

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**CHILDRENS AND FAMILIES
CABINET MEMBER**

CONCESSIONARY FARES 2022/23 - PUBLICATION OF FINAL SCHEME

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To approve a "Final Scheme" for concessionary fares reimbursement.
- 1.2 A decision is required because the final scheme must be published by 3 March 2022 in order for it to come into effect on 1 April 2022.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 On 22 November 2021, the Cabinet Member approved a draft Concessionary Fares scheme for the 2022/23 financial year. Local Public Transport operators were all sent a copy of the draft scheme. No-one has objected to continuing with the current voluntary fixed pot methodology. The voluntary fixed pot uses the Department for Transport's (DfT) reimbursement calculator as the basis for negotiations.
- 2.2 Smaller operators with infrequent services (eg once per week) and community transport providers will have simpler arrangements. This is permitted in the guidance.
- 2.3 The Council also offers and funds additional travel entitlements using discretionary powers from Section 93 of the Transport Act 1985. We currently provide the following additional discretionary entitlements:
 - Half or discounted local rail travel;
 - Free bus travel for companions of disabled people who cannot use buses or trains on their own; and
 - Free bus travel for passholders all day (eg. before 9.30am) every day on journeys within or from North Lincolnshire.

2.4 Following a letter from the Department of Transport in February 2022 for the period of the 2022-23 scheme. The Council acknowledges the current situation regarding COVID-19 and the measures in place to reimburse bus operators for concessionary travel at pre-COVID levels.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 The recommendation is that the Cabinet Member approves the proposed “Final Scheme” as attached using a voluntary fixed pot for an initial period of one year.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The “Final Scheme” as set out in the appendix has changed from the draft scheme due to further correspondence from the DfT on 24 February 2022. DfT guidance requires us to publish a scheme. If we do not publish a scheme then we will not have a method of reimbursing bus and rail operators for concessionary bus passes.

4.2 To not publish the “Final Scheme” would leave the council open to challenge from bus operators.

5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)

5.1 The Council has made provision for funding the 2022/23 Concessionary Fares scheme in the forward financial plan.

5.2 There are no other resource implications to consider.

6. OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)

6.1 There are no other relevant implications in adopting the “Final Scheme”.

7. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

7.1 There are no adverse impacts in adopting the “Final Scheme”.

8. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

8.1 Local bus operators have raised no objections to continuing with the current methodology.

9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the “Final Scheme” for 2022/23 as attached.

9.2 That the decision to publish is made by no later than 3 March 2022 in order to comply with the DfT Guidance.

9.3 In addition to the statutory scheme, the Council also continues to provide the following discretionary enhancements for North Lincolnshire residents:

- Half or discounted local rail travel;
- Free bus travel for companions of disabled people who cannot use buses or trains on their own; and
- Free bus travel for passholders all day (eg. before 9.30am) every day on journeys within or from North Lincolnshire.

DIRECTOR OF ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report –

- Transport Act 1985 and 2000.
- Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007.
- DfT Concessionary travel for older and disabled people: guidance on reimbursing bus operators (England) published in September 2017 for schemes commencing in April 2018 (updated guidance has not been issued by DfT).

DfT Guidance to local authorities on assessing eligibility of disabled people in England for concessionary bus travel version 1.2 (2013)