

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

Explanatory Note

The Leader of the Council has established Delegation Schemes by which certain decisions may be made by the relevant cabinet member or specific officers.

Cabinet member decisions are subject to review under the Call-in Procedure.

From the date the notice of the decision made is published there are five working days during which any five Councillors may sign a request for the decision to be reviewed (called in) and deliver it to the Proper Officer.

If, at the end of the period, no request has been made, the decision may be implemented. If a valid call- in request has been made, the matter will be referred to the Scrutiny Panel

Part A – To be completed by the appropriate Cabinet Member/Officer

Title of Report

Response to ECC P&R Concessionary Bus Pass Consultation

Delegated Power

To promote and procure the implementation of the Borough Council's Transport Strategy in partnership with Essex County Council, the responsible Transport Authority and other partners to improve infrastructure.

To promote partnership working with Essex County Council, the responsible Transport Authority.

Decision Taken

Approval of Colchester Borough Council's response to the Essex County Council Park and Ride Concessionary Bus Pass Consultation.

Key Decision

No

Forward Plan

No

Reasons for the Decision

Organisations and individuals have been invited to respond to the ECC Park & Ride Concessionary Bus Pass consultation. The importance of P&R and public transport in Colchester is recognised, along with the role it has in supporting the environment and the economy

Alternative Options

Not to respond – but this would mean that CBC does not take the opportunity to comment on public transport in the Borough

Conflict of Interest

None

Dispensation by Head of Paid Service

None

Dispensation by Monitoring Officer

None

Approved by Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation

Signature Cllr Martin Goss

Date 24/07/19

(**NB** For Key Decisions the report must be made available to the public for five clear days prior to the period for call-in commencing)

Part B – To be completed by the Proper Officer (Democratic Services)

Portfolio Holder Decision Reference Number

Specify Number. WAS-006-19

Implementation Date

This decision can be implemented if no request for the decision to be reviewed (call-in) has been made **after 5pm on 1 August 2019**

Call-in Procedure

The Decision Notice for this decision was published on the internet and placed in the Members' Room and the Customer Service Centre on 25 July 2019

A request for reference to the Scrutiny Panel must be made by **5pm on 1 August 2019**.

