

Report to Helen Morris, Head of IPTU	Forward Plan reference number: Not applicable
Date of report: 24/01/2024	County Divisions affected by the decision: All Essex
Title of report: COA Free child travel during school holidays when one adult travels with one child on P & R service 2024	
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1. Purpose of report

To seek permission to offer free travel for one child when accompanied by a full paying adult during school holidays in 2024.

2. Recommendations

To approve free travel for one child when accompanied by a full paying adult during the school holidays in 2024 as an initiative to help encourage new adult travellers on the service.

3. Background and proposal

Links to policy

- 3.1. The Park and Ride helps ECC achieve its outcomes and contributes to reducing congestion and road emissions in town centres.
- 3.2. This is not a key decision and falls under the category of 'everyday operational decision' that can be taken by duly delegated officers in accordance with ECC's scheme of delegation.

Background

- 3.3. The Park and Ride services were put in place to reduce congestion and therefore reduce pollution within the city by providing travellers with a high quality and frequent bus service while forming part of sustainable options. These services are continually under review with the aim of maximising the benefits of these services while keeping the cost to the taxpayer as low as possible.
- 3.4. Below are the child numbers that travelled during the school holidays 2023 of these we can't determine who are children travelling with a parent or who are children travelling alone so this would be a worst case scenario based on last years patronage.

	Sandon	Chelmer Valley	Colchester	Total
Easter	637	308	265	1,210
May half term	285	209	145	639
Summer Holidays	1,897	1,264	997	4,158
October Half Term	383	408	162	953
Total	3,202	2,189	1,569	6,960

- 3.5. The city centres put on children's activities during the holidays and we will be linking up with Chelmsford for you and our bid to support with marketing.
- 3.6. The offer will be aimed at children who travel with an adult on the service.
- 3.7. Publicise on webpage, at sites and on facebook and X.

4. Options

- 4.1 Do nothing – miss the opportunity of potential extra adult footfall of users who may not have used the service and may change their behaviours and use a more sustainable mode of transport in the future.
- 4.2 Give permission – run the initiative during the school holidays in 2024 and work with the Chelmsford For You and Our Bid in the cities to support promotion while supporting their city activities

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. Essex County Council already offers a Group Day Fare £5 which allows for up to 2 Adults and 3 Children to travel together, an Adult Day Fare £3 and a Child Day Fare £1.
- 5.2. The proposed offer to allow one child to travel free when accompanied by a full paying adult during the school holidays, will reduce the normal fare that would have to be paid from £4 to £3 a potential loss of revenue of £1. From the table in 3.4 if all the children travelling were accompanied by a full paying adult this would result in a revenue loss of £6,960. We have seen a 40% growth in child day fares to January 2024, which would equate to £9,744 lost

revenue if the same level of growth was experience during the holiday periods.

- 5.3. As a child day fare is payable for children 5 and above up to and including age 18, it's likely that a proportion of these child passengers are 17 and 18 year old drivers. As this incentive is to try and encourage new passengers onto the park and ride service, we need to think carefully about how we target and incentives these new passengers.
- 5.4. However, if the incentive is successful and new full paying adults with an accompanying child are encouraged and use the park and ride service, ECC will gain an additional £3 of revenue for each occurrence. For every 100 new full paying adults with an accompanying child, ECC will gain £300 of extra revenue.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1. ECC is under a statutory duty in accordance with the Transport Act 1985 to secure the provision of such passenger services as ECC considers it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within its area which would not in its view be met otherwise.

7. List of Background Papers

none

I agree the recommendations in this report for the reasons set out in the report.	Date
Helen Morris	20/02/2024