to provide Members with background to the matters raised by the motion, and is attached at the Appendix to this report. Officers will also be present at the meeting.

ACTION REQUIRED BY THE COMMITTEE

The Committee is requested to consider any further action it wishes to take in this matter.

Concessionary Travel Scheme Briefing Paper

National Provision:

The English National Concessionary Bus Travel Scheme (ENCTS) is a national scheme by the Department for Transport in conjunction with Local Authorities across England. The Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007 entitles eligible people who are resident in England to travel on any eligible service within England.

Since 1st April 2008, the statutory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) offers free off peak travel to all those over the current pensionable age and those with certain categories of disability.

The national bus concession in England is available at any time on a Saturday, Sunday or bank holiday, and from 9.30am to 11pm on any other day. As an off peak service, the majority of these journeys are carried in buses which would otherwise have spare capacity. TCAs are able to offer concessionary travel outside these hours on a discretionary basis.

Transport Concessionary Authorities (TCAs) are required by law to reimburse bus operators for carrying concessionary passengers. In respect of the mandatory concession, TCAs must reimburse bus operators for all concessionary journeys starting within their boundaries, regardless of where the concessionary passholder making the journey is resident.

The ENCTS costs Essex around £18m for some 245,000 pass holders, including administration costs. While it is difficult to be precise (as the grant for concessionary fares from the government comes through the Revenue Support Grant and is therefore very difficult to disaggregate), the best estimate we have indicates that the County Council receives an estimated £15.4m (in 2010/11), with the difference being made up from the County Council's own discretionary funding.

Current Provision for young people:

Essex CC runs the BITE (Be Identified Throughout Essex) Scheme, which is a free proof of age card. This allows young people to prove that they qualify for whatever commercial concession the bus operators may offer through its use of the nationally recognised 'PASS' accreditation. There are around 10,000 pass holders in Essex.

In 2010 the Council undertook a pilot scheme in Colchester (called BITE+) offering half price travel to young people between 11 and 19. During the scheme's operation (April 2010 to March 2011) some 2,300 young people made more than 80,000 half price journeys at a cost to the County Council of around £300,000.

We understand that Job Centre Plus also offer additional support for travel through the Flexible Support Fund, though we think that this is discretionary rather than being automatically available.

Considerations:

Any scheme that offered younger people free (or indeed reduced cost) travel to access work would require the availability of the offer in the main morning and evening peak periods. Given that most commercial bus operators run near to capacity in the peak, any significant use of a younger person scheme would require additional vehicle capacity in order to avoid displacing fare paying passenger with concessionary pass holders.

A concessionary scheme need not be 'free'. In 2010 the Council undertook a pilot scheme in Colchester (called BITE+) offering half the equivalent adult fare to young people between 11 and 19 at all times of day. The cost to the County Council was around £300,000 over the full year of operation before the pilot ended. At the time it was estimated that based on an identical take up pattern developing across the county, the reimbursement costs of an extended scheme would come to some £3.5m a year, though it has to be stressed that this was only an estimate based on 2010 prices. Evidence taken from the exit survey for the pilot suggests that those already making use of public transport (particularly to school) were the major users of the scheme.

Comparison with provision at other authorities:

The 'free' bus pass scheme for younger people run by Kent County Council is used by some 25,000 young people and users are charged £100 per year for those up to 16 and £500 for 16+. The scheme costs Kent in excess of £11m annually, net of the administration charges levied. This includes payments being made to operators to provide additional vehicle capacity during the peak travel period.

In Norfolk a peak period half fare scheme has been introduced commercially backed by the arrangements for the Better Bus Area Funding Grant they won earlier in the year.

According to the Office for National Statistics there are around 164,000 people in Essex between the ages of 15 and 24. Given the similar population and bus network with Kent a similar take up could be expected and comparable costs might be incurred.

No of individuals affected in Essex:

In Essex it is estimated that there are around 2,500 to 3,000 young people who could be classed Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) at any one time. Assuming a scheme similar to Kent's, but focused only on NEETS, this suggests a cost of around £1.1m per year.