Signature of Proper Officer Zoe Gentry



Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation

Item

July 2019

Report of	Assistant Director of Policy and Corporate	Author	Rachel Forkin
Title	Response to ECC Park & Ride Concessionary Bus Pass Consultation		
Wards affected	All		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Essex County Council (ECC) is consulting on the use of the older person's bus pass on ECC run Park & Ride services in Essex. The proposals are 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 day fare of £1.50.
- 1.2 Park and Ride in Colchester is a key component of the Colchester public transport system. By intercepting cars on the northern edge of the town, Park and Ride helps to improve accessibility and to reduce traffic congestion and pollution within, and on roads into, the town centre. It forms part of the ongoing strategy of reducing congestion and traffic in the town centre. Any changes to its operation should therefore be considered in the broader context of town-wide transport, congestion and parking issues.
- 1.3 It is recognised that ECC faces ever increasing financial challenges and the County Council will need to ensure the efficient provision of its Park and Ride services to ensure good value for money. However, any commercial considerations should be weighed up against the need to maximise opportunities to provide and promote the use of sustainable modes of transport across the town.
- 1.4 It is suggested that the responses to the consultation, in particular questions relating to the effect of charging older people to use Park and Ride (P&R) and the impact on their journeys, are considered in the wider context of town wide sustainable transport, congestion and parking issues before any decision is made on charging older people.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To approve Colchester Borough Council's response to the Essex County Council Park & Ride Concessionary Bus Pass consultation, contained in paragraphs 5.9 to 5.15.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 Organisations and individuals have been invited to respond to the ECC Park & Ride Concessionary Bus Pass consultation. The importance of P&R and public transport in Colchester is recognised, along with the role it has in supporting the environment and the economy.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not to respond – but this would mean that CBC does not take the opportunity to comment on public transport in the Borough.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 Essex County Council (ECC) is consulting on the use of the older person's bus pass on ECC run Park & Ride services in Essex. ECC are also consulting on making a reduced charge for people using the disability bus pass before 9am on these services. None of these proposals will affect the use of bus passes on normal local bus services.
- 5.2 ECC allows bus passes to be used on three County Council operated Park and Ride schemes at Sandon and Chelmer Valley in Chelmsford, and at the Colchester Park & Ride. It is the provision for concessionary travel on Park & Ride services which is the subject of this consultation.
- 5.3 Under the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007, the County Council is required to offer a pass that is valid on any registered local bus service operating within Essex, unless it falls within a small number of exceptions. One of these exceptions is 'Services where the fare charged by the operator has a special amenity element'. The County Council considers that its Park and Ride services offer a special amenity as the fares include an element related to the provision of dedicated parking and other site facilities. As a result, they are excluded from the statutory element of the Concessionary Travel Scheme.
- 5.4 Historically ECC has used its discretionary powers to include its Park and Ride services within the scheme allowing all pass holders to travel free after 9am. This has an estimated cost to tax payers of £447,000 per year. Given the pressure on expenditure, ECC is now considering stopping accepting older people's concessionary bus pass on Park and Ride services and instead use its powers under the Transport Act 1985 to offer older people's pass holders a £1.50 day fare.
- 5.5 There will be no change to services after 9am on weekdays for use of disability-based passes and this will remain free. Currently, holders of disability based passes pay full fare when travelling before 9am. The proposal is to reduce the cost of travel for disabled pass holders from full fare to £1.50 before 9am, and then travel free after 9am, as now.
- 5.6 ECC considers 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. The proposals would be from April 2020.
- 5.7 ECC acknowledge that this may mean that some passengers choose to cease using the Park and Ride scheme, and questions relating to this are asked in the consultation. It is acknowledged that in turn, this may mean that the current cost of the scheme to taxpayers would not translate directly into a similar saving.
- 5.8 The consultation is available on the ECC website www.essex.gov.uk/park-and-ride-fares-consultation and closes on 31 July 2019. The paper version of the consultation can be seen in Appendix A.

CBC Response to Consultation

- 5.9 Park and Ride in Colchester is a key component of the Colchester public transport system. By intercepting cars on the northern edge of the town, Park and Ride helps to improve accessibility and to reduce traffic congestion and pollution within, and on roads into, the town centre. It forms part of the ongoing strategy of reducing congestion and traffic in the town centre. Any changes to its operation should therefore be considered in the broader context of the town-wide transport strategy, and on congestion and parking.

- 5.10 Ticket prices are a big factor in the decision to use public transport. By removing the concessionary pass discount and introducing a charge for older people, this could encourage those users to drive into the town centre rather than using the Park and Ride or may even put them off travelling into the town completely. The proposal to charge older people could reduce the opportunity to shift trips from the private car onto the public transport network and may also result in a reduction in the number of passengers using the Park and Ride service.
- 5.11 In addition to serving the town centre, the Park and Ride also has stops at the hospital and the station. Changes to ticket prices could also have an impact on other journeys, in particular on journeys to the hospital.
- 5.12 It could also encourage displacement of parking into residential areas. This in turn could again lead to a reduction in the number of passengers using the facility finding alternative places to park.
- 5.13 It is recognised that ECC faces ever increasing financial challenges and the County Council will need to ensure the efficient provision of its Park and Ride services to ensure good value for money. However, any commercial considerations should be weighed up against the need to maximise opportunities to provide and promote the use of sustainable modes of transport across Colchester.
- 5.14 The Borough Council welcomes the addition of a question in the consultation that asks if users of the Park and Ride would continue to use it if there was a £1.50 fare, and if the answer is no, what would they do instead. This is an important question, and the Borough Council considers that responses to this should be considered fully before any decision is made on charging older people to use Park and Ride. As the County Council have acknowledged, the introduction of charges may mean that some users cease to use the Park and Ride service. They may pay to park elsewhere; park on street and possibly use other public bus services with their concessionary pass which would then continue to be a cost to the tax payer; or choose not to travel into the town centre at all. All of these would result in a reduction in Park and Ride use and the current cost of the scheme to taxpayers would not be reflected directly into a similar saving.
- 5.15 The Borough Council consider that the concession offered to older people on Park and Ride services after 9am should not be changed from free to £1.50 without further information on the effect this will have on journeys into Colchester. Consideration should be given to the outcome of changes to journey patterns made if the charge is introduced, and if this provides ECC with any significant saving. The proposal should be considered in the wider context of the Colchester transport strategy, town wide sustainable transport, congestion and parking issues before any decision is made on charging older people to use the Park and Ride in Colchester.

