

Appendix B - UPDATED

Summary of written responses to the consultation on the withdrawal of the discretionary elements of the concessionary travel scheme.

General summary of comments received

This summary includes comments made on the consultation response form, and in separate correspondence received in response to the consultation. It omits comments about matters which the County Council cannot influence, e.g. suggested changes to the statutory national concessionary travel scheme.

Specific Comments

Community Transport attracted a good number of comments about the facility; some transport providers actively encouraged their users to respond.

Common themes were:

- a) Increasing the cost of community transport to users increased the disparity between the frail elderly reliant on community transport and the younger pensioner group able to access free bus travel.
- b) Increasing the cost would lead to greater social isolation and loss of independence among current scheme users.
- c) Increasing the cost to users could reduce scheme usage to the extent that schemes were no longer viable, therefore impacting on those willing to pay full fare and potentially on other activities of the transport provider. Alternative income streams may already be fully exploited.
- d) The schemes sometimes provide the only affordable or practical means to reach shops or medical appointments.
- e) Schemes may serve rural areas where alternative public transport is in any case scarce.
- f) One or two comments that users would be prepared to pay the full fare as they find the service so useful.
- g) A number of comments about how good a service is provided by voluntary sector transport organisations.

Pre 9.30 am free bus travel for disabled people comments included:

- a) Having to pay for am travel could mean those disabled people in low paid jobs would be better off not working.

- b) The saving of £20,000 per annum is relatively modest but will cause particular difficulty for disabled people, for example those unable to handle money due to their disability.
- c) Early journeys are sometimes necessary for medical appointments.

Withdrawal of taxi vouchers received relatively few comments: most concerned increasing loss of independence for frail elderly and disabled people.

Free bus travel after 11pm only comment was that people could be unexpectedly stranded, if a bus scheduled to depart before 11 pm runs late and the driver refuses free travel.