Please find attached figures on apprenticeships, claimants' counts and NEETs (*attached as annexes*). Please note:

- Apprenticeships –figures include both for those starting an Apprenticeship in 2011/12 and also those participating on an Apprenticeship during 2011/12. The latter will include those already on the programme, having started in a previous year.
- NEET – the figures show the number of 18 & 19 year olds who are NEET. Published figures for NEET relate to 16-19 year olds (i.e. those leaving school

during the last three academic years), but 16 & 17 year olds have not been included as they should be covered by the existing 'BITE' card.

- Below are the numbers that are undertaking work experience through the ECC scheme. Please note this covers 16-24 year olds, with c.2/3 over 18.

Location	Number (total 161)
Basildon	35
Braintree	17
Brentwood	4
Castle Point	5
Chelmsford	17
Colchester	33
Harlow	14
Maldon	4
Rochford	8
Tendring	17
Uttlesford	5
Other	2

Job Centre Plus:

Jobcentre Advisers have discretion to reimburse fares or help purchase travel cards upfront for young people for additional interviews other than their signing day, to support job seeking visits to employer premises, jobs fairs etc, fares to interview both local and across the UK, development activities including skills training, for starting work where the cost would otherwise be a barrier to taking up a job etc. This can be a one off or a season ticket, whichever is most effective. They expect the flexible support fund we expect to continue next year.

Number of 18-24 year old Essex residents on an Apprenticeship**Source: National Apprenticeship Service, 2012**

LEA	Essex
Age Band	18-24 year olds

Starts (a)	Data Source			
	Collection	Academic Year		
	Full Year	In Year (as at Q4)		
Learner Home District	2010-11	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Basildon	594	468	575	619
Braintree	567	383	555	593
Brentwood	202	142	202	203
Castle Point	375	286	367	371
Chelmsford	544	422	527	600
Colchester	631	418	599	707
Epping Forest	319	256	313	343
Harlow	275	189	262	304
Maldon	244	190	237	299
Rochford	263	177	250	325
Tendring	541	417	528	617
Uttlesford	222	152	220	261
Grand Total	4,777	3,500	4,635	5,242

(a) Number of people starting an Apprenticeship in each year

Participation (a)	Data Source			
	Collection	Academic Year		
	Full Year	In Year (as at Q4)		
Learner Home District	2010-11	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Basildon	1,011	834	995	1,105
Braintree	901	692	895	1,028
Brentwood	369	277	371	360
Castle Point	625	501	625	666
Chelmsford	908	798	895	1,063
Colchester	1,040	789	1,014	1,241
Epping Forest	559	462	551	634
Harlow	446	342	435	519
Maldon	397	359	396	483
Rochford	438	325	425	539
Tendring	915	716	902	1,098
Uttlesford	367	298	366	476
Grand Total	7,976	6,393	7,870	9,212

(a) Number of people taking part on an Apprenticeship in each year (including starts from previous years)

Annex 2

Claimant count - age duration with proportions

Source: ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 23 October 2012]

date September 2012
age Aged 18-24
duration Total
rate Proportion of resident population of age group

	Total	
	number	rate
Basildon	1,295	8.8
Braintree	725	7.0
Brentwood	270	5.0
Castle Point	515	7.1
Chelmsford	805	5.7
Colchester	985	4.4
Epping Forest	600	6.3
Harlow	550	7.7
Maldon	255	5.8
Rochford	365	5.8
Tendring	980	9.3
Uttlesford	170	3.4
Total	7,520	6.4

Rates for local authorities from 2011 onwards are calculated using the mid-2010 resident population for the appropriate age group.

Number of 18 & 19 year old NEET in Essex - Aug 12

Source: Essex County Council, 2012

District	Age			
	18		19	
	Aug 12	Jul 12	Aug 12	Jul 12
Braintree	88	79	70	70
Maldon	46	37	36	33
Chelmsford	85	84	84	77
Basildon	185	142	125	103
Brentwood	43	29	33	26
Castle Point	71	45	59	52
Rochford	62	50	44	38
Colchester	106	104	113	91
Tendring	120	101	110	98
Epping Forest	58	46	55	53
Harlow	53	35	50	48
Uttlesford	30	27	33	29
Essex	947	779	812	718