6. Standard References

- 6.1 This is a response to a consultation by Essex County Council. There are no particular references to the Strategic Plan; consultation or publicity considerations or financial; community safety; health and safety or risk management implications.

PARK & RIDE CONCESSIONARY BUS PASS CONSULTATION

Consultation on changes to the use of Concessionary Bus Passes
on Essex County Council run Park & Ride services

passenger.transport@essex.gov.uk

Introduction

Consultation on changes to the use of Concessionary Bus Passes on Essex County Council run Park and Ride services only from April 2020.

This consultation gives you the opportunity to let us know your views about the proposal.

Once completed please send to the address listed on page 7.

About Essex County Council

Our high ambitions for Essex and Essex County Council have begun to be achieved.

Despite the ever-increasing financial challenges facing us, we have continued to provide the services residents and businesses need.

What we do is driven by four strategic aims: enabling inclusive economic growth, help people get the best start and age well, help create great places to live, work and grow up, and transform the council to achieve more with less.

Our strong track record of financial management has enabled us to do this, operating within a legally required balanced budget.

Last year, that meant finding over £1 million a week in efficiencies, through innovating to continue to provide services at lower cost, with greater efficiency. Increasing this has meant investing in digital services and seeking to generate income.

We also continue to invest in Essex infrastructure, a key element in driving economic growth.

Even greater challenges

How we are funded is changing. By the end of 2020, our main grant – the Revenue Support Grant – will have been phased out entirely. This will mean a £46m reduction in 2019/20.

Our income will come entirely from council tax, business rates, grants which are specific to our services, and fees and charges.

As in previous years, we will aim to keep council tax as low as possible through generating income and revenue where people can afford to pay for services and where there is demand for them. Demographic changes – particularly an ever-aging, ever-growing population – which also create demand pressures, alongside inflation, also contribute to the financial pressures we face.

The combination of these factors means that, unless we think differently about the services we offer and how residents and businesses access them, we will not succeed in delivering our ambitions for Essex.

Unless we change, reform, transform, the services we are responsible for will stop keeping pace with what people need.

This means that, alongside those services which we retain and continue to invest in, or invest even more in than in previous years, some of them will change, and some of them will no longer be provided where they are now.

Increasingly, digital platforms offer us new ways of connecting with individuals and communities, and of offering services.

Leveraging the power of data to help us understand where the most pressing needs and the key challenges are, allied to new, more citizen-friendly ways of dealing with those needs through digital platforms is how we will develop our approach.

The way we shop, travel, work, learn and enjoy leisure time has been transformed over the past decade and the pace of change is ever increasing.

The information and analysis we now have at our disposal means we design services better for the present and the future. We need to make sure we seize that opportunity.

What we are consulting over

We are consulting on the use of the older person's bus pass on County Council run Park and Ride services in Essex.

We are also consulting on making a reduced charge for people using the disability based bus pass before 9am on these services.

None of these proposals will affect the use of bus passes on normal local bus services.

Background

The Essex Bus Pass Offer

Essex County Council (ECC) provides a bus pass in Essex to residents who are either:

- A) Older people who meet the national state pension age – as on www.gov.uk/calculate-state-pension or;
- B) Disabled people who have one of the types of disability listed on the website – www.essex.gov.uk/buspass

What the law say we must do

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 9.30am and 11pm 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 9am to Midnight Monday to Friday. We are not proposing to change this.

Essex County Council is also required to leave bus operators neither better nor no worse off than had the concessionary travel scheme existed. It does this by reimbursing the bus operators.

What else we do

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. 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 £447,000 a year. It is this provision for concessionary travel on Park and Ride services which is the subject of this consultation.

The cost of concessionary travel to taxpayers: 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. The cost of the use of concessionary bus passes of all types on the park and ride services is around £447,000 of that £18m.

Why Park and Ride services are exempted from the legislation.

Under the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007 (as amended), the County Council is required to offer a pass that is valid on any registered local bus service operating within Essex unless it falls within a small number of exceptions. These are:

- Services on which the majority of seats can be reserved in advance of travel (such as coaches);
- Services that are intended to run for a period of less than 6 consecutive weeks;
- Services operated primarily for the purposes of tourism or because of the historical interest of the vehicle;
- Bus Substitution (rail replacement) services;
- Services where the fare charged by the operator has a special amenity element.

Services in these categories automatically fall outside the statutory scheme.

The County Council considers that its park and ride services offer a special amenity as the fares include an element related to the provision of dedicated parking and other site facilities such as toilets and customer service and that as a result they are excluded from the statutory element of the Concessionary Travel Scheme.

Historically the Council has used its discretionary powers to include its park and ride services within the scheme allowing all pass holders to travel free after 9.00am. This has an estimated cost to tax payers of £447,000 per year.

Given the pressure on expenditure as explained above, the Council is now considering stopping accepting older people's concessionary bus passes on the park and ride scheme and instead use its powers under the Transport Act 1985 to offer older people's pass holders a £1.50 fare.

This may mean that some passengers choose to cease using the park and ride scheme and we ask you about this later in this consultation. In turn this may mean that the current cost of the scheme to taxpayers would not translate directly into a similar saving.

The Proposal

The proposals are from April 2020.

1. 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.
2. Before 9am, **disability bus** (passholders currently pay full fare before 9am) will also be able to pay £1.50. **N.B. Disability bus pass users will still be able to travel free after 9am 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

ECC considers 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.

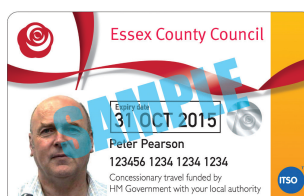
We are asking for your views on the proposal. These will form part of our consideration about whether to go ahead with the proposals. Any cost reductions realised in this area will help reduce the pressure on other areas of spend, including tax payer funding for local bus services that are not commercially viable and Community Transport schemes, as well as wider areas of spend such as adult social care.

How do I know if I am affected?

If you use the County Councils Park and Ride services, including the Broomfield Hospital Shuttle, and hold an older person's bus pass, (it has a blue panel down the right-hand side and looks like the example below), you will be affected by the proposals because you will be asked to show your pass and pay £1.50 at all times of travel.



If you hold a disability pass, (it has an orange panel down the right-hand side - it looks like the samples below), you will not be adversely affected by the proposals. **You can still travel free after 9am and will also be able to pay the reduced fare of £1.50 before 9am.**



Why are disabled persons passes not included in the changes?

At present there are 270,000 registered bus pass holders in Essex of whom around 15,000 hold their pass on grounds of disability. Given the inclusion challenges people with a disability face in accessing key services and the relatively small proportion of disability entitled pass holders, Essex County Council is not proposing to apply any of the changes to disabled pass holders at this time.

These changes are proposed to come into effect from 1st April 2020.

The Proposals

a) That the concession offered by the County Council on its Park and Ride services in Chelmsford and Colchester to holders of older people's bus passes should change from free travel after 9am on weekdays (and at all times at weekends and on public holidays), to a £1.50 fare when showing their bus pass.

b) That holders of disability - based passes should continue to be able to use their free pass on these services after 9am on weekdays (and at all times at weekends and on public holidays) but should also be able to buy a £1.50 fare when showing their bus pass before 9am.

These proposals also apply to the Broomfield Hospital Shuttle service running from the Chelmer Valley Site as well as the main Park and Ride services.

Questions

1. Do you currently hold an Essex County Council Bus pass?

Yes

No

2. If you answered yes to the above is it:

Age-related

Disability based

3. Do you agree with the proposal that starting 1st April 2020 the concession offered to older people's concessionary bus pass holders using the Essex County Council's park and ride services should be a £1.50 fare instead of free as it is at present?

Yes

No

4. If yes, why? Please tick all the following that apply:

It's fairer for everyone

All users should contribute to the service

If you can afford to pay to run a car, you should contribute to Park and Ride

Other, please specify:

5. If no, why? Please tick all the following that apply:

Older people should receive taxpayer funded transport

It supports independent living and prevents isolation

Older people use it to access healthcare

Other, please specify:

6. Do you currently use an age-related bus pass on Essex County Council's park and ride services?

Yes

No

7. If yes, please tick which Park and Ride services you use:

Chelmsford – Sandon

Chelmsford – Chelmer Valley

Chelmsford – Broomfield Hospital Shuttle

Colchester

8. If the answer to Q6 is yes, would you continue to use the County Council's park and ride services if you had to pay a £1.50 fare?

Yes

No

9. If the answer to Q8 is no, what will you do instead of using the park and ride service? Tick all that apply

Park in town in a car park

Park in a side street (unpaid)

Park at a friends and walk

Go to another town to shop

Go to a retail park instead

Park at the hospital

Other, please specify:

10. There will be no change to services after 9am on weekdays for use of disability based passes.

We are proposing that holders of disability based passes should pay a £1.50 fare when showing before 9am.

Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

No

11. If you do not agree, please specify why:

12. Do you have other comments about this proposal and/or an alternative suggestion related to the Park & Ride?

How to respond

1. Please complete and return this consultation questionnaire **by 5pm on Wednesday 31 July 2019**.
2. If you wish to submit a response for an organisation or group of people, please make this clear when providing us details about who you are. If you wish to provide a more detailed response than allowed for in this document, written anecdotal comments will be accepted by post or email. You should also respond to the questions in this consultation,
3. If you need help completing the survey or require it in an alternative format, such as large print, please contact us.

To respond or for further information:

Email: **Passenger.Transport@essex.gov.uk**

Post: Freepost RTKH-XUBZ-CJZS,
Essex County Council,
Bus Review Park & Ride
(Integrated Passenger Transport Unit E1),
County Hall, CHELMSFORD, CM1 1QH.

Telephone: 0345 743 0430

NB. The Information you provide as part of this questionnaire is anonymised and will only be used to analyse the public response to the proposals set out in this questionnaire. Your data will not be shared with a third party other than as strictly required to allow the analysis to take place.

ECC fully comply with information legislation.

For full details on how we use personal data, please go to: **www.essex.gov.uk/privacy** or call 03457 430430.

About you

Our Equality Impact Assessment has highlighted some groups who may be disproportionately affected by changes to our strategy. Questions are asked to ensure we have identified any specific issues for equality groups. It is not compulsory to answer these questions but it would be helpful in our analysis of the results.

Your gender:

Male Female Prefer not to say

Other, please state:

Where in Essex do you live?

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basildon | <input type="checkbox"/> Braintree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brentwood | <input type="checkbox"/> Castle Point |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chelmsford | <input type="checkbox"/> Colchester |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Epping Forest | <input type="checkbox"/> Harlow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maldon | <input type="checkbox"/> Rochford |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Southend-on-Sea | <input type="checkbox"/> Tendring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thurrock | <input type="checkbox"/> Uttlesford |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Out of County | |

Please tell us which age bracket you fall into:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age under 16* | <input type="checkbox"/> Age 55 – 64 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age 16 – 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> Age 65 – 74 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age 19 – 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> Age 75 – 84 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age 25 – 34 | <input type="checkbox"/> Age 85 – 94 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age 35 – 44 | <input type="checkbox"/> Age 95+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age 45 – 54 | |

*If you are under 16 you should ask your parent / carer for permission to take part in this consultation.

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

Yes

No

Which organisation:

Do you consider yourself to have a disability, and if so please tell us what type of disability you have?

- Hearing impairment
- Physical impairment
- Visual impairment
- Learning disability
- Mental health need
- Other long term health condition that affects my transport needs (eg epilepsy)
- None of the above

Notes

Notes

This information is issued by:
Essex County Council
Passenger Transport

Contact us:
passenger.transport@essex.gov.uk
www.essex.gov.uk/department
0345 743 0430

Passenger Transport
Essex County Council
County Hall, Chelmsford
Essex, CM1 1QH

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 **facebook.com/essexcountycouncil**

The information contained in
this document can be translated,
and/or made available in alternative
formats, on request.

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